

End Times: ***Putting the Pieces in Place***

An easy-to-use resource for finding and
understanding end-time Bible passages

by Sonny Bowman



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A free, electronic version of this book with hyperlinked, clickable page number references is available for download at www.life4square.com/sb/endtimes.pdf

A free, color version of the two timeline charts can be downloaded at www.life4square.com/sb/endtime-charts.pdf

Note: Some of the significant points in this book were initially compiled and distributed in 1983 in a paper entitled “The Final Days” by Sonny Bowman. The material was later expanded and distributed in various versions beginning in 1988 to 1993 as “Three Simple Keys to Understanding End Times” by Sonny Bowman. The material was then significantly expanded and renamed with the initial version of “End Times: Putting the Pieces in Place” being distributed in 1994.

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are from the *Holy Bible, New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. *KJV* indicates quotations taken from the King James Version of the Bible. Numbers associated with Greek (*italic*) or Hebrew (*upright*) words refer to the corresponding words in the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, by James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Background Information	5
Organization of this Material	6
The Importance of Understanding End Times	7
End-Time Events Are Not Always Described in Chronological Order	7
What is Literal and What is Figurative?	8
Using This Book to Study End Times	8
Charts and Tables	9
Chapter 2: Sign Posts along the Way.....	13
Missing the Messiah.....	13
Purposes of Bible Prophecies	13
Stay Open and Teachable.....	14
Chapter 3: Three Critical Keys!.....	15
Key #1: Two End-Time time periods that must not be confused.....	15
Key #2: Significant events signal the transitions between each major time period.....	15
Key #3: The Book of Revelation account is not in a single, chronological sequence.....	16
Chapter 4: Abomination of Desolation.....	17
Overview.....	17
Details.....	17
Clues for Recognizing the Abomination of Desolation	18
Historical Background	20
Historical insights	20
Chapter 5: The Great Tribulation	21
Overview.....	21
Details.....	21
Chapter 6: The Beast and False Prophet.....	25
Overview.....	25
Details.....	25
Clues for Recognizing the Beast (Antichrist)	26
Chapter 7: The Coming of Jesus	29
Overview.....	29
Details.....	29
Chapter 8: The Rapture	33
Overview.....	33
Three Bible Perspectives on the Rapture.....	33
Rapture Details.....	34
Pre-Trib Rapture Theory.....	36
Mid-Trib Rapture Theory.....	36

Post-Trib Rapture Theory	37
Pre-Wrath Rapture Belief	37
Chapter 9: The Wrath of God	39
Overview.....	39
Details.....	39
Chapter 10: Millennium, Reign of Christ	41
Overview.....	41
Details.....	41
Chapter 11: Final Rebellion and Judgment.....	43
Overview.....	43
Details.....	43
Judgment Seat of Christ	44
Chapter 12: Eternity with God.....	47
Chapter 13: Miscellaneous Questions & Information.....	49
Who are the “elect” in Matthew 24?	50
What is the Second Coming of Jesus?	50
When is the Rapture?.....	50
Is the Rapture secret and invisible?	50
Will only some Christians be raptured?	51
Is the Rapture shown in Revelation 4:1-6?	51
Why did Jesus say He would come as a thief in the night?.....	51
Will the Temple be rebuilt?.....	52
How can we recognize the Beast (Antichrist)?	53
What is the Mark of the Beast (666)?	53
How long is the Great Tribulation?	54
Will Christians be persecuted during the Great Tribulation?	56
How does the 70 th week of Daniel fit with the End Times?	56
Is Jacob’s trouble the same as the Great Tribulation?.....	57
When is the Battle of Armageddon?.....	58
When do Gog and Magog fight against God’s people?	58
Who are the 144,000 sealed in Revelation?	59
What are the seven seals?	59
What are the seven plagues?.....	60
What are the three woes?	60
Who are the two witnesses?.....	61
What is the Day of the Lord?.....	61
What is the First Resurrection?.....	63
Where do people go when they die?	63
What is the Lake of Fire (Second Death)?	63
Will the Gospel be preached to all the earth?	63
How does the parable of the wheat and tares relate to End Times?	64
Will heaven and earth be rejuvenated rather than replaced?	64
Chapter 14: Preparing for the End Times	67

Appendix A: Chronological Relationships.....	69
Graphical Timeline.....	69
Detailed Chronological List of Events.....	70
Appendix B: Tribulation or Wrath?	73
The Difference	73
The Great Tribulation	73
The Wrath of God.....	74
Appendix C: Transition Events	75
Abomination of Desolation – First Transition Event	76
Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars – Second Transition Event.....	76
Satan Bound for 1,000 Years – Third Transition Event	77
Satan Released a Short Time – Fourth Transition Event.....	77
New Heaven and Earth – Fifth Transition Event	78
Interlocking Events in the End-Time Puzzle	78
Appendix D: Signs in Sun, Moon, and Stars	79
Overview.....	79
Details.....	79
Appendix E: Telling and Retelling in Revelation.....	83
Overview.....	83
Time Periods Chart	84
A Modern Illustration	84
The Gospel Example	84
Four Separate “Tellings” of Events.....	84
Important Transition Events.....	85
Additional Information	86
Appendix F: The Seven Plagues Compared.....	87
Overview.....	87
Two Descriptions of the Seven Plagues	87
Seven Plagues, Descriptions Compared	89
Summary of the Seven Plagues.....	92
Index	93

Chapter 1: Introduction

Revelation 4:1 — After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

Background Information

In 1974, the Lord showed me some things that challenged what I believed about the events that would take place at the end of days as described in the Bible. Before that, any time I read certain passages in the Bible about end-time events, they were confusing and I couldn't understand them very well. I had heard teachings from different “experts” on End Times and had seen some really elaborate charts showing how the end-time events played out. But when I read the Bible, I just couldn't quite get it. So, I decided that it was just too complicated and that I would leave it to those experts who had studied so extensively. (Though it was troubling to me that some end-times experts taught things contradictory to those taught by other end-times experts.)

After God's challenge to my thinking about End Times in 1974, I decided to temporarily set aside everything I had been taught about End Times. The plan was to simply seek God's wisdom, read all the parts of the Bible that talked about End Times, then see what that told me about how the events play out. I was amazed about how much end-time information there was in the Bible. Also, I found that once I quit trying to fit the Bible verses into the theories I had been taught by some teachers, it was much easier to understand End Times than I had expected.

In studying the end-time verses directly in the Bible, I noticed some key things that really began to put the end-time pieces in place. For example, the Bible describes an extraordinary celestial event related to certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars. I noticed that this significant event was mentioned in several places in the Bible, all in relationship to various other end-time events.

One major insight was that Matthew 24 described the signs in the sun, moon, and stars in relationship to the Great Tribulation, the coming of Jesus, and His gathering of God's people—what people often call the “Rapture of the Church.” Then, I found that same celestial event (the signs in the sun, moon, and stars) described again in Revelation 6 where they were connected with a time period the Bible calls the outpouring of the Wrath of God.

As I compared these two passages, I realized that those signs (in the sun, moon, and stars) were an important key that clearly demonstrated the sequence and time relationships between the Great Tribulation, the Coming of Jesus, the Rapture, and the Wrath of God. It was like two interlocking puzzle pieces just snapped into place. As I began studying the same celestial event in other passages, the End Times began to get increasingly clearer. I learned that those signs in the sun, moon, and stars were actually one of several transitional events that mark the end of one biblical time period and the beginning of the next.

I also learned that the Book of Revelation was not written in one, straight chronological sequence from the first to the last chapter as I had assumed. Several end-times events were described multiple times in Revelation, retelling the same events from different perspectives with different

emphases. This understanding further cleared up some of the confusion about end-times events that I previously had.

To help others understand the things I had found, I wrote a paper entitled “The Final Days” that I began distributing in 1983. The material in that initial paper was later expanded and distributed in various versions beginning in 1988 to 1993 under the title, “Three Simple Keys to Understanding End Times.” Then, in 1994, the material was again significantly expanded and renamed as “End Times: Putting the Pieces in Place.” This resource book was designed to document and help explain what the Bible says about end-time events. In subsequent versions, the material was further updated and clarified. Extensive improvements and updates were made in July of 2020. While the basic premises are the same as when originally written, some of the text, tables, and charts were reworked to improve clarity and flow. Additional material was also added to help address additional questions about some of the events and relationships.

I do not claim to be an expert on the End Times—I’m just sharing what I have learned. I believe that as the time gets closer, God will continue to open the understanding of His followers (Daniel 12:8-10) so we can be well prepared to walk in His ways no matter what happens. This work is presented to you for the glory of God alone! May He use it as He sees fit, and may He bless your pursuit of Him.

Yours in Jesus,

Sonny Bowman

Organization of this Material

The most important information to understand can be found in Chapter 3: Three Critical Keys! (page 15). If you read nothing else in this book, read chapter 3.

The information in this book is compiled with three types of people in mind.

- For those people who desire only an overall view of the End Times, a chronological table of end-time events is provided on page 69. Charts and tables are used in the book to help explain relationships between the various events (see pages 69 and 83).
- For people who want an end-time reference book that is easy and fast to use, a detailed table of contents is provided along with a detailed index. Event overviews and summaries are included in many chapters as well as comparison tables and charts.
- Finally, for those who desire to study the End Times in detail, Scripture references are supplied throughout with detailed information on several topics provided in the appendices. (Numbers used in word definitions refer to the *Strong’s Concordance* numbering system.)

While the material in this book can be read straight through, it is primarily designed as a handy reference that provides extensive, yet easy to use, access to end-time information. This book is divided into several major sections as follows.

Introduction and General Information, Chapters 1-3

The information in these chapters provide background and other information that is helpful when studying end-time events.

Major End-Time Events, Chapters 4-12

Each chapter in this section provides detailed information on one of the major aspects of the End Times. The chapters are placed in general chronological order based on the material covered.

Miscellaneous Questions and Information, Chapter 13

This section is a collection of information related to common questions about End Times as described in the Bible. The beginning of the chapter has a topical list (with page numbers) of the issues covered. The Table of Contents and Index can also be used to locate desired information.

Preparing for the End Times, Chapter 14

This chapter addresses some basic issues necessary for preparing for the End Times.

Appendices A-F

The appendices contain supporting details for several premises in this book. Page references are provided throughout the book directing you to specific appendices where applicable.

Index

The index is a handy place to help you find page numbers where various topics are discussed.

The Importance of Understanding End Times

Why is it important to understand end-time events? First, the most significant indication of the importance of understanding end-time events is that they are included in the Bible. If God did not consider them important, they would not be included in the Bible. Second, Jesus told us to watch for certain events related to the End Times, and the apostle Matthew cautioned us specifically to understand the prophecy concerning the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15-27). Finally, failure to correctly understand end-time events can cause a Christian to be shaken in mind or troubled unnecessarily (2 Thes. 2:2-5). Some have even had their faith overthrown by incorrect teachings concerning end-time events (2 Tim. 2:17-18). A proper understanding of end-time events appears to be important for steadfast Christian living and service. Fortunately, basic end-time events are not nearly as difficult to understand as some people think.

On the other hand, **correct understanding of end-time events is not a requirement for salvation** (Rom. 10:9-10). When the Lord returns for His people, He will gather them whether or not they think it is the correct time for Him to return. Though we may go through hardships and persecution, we do not have to go through them without His presence, comfort, or aid. (Heb. 13:5-6; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; John 16:33; Ps. 23:4). As God was encouraging and strengthening the early Christians under Roman persecution, he will also strengthen and encourage each of us in any persecutions we may suffer for His name.

End-Time Events Are Not Always Described in Chronological Order

When studying end-time events, it is essential to understand that the order in which events are described in the Bible is not necessarily the order in which they occur. For example, if someone read straight through the Gospels (Matthew through John) thinking it was one chronological sequence, it would be very confusing.

Sometimes in the Bible, certain events are described out of chronological sequence to emphasize or complete an important point. This is especially true in the Book of Revelation. For example: In Revelation 14:8, an angel declares that, "...Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city...". After that, Revelation 17:3-7 describes what an angel told him about the evil activities of the harlot who was

identified as Babylon (Rev. 17:5), "...that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). Then later, in Revelation 18:1-2, John sees a repeat of the angel saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen...", which he earlier recorded in Revelation 14:8.

(See page 69 for a chronological list of end-time events. Also refer to page 83 for information on the chronological sequence of the chapters in the Book of Revelation.)

What is Literal and What is Figurative?

When studying end-time events, it is also important to make a distinction between descriptions that appear to be literal and those that are obviously figurative. Literal prophecies will occur exactly as described. Figurative prophecies will also occur, but they may not be obvious on the surface. As a general guideline when studying end-time events, assume that all descriptions are literal unless the context insists upon a figurative understanding.

It is also important to distinguish between two types of literal descriptions. The first type of literal event includes descriptions of what will be observed on earth. For example, the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:14), the signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Mat. 24:29), and the construction of an image of the Beast (Rev. 13: 14-15) are all literal events. All of these will be observable from an earthly vantage point.

The second type of literal event includes those that take place in the spiritual or heavenly realm. These may appear to be symbolic since they describe strange events and creatures. Even though these are literal events described from heaven's perspective, they will not necessarily be observed by people on earth exactly as described. Examples of these types of descriptions include the four creatures around the throne of God (Rev. 4:6-8) and the angels pouring out the bowls containing plagues (Rev. 15:6-8; 16:1). While this is literally happening in heaven, people on earth will not see the angels as they pour out the bowls, but they will see the results.

Examples of descriptions that appear to be figurative include: the harlot (probably representing all false religion, Rev. 17:1-6) and the wine and winepress (representing God's punishment of the ungodly during the Wrath of God, Rev. 14:9-10; 19:15). The exact interpretation of a figurative description can sometimes be difficult to determine.

The Beast will probably be a literal person (see page 25). In Daniel, the whole organization or kingdom from which he comes is also figuratively described as a beast (Dan. 7:7-11). In this description, the Beast (i.e., the Antichrist, an individual) is described figuratively as a little horn that is part of this organization or kingdom described by Daniel.

Problems develop when too many end-time events are thought to be symbolic. Problems also occur if all end-time descriptions are taken as literal. It is generally best to consider end-time descriptions as literal (either as observed in heaven or observed on earth) unless the context definitely indicates that a figurative understanding is necessary.

Using This Book to Study End Times

Much of the information in chapters 4-12 (describing major end-time events) is presented in a consistent format to aid research and study of end-time events. These chapters usually begin with an overall description of the covered event to aid in obtaining an overall understanding of the activity and significance of the event. Following the description, specific information related to the event is provided in the summary format shown below. This is most helpful when attempting to determine specific information about the event such as how long it lasts and what occurs prior to

it. Several appendices are included in the back of this book to provide additional details on certain aspects of End Times for those who desire even more details. Finally, an index is included for assistance in locating specific information.

The information format used to summarize the chapters covering major end-time events is as follows.

Summary

Term Definition:

Provides a definition of this specific term or event.

Significance:

Explains the major importance of this event, aspect, or being.

Source:

Explains who is behind this event or the cause of it.

Length:

Explains the length of this event or time period.

Events Prior:

Lists events immediately preceding this event or time period.

Events:

Explains the major events that take place as part of this event or time period.

God During:

Lists God's activities during this event or time period.

Christians During:

Lists the activities and status of Christians during this event or time period.

Satan During:

Lists Satan's activities during this event or time period.

Beast During:

Lists the Beast's (Antichrist's) activities during this event or time period.

Non-Christians During:

Lists activities and status of non-Christians during this event or time period.

Events Following:

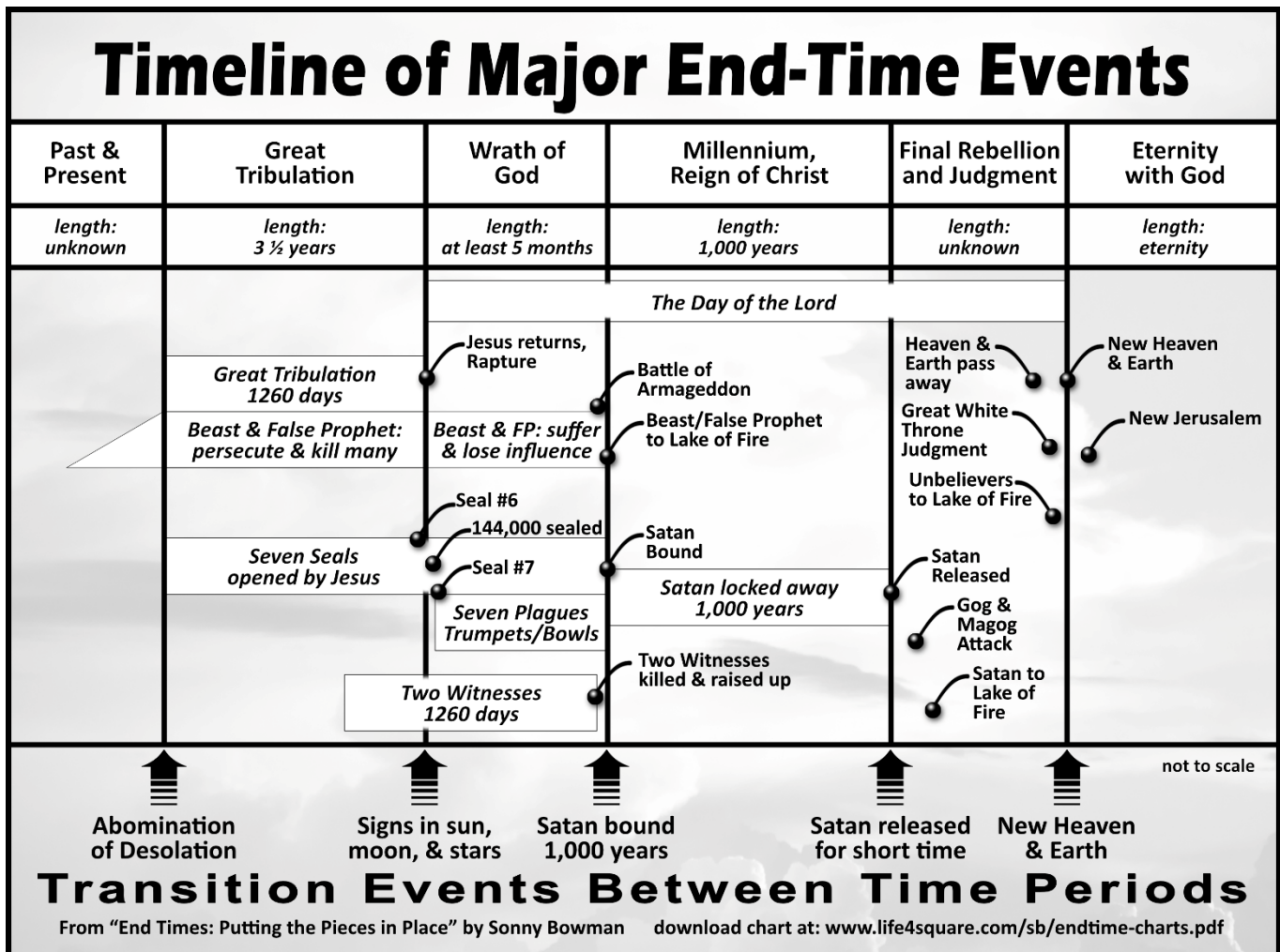
Lists events immediately following this event or time period.

Scripture references:

A comprehensive list of Bible passages related to this being, event, or time period.

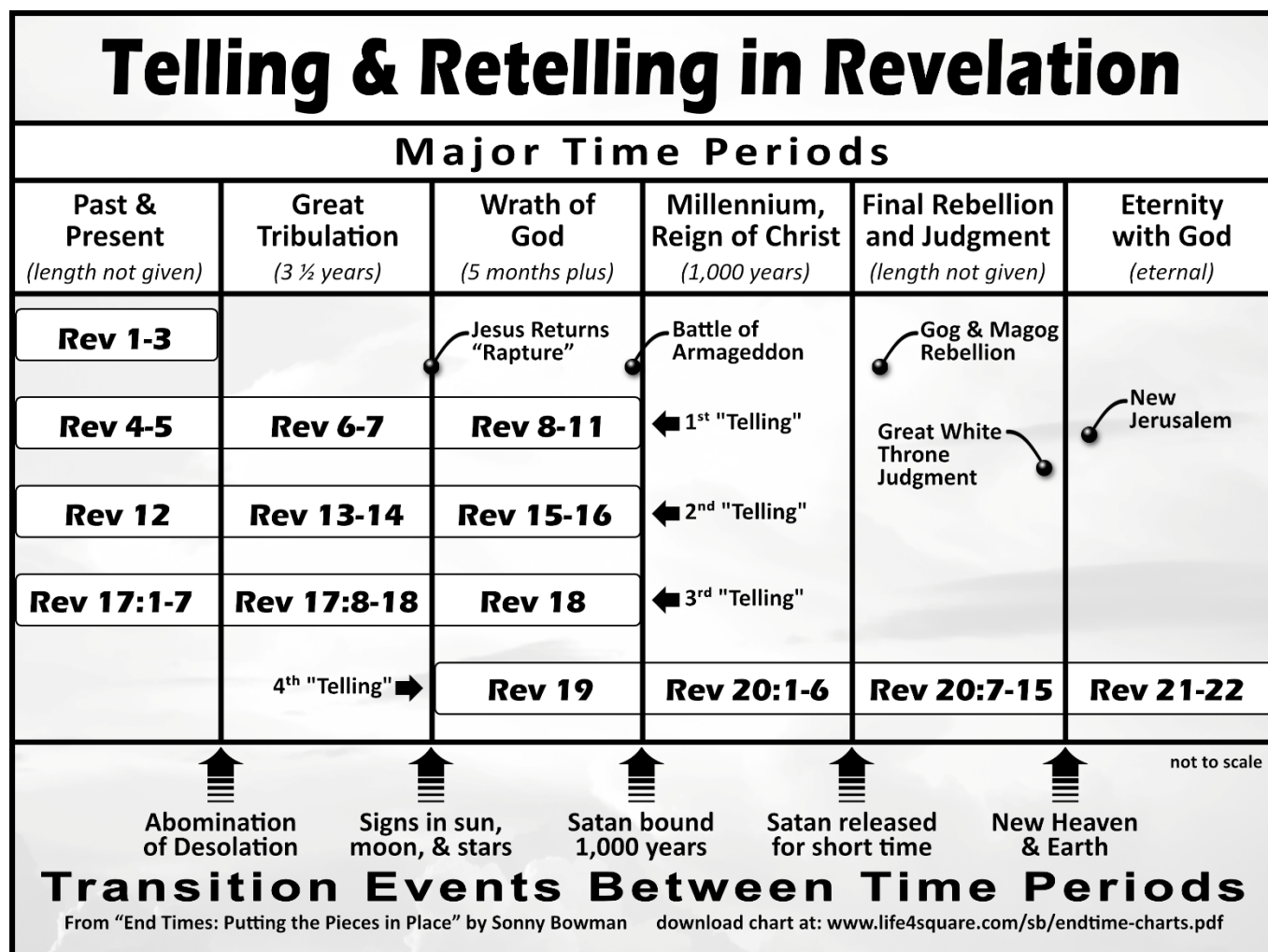
Charts and Tables

Charts and tables are included throughout this book to aid in understanding the material. Of particular importance is the following two charts. Free, full-color versions of the following two charts can be downloaded at www.life4square.com/sb/endtime-charts.pdf.



This timeline chart provides a visual overview of major time periods, transitional events, and key events of the End Times. While not to scale, the timeline shows the approximate relationships of many of the end-time events described in the Bible.

More information on this "Timeline of Major End-Time Events" chart can be found in *Appendix A: Chronological Relationships* on page 69. Additional information on the "Transition Events Between Time Periods" can be found in *Appendix C: Transition Events* on page 75.



This timeline chart provides a visual overview of major time periods, transitional events, and some key events of the End Times. It is particularly useful for identifying which time periods are covered by each set of the chapters in the Book of Revelation. While not to scale, the timeline shows the approximate relationships of many of the end-time events described in the Bible.

More information on the material in this "Telling & Retelling in Revelation" chart can be found on page 16 and in *Appendix E: Telling and Retelling in Revelation* on page 83. Additional information on the "Transition Events Between Time Periods" can be found in *Appendix C: Transition Events* on page 75.

Chapter 2: Sign Posts along the Way

Matthew 24:3 — Now 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?”

Missing the Messiah

The Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day made some common mistakes when it comes to biblical prophecy. They thought that the primary purpose of prophecy was to describe what would happen in the future. They also added too many assumptions based upon their limited understanding of the prophecies. This is how they missed the coming Messiah—Jesus—even though it seems so obvious to many of us looking back at the events. Even though the prophecies were fulfilled (to that point) exactly as given, many of the Jewish leaders did not recognize it because they were not fulfilled the way they expected. We must be careful not to make a similar mistake when studying end-time prophecies.

In the Jewish Scriptures written before the birth of Jesus (our Old Testament), there were many prophecies about the coming Messiah (i.e., Jesus, the Christ). Some of those prophecies described the Messiah as coming to rid the earth of those who oppose God. These prophecies described a kingly Messiah who would come to conquer and reign. Other prophecies of the Messiah described His death in payment for our sins. These prophecies described a servant Messiah who would suffer at the hands of men.

Jewish scholars studied the messianic prophecies to understand what God would do. Many of them did not understand that the prophecies were talking about **two separate comings** of the Messiah. His first coming would be as a **servant** to redeem man to God by suffering death on a cross (Isa. 52:13-15; 53:1-12). His second coming would be in a **kingly** role as a conqueror of all evil and as the deliverer of God’s people (Jer. 23:5-6; Dan. 7:13-14). Unfortunately, many people only looked for the kingly Messiah who would deliver the Jewish people from the tyranny of Roman rule (Acts 1:6). Since the servant prophecies did not seem to fit this view of the Messiah, those prophecies were often ignored or misapplied.

As a result, when Jesus came, the people thought that He was the promised, kingly Messiah who would set up God’s kingdom in Jerusalem. A few days before Passover, these people spread palm branches and clothes in the road to welcome their coming King (John 12:12-13). When Jesus failed to fulfill **their understanding** of the prophecies, these people turned against Him, demanding His death (John 19:14-15).

Purposes of Bible Prophecies

Throughout the Bible, God has provided many important end-time prophecies for us. These prophecies serve two major purposes. The **first** purpose of prophecies is **to assure us** that God is all powerful, all knowing, and totally trustworthy. When Bible prophecies come to pass, they assure us that God has everything under control (John 13:19; 14:29; 16:4). He is not surprised by the events taking place, and Satan has not gained an advantage over God. We can trust God fully, regardless of how difficult things may become.

The **second** major purpose of end-time prophecies is **to show us where we are in God's plan**. In this sense, prophecies are similar to city limit signs. When you reach the city limit sign for your destination, then you know you are beginning to enter the city area. Bible prophecies are not always intended to function as *mileage signs*. That is, they do not often tell us how far we have to go before we arrive. Instead, Bible prophecies help us see that we have **arrived** at certain points in history.

For example, the Abomination of Desolation is an important prophetic sign that tells Christians when we are entering the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:15,21). We will probably not know ahead of time when the Great Tribulation will start. However, when we see the Abomination of Desolation, we will know that the Great Tribulation has started. Therefore, the Gospel writer tells us that it is important to understand the prophecy about the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15). Besides showing us when we reach a certain point in history, this prophecy about the Abomination of Desolation also serves to assure us that God is not caught off guard by the works of the enemy.

When studying end-time prophecies, avoid the temptation to be too specific about how future prophecies may be fulfilled. Primarily, seek to understand enough about the prophecies to recognize them when they come to pass. If you do that, you will be less likely to miss these important sign posts provided by God.

Stay Open and Teachable

Don't get so locked into an expected way that some future event may take place that you miss it when it occurs in a somewhat different way than you expected. It is important to remain teachable and open to other possible interpretations of end-time descriptions. Many of these events may occur in several different ways while still meeting the prophetic requirements. Remember, prophecy is often used to show us when we reach a certain point rather than to inform us of what to expect next. For example, the Abomination of Desolation is used to signal that the Great Tribulation has started, rather than providing much information about what will happen (Mat. 24:15, 21). In Daniel's day, these prophecies were sealed so that he could not understand them (Dan. 12:8-9). However, as we get nearer to the time of the end, God declares that those who are wise (in God) will understand what is happening (Dan. 12:10).

Chapter 3: Three Critical Keys!

If you read nothing else in this book, please reach this chapter.

There are three critical keys that must be understood in order to get a clear view of what the Bible says about end-time events. These keys are fairly simple to understand. However, failure to understand these three keys contributes to significant confusion about end-time prophecies and how they related to one another. Therefore, these keys are crucial to putting the end-time pieces in place.

Following is a simple overview of each of the three keys. Understanding these keys will significantly help you understand what the Bible teaches about End Times. More details on each of these critical keys are included in the appendices in this book.

Key #1: Two End-Time time periods that must not be confused

One of the major points of confusion about end-time prophecies in the Bible is caused by the failure to accurately distinguish between the events occurring during two major time periods: the **Great Tribulation** and the **Wrath of God**.

The Difference

The **Great Tribulation** and the **Wrath of God** are:

...**two different** events coming from **two different** sources for **two different** purposes!

The Great Tribulation is a time of intense persecution and destruction on the earth. It is caused by Satan with the purpose of deceiving and harming as many people as possible.

An important clue to remember is that the Great Tribulation is **demonic in origin**. It includes the persecution and killing of many people by Satan's representative—the **Beast** (the Antichrist).

The Wrath of God is a time period of terrible suffering as a result of seven plagues sent by God through His angels, with the purpose of judging and punishing the Beast and all those who follow and serve the Beast.

An important clue to remember is that the Wrath of God is godly judgment **against** evil. This judgment takes the form of **seven plagues** poured at the command of God against the Beast and all those who take the Mark of the Beast.

Chronologically, the Great Tribulation finishes just before the Wrath of God begins.

See the *Tribulation or Wrath?* appendix on page 73 and the Timeline chart (page 69) for more details.

Key #2: Significant events signal the transitions between each major time period

Several Bible passages concerning End Times describe certain significant transitional events that mark the end of one major time period and the beginning of the next. These are called *transitional events* and *interlocking events* in this book. There are six major time periods discussed in end-time prophecies, with five different events that mark the end of each time period and the beginning of

the next. Each change from one major time period to the next in biblical prophecy is identified by a unique transition event. These transition events are identified on the Timeline chart (page 69) and the Time Periods chart (page 83). Recognizing these transition events helps clarify the flow of end-time passages.

For example, there are certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars that take place **immediately after** the Great Tribulation time period (Mat. 24:29). These same signs also take place **immediately prior** to the Wrath of God time period (Rev. 6:12-17). This tells us several things. The Great Tribulation takes place before the Wrath of God. All of the events of the Great Tribulation will finish before any of the events of the Wrath of God begin. **Since the seven plagues are part of the Wrath of God, we understand that the seven plagues are not part of the Great Tribulation.**

See the *Transition Events* appendix on page 75, the Timeline chart (page 69), and the Time Periods chart (page 83) for more details.

Key #3: The Book of Revelation account is not in a single, chronological sequence

The Book of Revelation describes end-time events in four separate chronological sequence groups. This telling and retelling of the end time events provides four different vantage points for the same overlapping time periods. If someone thinks that the Book of Revelation proceeds in a single chronological order from chapter 1 through chapter 22, it will be very confusing to understand.

This overlapping of time periods in the Book of Revelation leads to the repeating (telling and retelling) of several end-time events, each from a slightly different vantage point with a slightly different emphasis. For example...

- The **Great Tribulation** is described three times (Rev. 6:1-8; 13:1-18; and 7:7-17)
- The **Rapture** (i.e., gathering of God's people) is described three times (Rev. 7:9-17; 14:13-16; and 18:4)
- The **Wrath of God** is described four times (Rev. chapter 8-11; chapter 15-16; chapter 18; and 19:11-21).

The "Telling & Retelling in Revelation" chart (page 83) is provided to visually show how the time periods described by end-time prophecies are covered in an overlapping manner by the various chapters of the Book of Revelation.

See the *Appendix E*: on page 83 for more information.

Chapter 4: Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 11:31 — “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.

Matthew 24:15-16 — “Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Overview

The Bible does not clearly define the Abomination of Desolation (or the Abomination that causes Desolation). Apparently, it is something that is abominable (worthy of disgust or hatred) in the eyes of God and causes desolation (to deprive of inhabitants, make waste, forsake). It probably refers to the Beast’s prophesied claim to be God and his demand to be worshipped. He will follow this claim to be God with devastating persecution and attacks on many people.

Especially significant about the Abomination of Desolation is that Jesus told us that this is the key event that shows us that the prophesied Great Tribulation has started. Jesus told us that we need to take action when we see the Abomination of Desolation take place (Mat. 24:15-26).

Even though it is not clearly defined, the Abomination of Desolation should be readily identified by its associated events, especially those described in Daniel 11:29-32 and Matthew 24:4-28.

Details

All who read Matthew 24:15 are warned that they need to be sure to understand the Abomination of Desolation and its significance.

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

Understanding what the Bible says about the Abomination of Desolation is very important for understanding end-time events. **According to Jesus, the Abomination of Desolation is the event that will alert the people of God that the Great Tribulation has started.** As such, the Abomination of (that causes) Desolation is an important end-times transition event signaling the beginning of the persecutions and deceptions associated with the Great Tribulation. It is similar to an interlocking (connecting) puzzle piece in that it provides important keys to the time relationship of other end-time events (see page 75).

According to this passage in Matthew, the Abomination of Desolation is an event that is prophesied in the Old Testament Book of Daniel, which was written in the late sixth century B.C. The prophet, Daniel, prophesies the following about the Abomination of Desolation.

Daniel 8:9-14 — And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious *Land*. 10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11 He even exalted *himself* as high

as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. *12* Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered. *13* Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, “How long *will* the vision *be*, *concerning* the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?” *14* And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

Daniel 11:31 — “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 12:11 — “And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Two of these passages in Daniel tell how long the Great Tribulation will last. Daniel 12:11 states that there will be 1290 days after the Abomination of Desolation is set up. An extra 45 days are also mentioned that occur after the 1290, but their purpose is not explained (see Dan. 12:12). In Daniel 8:14 the length of time when the sanctuary and the host (people of God) are going to be trampled is given as 2,300 days in several translations. The Hebrew actually says 2,300 *evenings and mornings* instead of *days* (see other translations and the marginal notes in the NKJV translation). This may be equivalent to 1,150 days since one morning plus one evening adds up to one day. (Refer to page 54 for more information on the length of the Great Tribulation.) It is also possible that this passage (Dan. 8:14) refers to 2,300 days in a time period other than the Great Tribulation.

Since the Abomination of Desolation involves the *holy place* and the forced stopping of the daily sacrifices, the temple in Jerusalem may need to be rebuilt before this event takes place (Mat. 24:15; Dan. 11:31; 8:11). If such is the case, the Beast may be instrumental in the peace negotiations that open the way for the rebuilding the Jewish temple (Dan. 9:27). This could occur during a time when the Beast’s real nature is not as obvious. However, other ways of fulfilling this prophecy may be possible (see “Will the temple be rebuilt?” on page 52). For example, the Beast may forbid worship, prayer, or meeting in churches. It is important for us to remain sensitive to the warnings of God and not miss the fulfillment of this prophecy, even if it takes place in a somewhat different manner than we might expect.

Clues for Recognizing the Abomination of Desolation

Following are some things to help us recognize when the Abomination of Desolation occurs.

- A powerful individual arises and claims to be God.
- He demands worship.
- He enters the temple of God (possibly something other than a rebuilt, Jewish temple).
- He claims to be God, setting up something that is an abomination to the true God.
- He curses and blasphemes God (and God’s followers).
- He is a man of lawlessness (especially concerning the laws of God).
- He takes away daily sacrifices offered by God’s people (possibly something other than literal animal sacrifices). (It is interesting to note that the original language for Daniel 11:31 does not include the word “sacrifices,” just the word “daily.” Most translations insert “sacrifices” or “burn offerings” here for clarity. Other reference to this event in Daniel 9:27 includes the word “sacrifices”. Therefore, addition of the word “sacrifices” in Daniel 11:31 is justified.)

Summary

Definitions:

The Bible does not clearly define the Abomination of Desolation. Apparently, it is something that is abominable (worthy of disgust or hatred) in the eyes of God and causes desolation (to deprive of inhabitants, make waste, forsake). It probably refers to the Beast's prophesied claim to be God (2 Thes. 2:4; Dan. 11:36-37), his verbal assaults (blasphemies) against God (Rev. 13:5-6; Dan. 11:36), and his demand to be worshipped (Rev. 13:5-6, 15). He will follow this with devastating persecution and attacks on many people (Rev. 13:7; Dan. 11:39).

Events of the Abomination of Desolation:

The Abomination of Desolation includes the Beast's public claim that he is God, his demand for worship, and his stoppage of sacrifices to the true God. (see Dan. 8:11; 11:31, 36; 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:6, 7, 15). It will begin an intense time of persecution of God's people (Mat. 24:15-22).

Significance of the Abomination of Desolation:

The Abomination of Desolation is extremely significant because it identifies the beginning of the Great Tribulation for those who understand (Mat. 24:15-21)! It will reveal the Beast (Antichrist) as the man of lawlessness who will persecute those who refuse to worship him as God (2 Thes. 2:3-5, Rev. 13:5-9, 14-15).

Source of the Abomination of Desolation:

The Abomination of Desolation is set up by the Beast under the authority of Satan, the dragon (Rev. 13:2,4).

Length of the Abomination of Desolation:

The length of the specific act that is called the Abomination of Desolation is not given. It probably takes place in a single day, though it may take several days to fully unfold.

Events Prior to the Abomination of Desolation:

Prior to setting up the Abomination of Desolation, the Beast will be establishing his position of power—largely by deception and lies (see Dan. 8:9-10; 11:21-28). A period of deceptive peace may precede the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 11:21, 24).

Events Following the Abomination of Desolation:

The Great Tribulation immediately follows the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15, 21).

God During the Abomination of Desolation:

God's activity during the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation is not directly spelled out in Scripture. God is faithful to alert watchful Christians to the significance of the event and to instruct them on the appropriate action to take (Mat. 24:15-27).

Christians During the Abomination of Desolation:

Christians should recognize the Abomination of Desolation as the primary sign that Jesus gave signaling the beginning of the Great Tribulation. For more information on persecution of Christians during the Great Tribulation, see page 56.

Satan During the Abomination of Desolation:

Satan empowers and directs the Beast (Rev. 13:2,4; 2 Thes. 2:9).

Beast During the Abomination of Desolation:

The Beast sets up the Abomination that makes Desolation and takes away daily sacrifices (Dan. 11:31, Mat. 24:15). He will claim to be God (2 Thes. 2:4, Dan. 11:36-37). He will also blaspheme the true God (Rev. 13:5-6, Dan. 11:36). The Beast will demand that people worship him (Rev. 13:5-6, 15), and will launch devastating persecution and attacks on many people (Rev. 13:7, Dan. 11:39).

Non-Christians During the Abomination of Desolation:

Non-Christians will be corrupted and deceived by the Beast's words and activities. They will join with him in persecution of those who desire to serve the true God (Dan. 11:32; Rev. 13:14). They will also be amazed by the power of the Beast and Satan and will worship both of them (Rev. 13:3-4).

Scripture references for the Abomination of Desolation:

Dan. 8:9-14, 17; Dan. 9:27; Dan. 11:21-36; Dan. 12:11; Mat. 24:15-27; Mark 13:14; 19; 2 Thes. 2:3-4, 9; Rev. 13:2-7, 11-15.

Historical Background

A possible partial fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation was accomplished over 160 years **before** the birth of Jesus. Apparently, this was not a complete fulfillment since Jesus warned of a future Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24:15. This earlier event relates to Daniel's prophecy as recorded in the apocryphal books of *1* and *2 Maccabees*. These two books record historical events during part of the time period between the writing of the last Old Testament book and the birth of Jesus. In their titles, *Maccabee* (meaning *Hammer*) was the name given to a family of Jews who led the Jewish revolt against the Syrians.

These apocryphal books and Josephus record a time in 167 B.C. when Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), king of Syria, erected an idolatrous altar on God's altar in the temple in Jerusalem. He sacrificed a pig to Jupiter Olympus [Zeus] on his altar. This was an abomination to the Jews. Antiochus also forbade Jews to engage in sacrifices, rites, feasts, circumcision, and worship of any kind. This was apparently a partial fulfillment of Daniel's prophesied cessation of the sacrifices.

The Jewish revolt began in 167 B.C., when a Jewish man sacrificed to Zeus under coercion by a Syrian officer. A priest named Mattathias witnessed the event. Mattathias killed both the Jew and the Syrian officer and called for all faithful Jews to follow him. They fled to the hills outside Jerusalem. There, he and his sons organized for war against the Syrians. In 164 B.C., the armies under Mattathias' sons entered Jerusalem, defeated the Syrian army, and secured the city. The Syrian leaders were forced to repeal their ordinances against worship in Israel. The temple was formally cleansed in December of 164 B.C. The Jews celebrated the dedication for eight days. Since that time, the Festival of Dedication (also called the Festival of Lights and Hanukkah) is celebrated by Jews each year, usually in December. This event includes lighting of the menorah to commemorate the cleansing and dedication of the temple. According to Jesus, there will be a further fulfillment of the prophesied Abomination of Desolation that will take place in the last days (Mat. 24:15-21).

Historical insights

Certain insights from the partial fulfillment of this prophecy about the Abomination of Desolation may be helpful in seeking to understand the future complete fulfillment. For example, in 167 B.C., when the Jews fled to the surrounding hills, it was to organize for war, not to tremble in fear. Jerusalem became a stronghold of the enemy, so the people went to an area over which the enemy had less control. In a similar manner, when Jesus tells His disciples (now called *Christians*, Acts 11:26) to flee to the wilderness at the start of the Great Tribulation, it will be for purposes of consolidating forces and preparing for spiritually empowered warfare against the Beast and his forces (Mat. 24:3, 15-21; Dan. 11:32-33). This does not necessarily mean that all Christians around the world will have to flee to the wilderness.

The warfare that the Jews waged against the Syrians may be a parallel of the war that Christians will wage against the Beast during the Great Tribulation. It may also be significant that after about three years, the Jews under the Maccabees overcame the Syrians and proper worship was reestablished. This is a length of time similar to the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation.

Chapter 5: The Great Tribulation

Revelation 13:15-16 — He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

Overview

The important thing to understand is that the Great Tribulation is a time of intense persecution and trouble caused by the Beast and his forces. It is demonic in nature and its ultimate source of the trouble is Satan (Rev. 16:13-14; 13:2, 4). A major purpose of the persecutions and trouble is to cause people to fall away from the Lord Jesus. (Rev. 13:4, 17). It will be an intensification of Satan's continuing efforts to kill, steal, and destroy (Jn. 10:10). God is not the cause of any of the persecutions arising during the Great Tribulation.

See the “Three Critical Keys!” chapter on page 15.

Details

Jesus described the Great Tribulation in chapter 24 of Matthew. He said it will be a time of deception with false christs and false prophets (Mat. 24:4-5, 11, 23-24). It will also be a time when believers will be persecuted severely and hated (Mat. 24:9-11). Lawlessness will increase. As a result, many people's love for the Lord will grow cold, leading them to fall away from the faith (Mat. 24:12-13). Satan will do his best to deceive people during the Great Tribulation and will empower the Beast to deceive and persecute people. There will be many false signs and wonders which will be used in an attempt to deceive the elect (i.e., Christians—the chosen ones of God, see page 50) (Mat. 24: 24). This time of great tribulation will be characterized by greatly increased demonic activity led by the one called the *Beast* or the *Antichrist*.

During the time of the Great Tribulation there will be one particular individual who will attempt to take the place of Jesus as King on this earth. This individual is called the *man of lawlessness* (2 Thes. 2:3-10) and the *Beast* (Rev. 13:1, 4, 12-14). As the antichrist of all antichrists, the Beast is the Antichrist. According to chapter 13 in Revelation, the Beast and his forces will be the major cause of persecution during the Great Tribulation (see page 25). The Great Tribulation will begin when the Beast sets up the Abomination of Desolation (see page 17).

The word *antichrist* is found in only four Scripture verses and refers to one of many antichrists in the world (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7). It refers to an individual or spirit who is against Christ or one who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22).

The Beast will be assisted by the False Prophet (see page 25). The False Prophet will make an image of the Beast (Rev. 13:14). To deceive people into worshipping the Beast and his image, the False Prophet will perform signs and miracles and even cause the image to come to life. He will even be able to call down fire from heaven (i.e., the sky) (Rev. 13:13). This is something that Satan's servants could not do in the past (1 Kings 18:22-29). Anyone who refuses to worship the Beast or

his image will be killed (Rev. 13:15). Also, anyone who refuses to take the Mark of the Beast will not be able to buy or sell (see page 53).

Many people will be killed during the Great Tribulation. This includes some of those who belong to God (Dan. 11:32-35; Rev. 13:8). However, those who know God and understand what is going on will oppose the Beast and teach others the truth (Dan. 11:32-33). Some protection will be provided by God for His people (Dan. 11:34; Rev. 12: 6, 13-17). However, many will pay the ultimate price of dying in their service to God (Dan. 11:35). Historically, Christianity is purified and strengthened by persecution (Dan. 12:10).

The reign of the Beast (and thus the length of the Great Tribulation) is limited to 3½ years (see page 54). At the end of the Great Tribulation, the reign of the Beast will be brought to a sudden end by the return of Jesus (Mat. 24:29-31; 2 Thes. 2:8). At that time, Jesus will gather His people from the earth (the *Rapture*, Mat. 24:31). The Beast, False Prophet, and those who followed them will be left on the earth to suffer during the seven plagues of the Wrath of God that follow the Great Tribulation (see page 39).

As in the past persecutions, the intensity of persecution will probably vary with geographic areas. For example, during the first century, Christians in Rome suffered greater persecution than those in more remote areas. Persecution during the Great Tribulation will probably be the most severe in those locations most tightly controlled by the Beast. Persecution will probably be less severe in areas where the Beast has less control. Possibly that is why Jesus said to leave the cities (Mat. 24:15-21).

It is also probable that the persecution will increase as the Great Tribulation progresses and the Beast's influence spreads. Those Christians who are physically near the Abomination of Desolation when it is established will have to flee immediately (Mat. 24:15-16). Those who are in other parts of the world may have a little more time to react to the Beast's actions. However, intense persecution may begin immediately after the Abomination of Desolation in all regions. Christians must always be alert and ready to quickly take necessary action.

Some believers will be supernaturally protected (Rev. 12:6,13-17; Dan. 11:34). This protection may be that described in Psalm 91. The length of the Great Tribulation has also been shortened for the benefit of Christians (Mat. 24:21-22). However, not all of God's people are fully protected from the persecutions during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 12:17; 13:7). No matter what comes against you, be assured that **nothing** can separate you from the love of God that is in Jesus (Rom. 8:35-39; Heb. 13:5-6; Mat. 28:20).

Summary

Term Definition:

The term *great tribulation* is used in only three Scriptures (Mat. 24:21, Rev. 2:22, and 7:14). In Matthew 24:21, Jesus warns that "there will be a great tribulation." In Revelation 7:9-14 the great multitude from all nations who are standing before the throne of God are those who have come "out of the great tribulation."

The Greek word for tribulation (Strong's #2347 θλίψις, *thlipsis*) means *pressure*, either literally or figuratively. This word has been translated in various Bible passages as *affliction*, *anguish*, *burdened*, *persecution*, *tribulation*, and *trouble*. From the meaning of the word it is evident that the Great Tribulation will be a time of great persecution, affliction, and trouble.

Significance of the Great Tribulation:

The Great Tribulation is a time when Satan will do his worst to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). For people of the world, it will **appear** to be a time of victory against God and against those who serve God.

Source of the Great Tribulation:

Satan is the source of the Great Tribulation. Primarily, he uses the Beast (the Antichrist) as his instrument of deception and destruction (Rev. 13:2-4). God is not the cause of the Great Tribulation. (However, God may release authority for Satan to do his worst in a similar manner to that described in Job 1:8-12 and 2:3-6. This may be alluded to in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8, Revelation 6:1-8, Revelation 13:5-8, Matthew 24:21-22, and Daniel 8:12-13.)

Length of the Great Tribulation:

The Great Tribulation lasts for 3½ years. This 3½ year length is described as 42 months, 1260 days, and as a *time, times, and half a time* (see page 54).

Events Prior to the Great Tribulation:

Immediately prior to the start of the Great Tribulation, the Abomination of Desolation will be set up (see page 17). Jesus instructs Christians that the Abomination of Desolation is the primary signal (sign or announcement) that the Great Tribulation has started (Mat. 24:15, 21).

Events of the Great Tribulation:

The Great Tribulation is primarily characterized by the reign of the Beast. It will be a time of intense persecution of all people, especially those who belong to God. All that is evil will be unleashed in one last, extreme effort to strike out at God and the people He loves. People cannot buy or sell in the Beast-controlled markets without accepting the *Mark of the Beast* (i.e., 666, Rev. 13:16-18; see page 53).

God During the Great Tribulation:

God will send a strong delusion upon those who do not love the truth causing them to believe the lies of Satan and the Beast (2 Thes. 2:9-12). God will be caring for His people as always, even though many will be martyred for their faith (Dan. 11:33-35). He will provide a place of protection in the wilderness for some (Rev. 12:6, 13-16; Mat 24:15-21). God will be a shelter for His people (Joel 3:9-16). At the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will return to cut off the persecutions by gathering His people from the earth (the Rapture) (Mat. 24:21-22, 29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-8; 2 Thes. 2:8).

Christians During the Great Tribulation:

The people who know their God will strongly oppose the Beast and do great exploits (Dan. 11:32). Some Christians will be killed during the Great Tribulation (Dan. 11:33-35). However, many will flee to the protection of the place in the wilderness that God has prepared for them (Rev. 12:6, 13-16).

Satan During the Great Tribulation:

Satan (the dragon) will give the Beast great authority during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13:4-5).

Beast During the Great Tribulation:

The Beast will exalt himself and claim to be God (Dan. 11:36; 2 Thes. 2:4). He will blaspheme the true God (Rev. 13:6). He will also make war with the people of God (Rev. 13:7) and deceive those who do not love God's truth (2 Thes. 2:9-10).

Non-Christians During the Great Tribulation:

Non-Christians will be corrupted with the Beast's flatteries and be deceived (Dan. 11:32; Rev. 13:14). They will join with him in his persecution of those who desire to serve the true God (Dan. 11:32; Rev. 13:14). These people will be awed by the power of the Beast and Satan, and they will worship both of them (Rev. 13:3-4). All people who do not belong to God will worship the Beast (Rev. 13:8).

Events Following the Great Tribulation:

At the end of the Great Tribulation, certain signs will be seen in the sun, moon, and stars. Jesus will return to gather the Christians (the *Rapture*). After that, the Wrath of God will be poured out in judgment upon the Beast and those who served him. (See Mat. 24:29-31 and Rev. 6:12-17.)

Scripture references for the Great Tribulation:

Mat. 24:4-5, 9-24, 29-31; Mark 13:14-20; 2 Thes. 2:3-12; 1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7; Rev. 7:14; Rev. 12:6, 13-17; Rev. 13:1-18; Dan. 7:25; Dan. 8:11-14; Dan. 11:28-36; Dan. 12:6-7, 11-12

Chapter 6: The Beast and False Prophet

Revelation 13:1-2 — Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Overview

The Beast and False Prophet are the two primary sources (causes) of persecution during the Great Tribulation (see page 21). The Beast is also called the *Antichrist*. In the Book of Daniel, he is referred to as a little horn. The False Prophet is an assistant of the Beast.

The Great Tribulation begins when the Beast sets up the Abomination of Desolation (see page 17). Prior to this time, the Beast will be advancing in position and power in preparation for his activities during the Great Tribulation. The Beast's power and authority are granted to him by Satan (the dragon, Rev. 13:2-4).

The Beast will be active for a while before the Great Tribulation, then for the duration of the Great Tribulation, and finally in more limited capacities during the plagues of the Wrath of God where he will suffer punishment from God.

Details

Before the Beast sets up the Abomination of Desolation, he may not be readily identified for who he is. One possible advance clue is that the Beast will suffer some kind of physical, political, or other fatal wound to the head (Rev. 13:3). This temporarily knocks the Beast out of commission according to Revelation 17:8, "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit ... the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." It seems that this wound occurs before the Great Tribulation. Daniel 7:7-11 describes a beast-like kingdom in which several rulers appear as ten horns. One of these rulers (horns) excels over the others and becomes the Beast.

When the Beast sets up the Abomination of Desolation (claiming that he is God), his identity and purpose will be exposed (especially to those who heed the Gospel writer's warning to understand Daniel's prophecy, Mat. 24:15). At that time, he will blaspheme the true God and declare that he (the Beast) is God. He will demand worship and intensely persecute those who oppose him resulting in an intense time of trouble called the Great Tribulation. He will be a man of lawlessness (2 Thes. 2-12).

During the reign of the Beast during the Great Tribulation, the False Prophet will perform signs and wonders to deceive people (Rev. 13:13-14). He will also make an image of the Beast which he will bring to life. Those who refuse to worship the image of the Beast will be killed (Rev. 13:15). The False Prophet will also institute a special mark often called the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18). People will not be able to buy or sell in the economies controlled by the Beast without his identifying mark in their hand or forehead. All who worship the Beast and take his mark will suffer severe punishment during the Wrath of God (Rev. 14:9-11, see page 39).

Some Christians (and possibly some non-Christian) will oppose the Beast (Dan. 11:32-35). Some who oppose him will be killed. Many nations, including Israel and Egypt, will be conquered by the Beast. Some nations (Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon) will escape the Beast's efforts (Dan. 11:41-43). It would seem that the Beast's rule and control is limited in some areas of the world.

The main purpose of the Beast will be the same as Satan's—to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). His rantings and ravings against the true God and God's people will be particularly intense during the majority of the Great Tribulation.

For the entire 3½ years of the Great Tribulation, things will seem to go well for the Beast. Many will believe that the Beast and Satan are unconquerable (Rev. 13:3-4). Suddenly, his reign will be brought to an end by the coming of Jesus (2 Thes. 2:8). At that time, the people of God will be gathered from the earth (the Rapture, Mat. 24:30-31). Unsaved people (who don't belong to God) will be left behind and mourn as they recognize that the Wrath of God is upon them (Rev. 6:15-17).

During the Wrath of God, the Beast will suffer from God's judgment (in the form of seven plagues) along with the people on earth who are part of the Beast's kingdom (Rev. 16:10-11). Between the sixth and seventh plagues, the Beast will attack and kill the two witnesses of God (Rev. 11:7-14, see page 61). There will be much rejoicing by the world over the death of the two witnesses. The people will probably think that the death of these two witnesses will bring an end to the severe plagues of God's wrath. Three and a half days after the two witnesses are killed, they will be brought back to life by God and then called up to Heaven.

Also prior to the last plague of the Wrath of God, the Beast will gather the people of the earth together at Armageddon for battle against God (Rev. 16:14-21; 19:17-21; see page 57). Apparently, it will not be much of a battle. After this, the final plague of the Wrath of God will take place (Rev. 11:14-19; 16:13-21). The Beast and False Prophet will be thrown into the Lake of Fire where they will be tormented day and night forever (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

Clues for Recognizing the Beast (Antichrist)

Following are some things to help us recognize the Beast when he becomes active.

- A powerful individual arises and claims to be God.
- He demands worship.
- He enters the temple of God (possibly something other than a rebuilt, Jewish temple).
- He claims to be God, setting up something that is an abomination to the true God.
- He curses and blasphemes God (and God's followers).
- He is a man of lawlessness (especially concerning the laws of God).
- He takes away daily sacrifices offered by God's people (possibly something other than literal animal sacrifices). (It is interesting to note that the original language for Daniel 11:31 does not include the word "sacrifices," just the word "daily." Most translations insert "sacrifices" or "burn offerings" here for clarity. Other reference to this event in Daniel 9:27 includes the word "sacrifices". Therefore, addition of the word "sacrifices" in Daniel 11:31 is justified.)

Summary

Term Definition:

The *Beast* refers to the individual that is empowered by Satan during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13:1-8). He is also called the *Antichrist* (1 John 2:18; 4:3), the *little horn* (Dan. 7:8; 8:9-11), the *lawless one*, and the *son of perdition* (2 Thes. 2:3,8).

The *False Prophet* refers to an individual who assists the Beast, performs false signs, and demands that people worship an image he makes of the Beast (Rev. 13:11-17; 19:20). He is also called a beast and is demon possessed and empowered (Rev. 13:11; 16:13-14).

Significance of the Beast:

The Beast is the earthly source of the persecutions and problems of the Great Tribulation. His activities will produce great problems for God's people on the earth.

Source of the Beast:

The source of the Beast's power is Satan (2 Thes. 2:9; Rev. 13:2,4) through a demon that dwells in him (Rev. 16:13-14).

Length of the Beast's Activity:

The Beast has authority to act with blasphemy for 42 months during the Great Tribulation (i.e., 3½ years, Rev. 13:5). **Before** the Great Tribulation, the Beast will be actively maneuvering himself into a position of power and authority, but the length of that time is not specified (Dan. 11:21-31). He also suffers punishment **after** the Great Tribulation during the judgment plagues of the Wrath of God (Rev. 16:10-11). Finally, the Beast and the False Prophet gather the people against Jesus for battle at Armageddon where they are defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:19-20).

In summary, the Beast will be active for a while before the Great Tribulation, for the duration of the Great Tribulation, and finally in more limited capacities during the plagues of the Wrath of God where he will suffer punishment from God.

Events Prior to the Beast's Activity:

Since the Beast's primary activity occurs during the Great Tribulation, all events that precede the Great Tribulation also precede his primary activity. Before the start of the Great Tribulation, the Beast will work to obtain a position of authority and power (Dan. 11:21-31). When the time is right, he will set up the Abomination of Desolation (see page 17). This is the primary identifying event for the Beast and signals the start of the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:15, 21).

Events Associated with the Beast:

The Great Tribulation is primarily a result of the persecutions, blasphemies, and wars of the Beast. A few events are associated with him during the Wrath of God, but that is a time when he is suffering from the plagues of God's wrath rather than functioning from a position of power.

God During the Beast's Activity:

God is not the source of the troubles and persecutions during the Beast's reign or the Great Tribulation. He will provide some assistance to those who are persecuted by the Beast during that time (Dan 11:33-34; Rev. 12:6, 13-16; Joel 3:9-16). Jesus will rescue His people from the Beast and bring an end to the Beast's reign when He cuts the Great Tribulation short when Jesus returns to rescue His people (Mat. 24:21-22, 29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-8; 2:8).

Christians During the Beast's Activity:

Christians will oppose the Beast and explain to many other people the meaning of certain end-time events (Dan. 11:32-35). Christians will suffer the worst persecution that has ever been launched against God's people (Mat. 24:15-22, Dan. 7:25; Rev 13:7). Some will lose their lives (Dan. 11:33-35; Rev. 13:7-8), yet many will experience a place of protection provided by the Lord (Dan. 11:34; Rev. 12:6, 13-16).

Satan During the Beast's Activity:

Satan is the primary source of power for the Beast (Rev. 13:2-4).

Non-Christians During the Beast's Activity:

Some non-Christians will apparently falsely claim to be Christians in an attempt to join with the people of God (Dan 11:34). Non-Christians will worship Satan (the dragon) because of the great authority he gives the Beast (Rev. 13:4). They will be required to worship an image of the Beast and to take a mark in their hand or forehead (Rev. 13:15-18). Because of their lack of love for the truth they will be easily deceived by the Beast and False Prophet (2 The. 2:9-12; Rev. 13:14). The people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon will somehow escape the attacks of the Beast (Dan. 11:41).

Events Following the Beast's Activity:

Since the Beast's primary activity occurs during the Great Tribulation, all events that follow the Great Tribulation also follow his primary activity. After the Great Tribulation, certain signs will be seen in the sun, moon, and stars (see page 79) and Jesus will return to gather the church (see page 29). After those events, the Wrath of God will be poured out in the form of seven plagues upon the Beast and all who followed him (Rev. 14:9-11; 16:10). Eventually, the Beast and False Prophet will be thrown alive into the Lake of Fire where they will be tormented forever (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

Scripture references for the Beast and the False Prophet:

Mat 24:15, 21; 2 The. 2:1-12; 1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 1 Jn. 4:3; 2 John 1:7; Rev. 13:1-8, 11-18; Rev. 16:10-11; Rev. 17:3-14; Rev. 19:19-20; Rev. 20:10; Rev. 14:9-11; Rev. 11:7-14; Rev. 16:13-21; Dan. 7:7-8, 11, 19-27; Dan. 8:9-14, 23-26; Dan. 11:21-45

Chapter 7: The Coming of Jesus

Revelation 1:7 — Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Overview

Jesus promised that He will come back for us (the Rapture, John 14:2-3). The first time that Jesus came, He was born as a child in Bethlehem (Mat. 2:1). After He died the death that we deserved on a cross, He was raised from the dead and returned to the Father (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Jn. 14:28). Jesus' first coming was as a servant to die for mankind (Isa 52:13-15; 53:1-12; Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 5:8).

When Jesus comes again, it will be as King and Judge (Jer. 23:5-6; Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 19:11-16). He will rescue His people (Rapture) and will begin the period of judgment called the Wrath of God (Mat. 24:30-31; 1 Thes. 1:5-10; 4:16-17; Rev. 19:11-16).

Immediately after the Great Tribulation, there will be certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars. After that, Jesus will appear in the sky with power and great glory for all to see. Those who do not belong to God will mourn and those who do know God will be gathered up by the angels with a loud trumpet call (the Rapture). After that, God will pour out the seven plagues of his judgment and wrath upon the kingdom of the Beast (Antichrist) and all who followed the Beast.

Details

The coming of Jesus is preceded by certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars which occur immediately at the end of the Great Tribulation. These signal the end of the Great Tribulation because that's when Jesus puts an end to the great persecution of God's people by the Beast.

Scripturally, the coming of Jesus precipitates several events. First, non-Christians will see Jesus and will mourn because of the coming punishment (Mat. 24:29-30; Rev. 6:12-17). Next, Jesus will gather His people from all the earth, the Rapture (Mat. 24:31; 1 Thes. 4:13-17). Finally, Jesus will bring an end to the reign of the Beast and a beginning of punishment upon the Beast and those who worship him (2 Thes. 1:6-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:9-11; 14:14-20).

In the Bible, the Coming of Jesus takes place at the beginning of the time period called "The Day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20-21; 1 Thes. 5:2; Joel 2:11, 31; see page 61). It will come as a thief in the night upon those who are not prepared (Rev. 16:15; 3:3; 1 Thes. 5:2-6). This time of punishment upon the Beast and his followers as seven plagues of God's judgment is also called the Wrath of God (see page 39).

The coming of Jesus takes place immediately after the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:21,29-30). This means that the gathering of God's people (i.e., Rapture) will also take place immediately after the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:31). The coming of Jesus also takes place before the seven judgment plagues of the Wrath of God, so **God's people will be gathered (i.e., Rapture) before the plagues are poured out upon the Beast and his kingdom** (Rev. 14:14-20).

When Jesus comes, He will bring God's judgment (i.e., wrath) on the people like it was in the days of Noah (Mat. 24:36-39). When the flood waters came, all who were outside Noah's ark died (Gen.

7:21-23). Once the ark door was closed, all opportunity for salvation was lost to those outside. When Jesus comes, all opportunity for the salvation of those who do not belong to Him will be over (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11).

Summary

Term Definition:

The Coming of Jesus refers to the time when Jesus comes to gather His people (Rapture) and to bring God's judgment upon the Beast and those who oppose God. (Mat. 24:30-31; Rev. 14:14-20; 1 Thes. 4:15-17, 2 Thes. 1:6-10).

Significance of the Coming of Jesus:

The Coming of Jesus is very significant in that it marks the end of suffering for Christians during the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-10). It also marks the end of mortal life for the gathered Christians (1 Cor. 15:50-52). For the Beast and non-Christians, the Coming of Jesus marks the end of their reign on earth and the beginning of the judgment poured out on them during the Wrath of God (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 14:17-20).

Source of the Coming of Jesus:

Jesus is the One who comes.

Length of the Coming of Jesus:

The exact length of the Coming of Jesus is not given in Scripture. However, it appears to occur in a very short time, possibly instantly (1 Cor 15:51-52). The results of His coming will last for eternity.

Events Prior to the Coming of Jesus:

The Coming of Jesus (also called the Rapture) will not occur until after there is a major falling away of believers (see Mat. 24:12; 1 Tim. 4:1-3) and the Beast is revealed (2 Thes. 2:1-4). The Beast is revealed for who he is when he establishes the Abomination of Desolation (see page 17). Therefore, the Coming of Jesus will not occur until sometime after the Abomination of Desolation is established. Scriptures show that the **Coming of Jesus occurs after the 3½ year Great Tribulation and before the Wrath of God** (also see page 54, and the appendix beginning on page 69).

Events of the Coming of Jesus:

Jesus will come with the clouds, a shout, and a trumpet call (Mat. 24:30-31; Rev 1:7; 1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor 15:51-52). Jesus will send His angels to gather the people who belong to Him from all over the earth (Mat. 24:31). Christians (i.e., God's people, the *elect*, the *Church*) will be gathered (also called *raptured*). The Wrath of God will begin when Jesus comes (Mat. 24:30-31; Rev. 14:14-20; 2 Thes. 1:6-10). Also, 144,000 people of God are sealed to protect them from the Wrath of God (Rev. 7:1-8). The Christians who were gathered (Rapture) from the earth appear before God's throne in Heaven (Mat. 24:30-31; Rev. 7:9-17).

God During the Coming of Jesus:

God, the Son, will be very active as He returns to gather His Church and punish the Beast along with those who followed the Beast (Mat. 24:29-31; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21).

Christians During the Coming of Jesus:

Christians are removed from the earth (Rapture) and taken to Heaven (i.e., before the throne, Rev. 7:9-17; Mat. 24:29-31). There will be 144,000 people sealed to protect them from the plagues of God's Wrath (Rev. 7:1-8). It appears that the 144,000, who follow Jesus wherever He goes, participate in the outpouring of God's wrath against the Beast and his followers (Rev. 14:1-4; Rev. 19:14-15).

Satan During the Coming of Jesus:

Scripture does not indicate what Satan is doing during the Coming of Jesus.

Beast During the Coming of Jesus:

Scripture does not indicate what the Beast is doing during the Coming of Jesus. The Coming of Jesus marks the beginning of God's judgment on the Beast (2 Thes. 1:6-9; 2:8; Rev. 14:7-11; Rev. 19:11-21).

Non-Christians During the Coming of Jesus:

When Jesus comes back to gather the Christians, His return will be as visible as the lightning that lights up the entire sky (Mat. 24:27). The non-Christians will see Jesus and great fear will come upon them. They will seek to hide from the anger of the Lord (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 6:15-17). The Coming of Jesus and the gathering of God's people (Rapture) will be highly visible and impactful upon the entire world. The Rapture of the Church is not quiet or secret.

Events Following the Coming of Jesus:

After these events, the seven plagues of the Wrath of God will be poured out on the Beast and those people who do not belong to God (i.e., the non-Christians) (Rev. 8:1 through 11:19).

Scripture references for Coming of Jesus:

Mat. 24:12, 23-31; Mat. 13:36-43; Mat. 13:47-50; Mat. 16:27; Mat. 24:36-51; Mat. 25:13, 31; Mat. 26:64; Mark 13:21-27; Mark 13:32-33; Mark 14:62; Luke 9:25; Luke 17:22-37; Luke 21:25-28; Luke 21:34-35; Jn. 14:2-3, 18, 28; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:11, 23; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:23, 50-56; Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 1:9-10; 1 Thes. 3:13; 1 Thes. 4:13-17; 1 Thes. 5:1-9, 23; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; 2 Thes. 2:1-4, 8; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Heb. 9:28; James 5:4; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Pet 1:16; 2 Pet 3:4, 7, 10-13; 1 Jn. 2:28; Jude 14-15; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 3:3, 11; Rev. 6:12-17; Rev. 14:9-11, 14-20; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 22:12, 20; Job 19:25; Isa. 27:12-13; Dan. 12:1-3; Joel 3:13-16; Zech. 14:4-5

Chapter 8: The Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 — For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Overview

In several passages, the Bible describes a time when Jesus will gather the people of God and remove them from the earth. This gathering is often called the *Rapture* of the Church. *Rapture* is not a term found in the Bible, therefore it is important that people clearly understand what a person means when this term is used. In this book, *Rapture* is used to refer to the gathering of God's people when Jesus comes (See Chapter 7 on page 29, Mat. 24:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:51-56; 1 Thes. 4:14-17). **The Rapture takes place right after the Great Tribulation and just before the seven plagues of the Wrath of God.** See Chapter 7 for related information (page 29).

Three Bible Perspectives on the Rapture

The Bible describes the Rapture from three different perspectives or viewpoints: 1) as experienced by Christians, 2) as experienced by unbelievers, and 3) as seen from a heavenly (or spiritual) perspective. It is helpful to keep these perspectives in mind when studying the Rapture.

The Rapture as Experienced by Christians

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 — For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 — Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The Rapture as Experienced by Unbelievers

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

Revelation 6:12-17 — I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on

us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The Rapture as Seen from Heaven

Revelation 14:14-20 — Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Rapture Details

It seems that one of the most frequently asked questions concerning End Times is, "When does the Rapture occur?" The following Scriptures show that the Rapture occurs when Jesus comes (see also 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; James 5:7-9; and 1 John 2:28). [*Emphasis added to the following passages.*]

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 — For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord** will by no means precede those who are asleep. *16* For the **Lord Himself will descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. *17* Then we who are alive *and* remain **shall be caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 — Now, brethren, **concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ...**

Matthew 24:30-31 — "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they **will see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. *31* "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they **will gather** together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 — and to **give you who are troubled rest** with us **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven** with His mighty angels, *8* in flaming fire **taking vengeance** on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:2-3 — "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. *3* "And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you to Myself**; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

This *coming* of the Lord is His promised return (John 14:3). Since the promise was given after His first coming to earth as a child born in Bethlehem, this coming of Jesus will be His second time. Therefore, some people refer to this as the *Second Coming* of Jesus. However, other people call the start of Jesus' millennial reign His *Second Coming*. (The Millennium occurs at least five months after Jesus comes, see page 41.) Some theories about the End Times incorrectly teach that the gathering of Christians (i.e., the Rapture) will occur sometime before (typically 3½ or 7 years before) the Second Coming of Jesus. However, as shown in the Scriptures quoted above, the Rapture takes place **at the Coming of Jesus** (which is technically His second coming). The Bible does not use the term *second coming*. For more information on the Coming of Jesus, see page 29.

Matthew 24:23-31 says that the Coming of Jesus and the gathering of His people (Rapture of the *elect*) will take place immediately after the Great Tribulation. (See page 50 for information about

the *elect*.) It is extremely important to understand the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God before attempting to understand the correct timing for the Rapture (see page 73). Much of the confusion about whether the Rapture occurs before, after, or in the middle of the Great Tribulation stems from confusion about which events occur as part of the Great Tribulation. It is also important to understand that Jesus gathers His people (in the Rapture) just before God pours out his seven judgment plagues during the Wrath of God (page 39).

The Rapture is described in several passages in the Bible. Probably the most familiar to Christians is in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (quoted above). This passage explains that when Jesus comes, those Christians who have died (those who are *asleep in Jesus*) will be resurrected and rise first to meet the Lord. Then those Christians who are still physically alive will rise up to join the others and Jesus in the clouds. (According to Acts 1:9-11, these are probably literal clouds.) This passage also shows that the Coming of Jesus will be a very dramatic event with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and a great sound from the trumpet of God. Matthew 24 describes the Rapture of the Church as follows.

Matthew 24:29-31 — “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This passage clearly explains that the Rapture will occur **immediately after** the Great Tribulation (compare Matthew 24, verse 21 with 29). The Rapture also occurs after certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars (vs. 29). Jesus will come on the clouds of heaven and send His angels to gather His people from all the earth (vv. 30-31). Christians will rise into the air (i.e., the *heavens*) and then be gathered by the angels at the command of Jesus.

Another description of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars is provided in Revelation 6:12-14. Soon after these signs occur, a very large number of people appear before the throne of God (Rev. 7:9-10). These people are those who went through the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14, see note on NLT at the end of this chapter). These passages in Revelation shows that **the Rapture occurs after the Great Tribulation, but before the Wrath of God.**

Christians in their resurrected bodies will be in Heaven (i.e., before the throne of God) during the plagues of the Wrath of God. (Some people teach that Christians do not go to Heaven at the Rapture. Instead, it is claimed that after they meet the Lord in the air, then the Lord and the Christians return right away to reign on earth at the Millennium. This passage in Revelation 7:9-14 shows that this teaching is incorrect since people are in Heaven immediately after the Rapture.) Following is another passage that describes the Rapture or gathering of the Church.

Revelation 14:14-16 — Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

This passage describes Jesus (“one like the Son of Man”) sitting on a cloud wearing a golden crown and carrying a sharp sickle. The harvest is ripe indicating that it is time to gather the people of God from the earth. This reaping or gathering (the Rapture) is described using the illustration of a harvester (Jesus) who uses a sickle to gather the grain (the people who belong to God).

Evidence that this passage is describing the Rapture rather than some other event is provided by comparing the surrounding verses with parallel descriptions provided in Revelation 6:12 through 11:19. First, this gathering of the harvest occurs after the Great Tribulation (Rev. 14:9-13). Immediately after this harvest, those who remain on the earth (the grapes) are gathered and thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:17-20; 15:1). Next, a great multitude of people who obtained victory over the Beast are shown worshipping God before the throne in Heaven (Rev. 15:2-4). This is describing the same scene shown in Revelation 7:9-17 where a great multitude is shown who came out of the Great Tribulation. Finally, events of the Wrath of God are described following this great multitude's appearance before the throne (Rev. 15:1, 5-8, 16:1-21).

As explained in the appendix on page 73, it is extremely important to understand the difference between the events of the Great Tribulation and those of the Wrath of God. Failure to understand the differences can lead to three of the more common erroneous theories about when the Rapture occurs. These three theories are sometimes called the pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-trib rapture theories.

These three rapture theories appear to have their roots in a failure to correctly distinguish the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. While the following explanations are over-simplified, they can help show how each theory can be derived by mistakenly mixing the events of the Great Tribulation and Wrath of God.

Pre-Trib Rapture Theory

This theory teaches that Christians will be raptured before the Great Tribulation. The following two Scriptures are sometimes used to support this popular theory.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (KJV) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (KJV) And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

The problem is a failure to distinguish the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. Those who hold this theory typically include the seven plagues (of the Wrath of God) as part of the Great Tribulation. Then they reason that since we are not destined for wrath, we must not be here during the Great Tribulation. It is true that Christians will not suffer the Wrath of God. However, the plagues of the Wrath of God are not part of the Great Tribulation (see page 73).

Mid-Trib Rapture Theory

This theory teaches that Christians will go through the first half of the Great Tribulation. They will be raptured to avoid what is taught as the more severe second half of the Great Tribulation. Often, the total length of the Great Tribulation is given as seven years with the Christians going through the first three and one-half years of it. Some people call the first 3½ years the *Tribulation* and the last 3½ years the *Great Tribulation*.

The problem in this theory is also caused by a failure to distinguish the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. In this case, the plagues of the Wrath of God are included as the last half of the Great Tribulation. This rapture theory teaches that Christians will be taken out of the earth before the plagues, but they will suffer some under the Beast. This theory is correct in its teaching that Christians will suffer under the Beast. It is also correct in teaching that

Christians will not suffer during the seven plagues. However, it is incorrect in claiming that the Great Tribulation is seven years long and that the seven plagues are part of the Great Tribulation.

Post-Trib Rapture Theory

This theory teaches that Christians will be raptured after all of what they call the Great Tribulation is completed. Their view of the Great Tribulation incorrectly includes the seven plagues of God's judgment. The seven plagues are part of the Wrath of God, not of the Great Tribulation. This theory is incorrect when it teaches that Christians will go through the seven plagues of the Wrath of God.

Pre-Wrath Rapture Belief

Since the Rapture takes place after the Great Tribulation but before the Wrath of God, it is sometimes called the *Pre-Wrath Rapture* to prevent confusion between it and the Post-Trib Rapture theory. As established in the early part of this chapter, the Rapture takes place at the Coming of Jesus. The Coming of Jesus takes place immediately after the Great Tribulation and before the Wrath of God (see pages 29 and 69). Therefore, the Rapture **must** take place after the Great Tribulation and before the Wrath of God.

When Jesus comes, it will also be like the days of Lot (Lk. 17:26-29). As soon as Lot was safely outside the city, God's judgment rained down from heaven destroying Sodom and Gomorrah with all their inhabitants (Lk 17:29; Gen. 19:12-29). In a similar manner, as soon as Christians are removed from the earth, God's wrath will fall on all the earth's inhabitants (Rev. 14:14-20; Rev. 15:1-8; Rev. 16:1-21).

Each of the three incorrect theories (Pre-Trib, Mid-Trib, and Post-Trib Raptures) about the timing of the Rapture can be logically traced to a failure to properly distinguish the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. (There are other factors that contribute to the confusion.) Therefore, it is vitally important that a clear distinction is made between the Great Tribulation and Wrath of God. (See page 73 for more information on the differences between the two.)

Summary

Term Definition:

The term *Rapture* is not in the Bible. However, it is often used in referring to the gathering of Christians from the earth when Jesus comes.

Significance of the Rapture:

The Rapture is very significant in that it marks the end of suffering for Christians during the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-10). It also marks the end of mortal life for Christians (1 Cor. 15:50-52). For the Beast and non-Christians, the Rapture marks the beginning of the judgment poured out on them during the Wrath of God (Rev. 14:14-20).

Source of the Rapture:

Jesus is the one who sends His angels to gather the Christians (Mat. 24:30-31).

Length of the Rapture:

The exact length of the Rapture is not given in Scripture. However, it appears to occur in a very short time, possibly instantly (1 Cor 15:51-52). However, its effects will last through eternity (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

Events Prior to the Rapture:

There will be a major falling away of believers before the Rapture (see Mat. 24:12; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). The Beast will be revealed before the Rapture (2 Thes. 2:1-4, see page 17). The Great Tribulation takes place before the Rapture (Mat. 24:15, 21, 29-31). There are certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars just before the Rapture

(Mat. 24:29-31). The Coming of Jesus immediately precedes the Rapture (1 Thes. 4:15-17; 2 Thes. 2:1; 1:7-8; Mat. 24:30-31; John 14:2-3).

Events of the Rapture:

The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven (the sky), all the non-Christians (tribes of earth) will see Jesus coming and mourn (Mat. 24:27-30; Rev 6:12-17). Jesus will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather the Christians (the elect) (Matt 24:31; 1 Thes. 4:16). Dead Christians will be resurrected and alive Christians will be instantly changed with both groups receiving new, incorruptible bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-52). Both groups of Christians will rise up to meet Jesus in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

God During the Rapture:

God the Son will be very active as He returns to gather His people (Mat. 24:29-31; Rev. 14:14-16).

Christians During the Rapture:

Dead Christians will be resurrected and alive Christians will be instantly changed with both groups receiving new, incorruptible bodies at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:50-52). Both groups will rise up to meet Jesus in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:16-17). Christians are removed from the earth and taken to Heaven (i.e., before God's throne, Rev. 7:9-17; Mat. 24:29-31).

Satan During the Rapture:

Scripture does not indicate what Satan is doing during the Rapture.

Beast During the Rapture:

Scripture does not indicate what the Beast is doing during the Rapture.

Non-Christians During the Rapture:

When Jesus comes back to gather the Christians, His return will be as visible as the lightning that lights up the entire sky (Mat. 24:27). The non-Christians will see Jesus and great fear will come upon them. They will mourn and seek to hide from the anger of the Lord (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 6:15-17).

Events Following the Rapture:

After the Rapture, the people of God show up before God's throne in Heaven (Rev. 7:9-17). Also, 144,000 people from the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed to protect them from the plagues of the Wrath of God while they serve God on earth (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5). After these events, the seven plagues of the Wrath of God are poured out on the Beast and those people who followed and served the Beast (i.e., the non-Christians, see page 39).

Scripture references for Rapture:

Mat. 24:23-31; Mat. 13:36-43; Mat. 13:47-50; Mat. 24:42-51; Mat. 25:13; Mark 13:21-27; Mark 13:32-33; Luke 17:22-24; Luke 21:25-28; Luke 21:34-35; Jn. 14:2-3; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:11, 23; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:50-56; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thes. 4:13-17; 1 Thes. 5:1-9, 23; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; 2 Thes. 2:1-4, 8; James 5:7-9; 2 Pet 3:4, 7, 10-13; 1 Jn. 2:28; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 6:12-17; Rev. 7:9-17; Rev. 14:14-20; Rev. 15:1-4; Rev. 16:15; Isa. 27:12-13; Dan. 12:1-3; Joel 3:13-16; Zech. 14:4-5

Note: The New Living Translation (2nd Edition, NLT) is apparently the only translation that translates Revelation 7:14 as "These are the ones who died in the great tribulation." The word "died" is not in the Greek here and it is not used in any of the 36 other translations that were checked. It is puzzling why the NLT translators would add the word "died" when there appears to be no support for it.

Chapter 9: The Wrath of God

Revelation 16:1 — Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.”

Overview

There is a time coming when God will judge the world for rejecting His Son and for their sin. It will be a time of wrath and judgment descriptively called the *Wrath of God*. The Wrath of God takes place during the *Day of the Lord* (Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; 1 Thes. 5:1-9; see page 61). It will be a day of vengeance when God’s wrath will take the form of seven plagues poured out upon the earth. At that time, there will be much physical pain and trouble for the inhabitants of earth who oppose God.

Details

The seven plagues in the Book of Revelation make up the outpouring of the Wrath of God (Rev. 6:17; 11:18; 18:4, 8). Some have taught that the plagues of God’s wrath are part of the Great Tribulation. That is not the case according to the Bible (see page 73). Details of the seven plagues are first described in Revelation 8:6-13, 9:1-21, and 11:15-19. The seven plagues are described a second time in Revelation 16:1-21. Notice that the plagues are poured out by angels of God (Rev. 8:6,10; 11:15; 16:1). Revelation 16:1 says, “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.’”

Failure to recognize that the same seven plagues are described twice in the Book of Revelation can lead to confusion about end-time events. Even though the plagues are described from slightly different viewpoints, the two different descriptions for each plague can be compared to see that both descriptions apply to the same event. There is only one set of seven plagues, but they are described twice in the Book of Revelation. (See page 87 for information on the seven plagues.)

Since the Great Tribulation is caused by demonic persecution instigated by Satan and the Beast against the people of God, it should be clear that the seven plagues of God’s wrath are not part of the Great Tribulation (page 73). The seven plagues come from God against the Beast and those who follow the Beast (non-Christians). The seven plagues do not come from Satan or the Beast.

Christians will not suffer the Wrath of God because they are forgiven by faith in Jesus (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thes. 5:9; Rev. 18:4; 1 Thes. 1:9-10). The Beast and non-Christians will suffer terribly during the Wrath of God (Rom. 1:18; 2:5-9; Eph 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-6; Rev. 9:3-6; 16:9-11). They refuse to repent, but are forced to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of all (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11; 11:13; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11). Since no one repents during the Wrath of God, it appears that no one gets saved during the Wrath of God (Rev. 9:20-21; Acts 3:19; 11:18). Like in Noah’s days, the Wrath of God is a time of punishment, not of correction (Mat. 24:36-39; Gen. 6:5-8, 13, 17; Gen. 7:13-24).

Summary

Term Definition:

The *Wrath of God* is a Scriptural term referring to a specific period of time when God will punish the Beast and those who worship him (Col. 3:6; Rev. 14:9-10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1). This outpouring of God’s wrath will

take the form of seven plagues (Rev. 8:1-13; 9:1-21; 11:1-19; 15:1-21). The Wrath of God begins with the *Day of the Lord* (Joel 1:15; 2:1-11; 1 Thes. 5:1-9, see page 61).

Significance of the Wrath of God:

The Wrath of God is a time of punishment for the Beast and those who worship him and take his mark (Rev. 14:9-11). The Wrath of God is God's judgment upon sinners (Rom. 1:18; 2:5-9; Eph 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-6).

Source of the Wrath of God:

The Wrath of God comes from God (Rom. 2:5-9; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; Rev. 15:6-7). It is administered by angels under His command (Rev. 8:1-2; 11:17-18; 15:6-8; 16:1).

Length of the Wrath of God:

The precise length of the Wrath of God is not given in, but the fifth plague lasts for five months (Rev. 9:5).

Events Prior to the Wrath of God:

The Great Tribulation occurs before the Wrath of God (see page 21 and the timeline on page 69). Immediately after the Great Tribulation (but before the Wrath of God) certain signs will occur in the sun, moon, and stars (Mat. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-14; and page 79). Also, Jesus will be seen by all the people on earth as He returns to gather His people (Mat. 24:27, 30-21; Rev. 6:15-17).

Events of the Wrath of God:

The primary events associated with the Wrath of God are the seven plagues poured out in judgment upon the earth and its inhabitants (Rev. 8:6-13; 9:1-21; 11:15-19; 15:1; 16:1-21).

God During the Wrath of God:

God's judgment and punishment will be poured out on the earth in the form of seven plagues upon the kingdom of the Beast and all who followed the Beast (Rev. 8:1-13; 9:1-21; 11:1-19; 15:1-21).

Christians During the Wrath of God:

Most Christians will be in Heaven during the Wrath of God (Rev. 7:9-17; 15:1-4). There will be 144,000 of God's people (Christians) who are sealed to protect them from the plagues (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5). These will follow Jesus wherever He goes during the outpouring of the Wrath of God (Rev. 14:1-4). There will also be two witnesses who also testify against the people during the Wrath of God (Rev. 11:3-13). The people of God will not suffer from the plagues of the Wrath of God (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thes. 5:9; 1:9-10; Joel 3:9-16; Rev. 7:2-3).

Satan During the Wrath of God:

Near the end of the Wrath of God, Satan (the dragon) will gather the rulers and people of the world to Armageddon to fight against God (Rev. 16:13-16).

Beast During the Wrath of God:

The Beast will suffer severe punishment from the seven plagues during the Wrath of God (Rev. 16:10-11). The Beast will kill God's two witnesses between the sixth and seventh plagues (Rev. 11:7). Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet will, through his demons, gather the people together at Armageddon to fight against God (Rev. 16:13-14).

Non-Christians During the Wrath of God:

Non-Christians suffer punishment from the plagues of the Wrath of God (Rom. 1:18; 2:5-9; Eph 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-6; Rev. 9:3-6; 16:9-11). They will blaspheme and curse God (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). They will refuse to repent (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11), and be forced to give God glory (Rev. 11:13; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11).

Events Following the Wrath of God:

Satan will be bound for 1000 years, and the Millennium will begin (Rev. 20:1-4).

Scripture references for the Wrath of God:

Mat. 24:36-39; Luke 17:22-30; Rom. 1:18; 2:5-9; 5:9; 14:11; Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-6; 1 Thes. 1:9-10; 1 Thes. 5:1-9; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; Rev. 6:12-17; Rev. 7:1-17; Rev. 8:1-13; Rev. 9:1-21; Rev. 11:1-19; Rev. 14:7-12, 17-20; Rev. 15:1-21; Rev. 16:1-21; Rev. 18:4, 8; Rev. 19:11-21; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:1-11, 28-32; Joel 3:12-16; Zech. 14:1-15; Isa. 2:10-21; Isa. 13:1-16; Isa. 24:1-23; Isa. 26:20-21; Isa. 63:1-6; Ezek. 7:1-27

Chapter 10: Millennium, Reign of Christ

Revelation 20:4 — And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Overview

The Millennium is a term used to describe the one-thousand-year period in which Jesus will reign over all the earth from Jerusalem. After the Wrath of God, Satan is bound by an angel of God and thrown into the bottomless pit. He will be kept there during the Millennium to prevent him from deceiving the people on earth. The Millennium is 1,000 years of peace and godly rule that begins when Satan is bound by the angel.

Details

Well before the Millennium, the people who belong to God will be resurrected (if dead) or changed (if alive) during the Coming of Jesus, the Rapture (page 29; 2 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 20:4; page 33). God's people will always be with the Lord from that time on (1 Thes. 4:17). During the Millennium, the people of God will reign with Jesus on earth (Rev. 20:6).

Under the righteous rule of Jesus, the earth will experience a time of peace and prosperity, free from the temptations of Satan. For 1,000 years, conditions for mankind will be ideal—yet man will still follow evil when Satan is released at the end of the 1,000 years.

Apparently, some of the people who follow the Beast will live through the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-21). These are people who suffer the plagues of the Wrath of God but are not killed (Rev. 8:11; 9:4-6,15,18,20). (The Bible sometimes refers to the people who do not belong to God as the *nations*—Ps. 10:15-16; 59:5; Isa. 34:1-8; Rev. 11:18; 16:19; 18:3; 20:3,8-9). Apparently, these non-Christians who live through the Wrath of God will be the ones who are required to go to Jerusalem each year to offer worship to the Lord and keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16-19). Their punishment for failure to perform this annual duty is that they will suffer a plague and rain will be withheld from them.

At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed from his prison in the bottomless pit for a short while. He will go out to deceive the nations, including Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-8). These nations will decide to rebel against Jesus and attempt an attack on Jerusalem. This will not be much of a war since fire will come down from God and destroy them (Rev. 20:9). Satan will then be thrown into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever (Rev. 20:10). He will never be allowed to deceive people again. Immediately after Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire, the first heaven (i.e., universe) and first earth (our current earth) will disappear (Rev. 20:11, 21:1; 2 Pet. 3:7,10) and the Great White Throne Judgment will begin (Rev 20:11-12).

Summary

Term Definition:

Millennium is a period of one thousand years during which Satan is locked away and Jesus reigns over the entire world (Rev. 20:1-7).

Significance of the Millennium:

The Millennium will be a time when Satan is prevented from deceiving man for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). Jesus and His people will reign during the Millennium (Rev. 20:4-6).

Source of the Millennium:

God will have Satan bound to prevent his interference with the millennial peace (Rev. 20:1-3). Jesus and His people will rule over all the earth and over all people (Zech. 14:9,16-17; Rev. 20:4,6).

Length of the Millennium:

The Millennium lasts one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

Events Prior to the Millennium:

The Wrath of God and Battle of Armageddon will occur before the Millennium (Rev. 19:17; 16:12-21; also see the chart on page 69). Just before the beginning of the Millennium, the Beast and False Prophet will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). At the start of the Millennium, Satan will be bound by an angel of God and cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3).

Events of the Millennium:

Satan will be bound during the entire 1,000 years of the Millennium so that he cannot deceive people (Rev. 20:2-3). The people of God will reign with Jesus (Rev. 20:4-6). Those non-Christians who survive the Wrath of God will be required to go to Jerusalem each year to worship Jesus and keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16). Any who fail to do this will not receive rain, and they will receive a plague from the Lord (Zech. 14:17-19).

God During the Millennium:

God the Son will reign from Jerusalem (Zech. 14:9,16-19).

Christians During the Millennium:

Christians will reign with Christ during the Millennium (Rev. 20:4).

Satan During the Millennium:

Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3).

Beast During the Millennium:

The Beast and the False Prophet will be suffering eternal torment in the Lake of Fire during the Millennium (Rev. 19:20).

Non-Christians During the Millennium:

Those non-Christians who survive the Wrath of God and Armageddon must go to Jerusalem each year to worship Jesus and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. If they fail to do so, they will not receive rain, and they will suffer from a plague (Zech. 14:16-19). Those non-Christians who die before the start of the Millennium will not be resurrected until after the Millennium is over (Rev. 20:5,11-13).

Events Following the Millennium:

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed from his bonds for a short time (Rev. 20:3,7). Satan will deceive Gog, Magog, and the nations into attempting an attack against Jesus and His people in the beloved city, Jerusalem (Rev. 20:8-9). The attackers will be destroyed and Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:9-10). The present heaven (i.e., universe) and earth will disappear and the Great White Throne Judgment will begin (Rev. 20:11-15).

Scripture references for the Millennium:

Rev. 20:1-10; Zech. 14:16-21; Mic. 4:1-4; Isa. 2:2-4

Chapter 11: Final Rebellion and Judgment

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

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

Overview

After the 1,000-year millennial reign of Jesus during which Satan is bound, Satan will be loosed for a short time and will deceive Gog, Magog, and the nations. They will attempt an attack against Jesus and Jerusalem. The battle will be very short with fire coming down from God to destroy all the attackers. Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever. Immediately after Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire, the present heaven (universe) and earth disappear. Then the Great White Throne Judgment begins where all the non-Christians are judged by their works. After the Great White Throne Judgment, God creates a new heaven (universe) and earth.

Details

At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed from his prison for a short time (Rev. 20:7). He will go out to deceive the nations, including Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:8). These nations will decide to rebel against Jesus and attempt an attack on Jerusalem. This will not be much of a war since fire will come down from God and destroy them (Rev. 20:9). Satan will then be thrown into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever (Rev. 20:10). He will never be able to deceive people again. Immediately after Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire, the first heaven (i.e., universe) and first earth (our current earth) will disappear (Rev. 20:11, 21:1; 2 Pet. 3:7,10) and the Great White Throne Judgment will begin (Rev 20:11-12).

The Great White Throne Judgment is where those who do not belong to God are judged by their works (Rev. 20:12-13). Each person's works (i.e., the things he did in life) will be examined. Since no one's works are good enough to save him, all will stand condemned (Rom. 3:10, 20, 23). After each person clearly sees that his works are inadequate to pay the price of his sin, the Book of Life will be opened. The Book of Life records all those persons who have accepted God's mercy and salvation provided by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus (Rom. 5:8; 3:28; 4:5; 10:9-10, 13; Eph. 2:8-9). If a person's name is recorded in the Book of Life, his sin debt has been paid in full through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom. 3:23-24; 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:20-21). Only those persons whose

names are recorded in the Book of Life can enter the New Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from God to the new earth (Rev. 21:1-4, 10, 27).

If a person's name is not recorded in the Book of Life, that means that he has not accepted Jesus' provisions for paying his sin debt (John 12:48; Rom. 10:3). All those whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life are thrown into the Lake of Fire where Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet are (Rev. 20:10,15). This is eternal separation from God and all the goodness, light, peace, and life that is in Him alone. It is called the **second death** (Rev. 21:8).

After the Great White Throne Judgment is completed, a new heaven and earth will be created (Rev. 21:1), which is the transition event that identifies the end of the period of "Final Rebellion and Judgment" (see timeline chart on page 69).

Judgment Seat of Christ

The Great White Throne Judgment is not the same as the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:9-10). The Judgment Seat of Christ is only for Christians (Rom. 14:10-13). The **work that each Christian does on earth for Jesus will be judged** with some type of reward given as appropriate (1 Cor. 3:10-15). If a Christian's works prove faulty, he will lose his reward, but **he will not lose his salvation** (1 Cor. 3:14-15). The exact timing of the Judgment Seat of Christ is not given. But we are told that we will be repaid at the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14) and that Jesus is bringing His reward with Him when He comes (Rev. 22:12). Therefore, the Judgment Seat of Christ probably takes place at the Rapture or sometime very soon afterward (Rev. 22:12; Isa. 62:11).

Summary

Term Definition:

The Final Rebellion occurs at the end of the Millennium when Satan is loosed from his bonds for a short time. He then convinces Gog, Magog, and other people to attack Jesus and the saints at Jerusalem.

The Great White Throne Judgment is when those who do not belong to Jesus will be judged to determine where they will spend eternity (Rev. 20:11-15). God will judge the spiritually dead while sitting on a great white throne.

Significance of the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

This is when Satan and his followers make their last attempt to rebel against God. After that, sin is finally and completely judged. Those whose sin debt was not paid through acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice will have to pay the price themselves (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:15). It is probably significant that the judgment of sinful man follows immediately after Satan's eternal banishment to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10-12).

Source of the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Satan is the cause of the deception and rebellion of the final rebellion at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9).

God defeats Satan and his rebels when they attack Jerusalem (Rev. 20:9). Then He banishes Satan to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10). God is the Judge at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-12).

Length of the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

The length of the Final Rebellion is not given, though it may take a number of days for Satan and his followers to gather weapons and plan their attack strategies.

The length of the Great White Throne Judgment is not given. It is possible that time will no longer function in the same manner that we know it now since the old heaven and earth will no longer exist (Rev. 20:11).

Events Prior to the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Prior to the Final Rebellion, there is a 1,000-year period when Satan is bound and Jesus reigns from Jerusalem (see the Chapter on page 41).

Events of the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Satan is loosed for a short time at the end of the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:7). He gathers some of the people on earth and convinces them to attack Jerusalem (Rev. 20:7-9). The rebels are swiftly destroyed by God (Rev. 20:9). Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever (Rev. 20:10). The heaven (i.e., the universe, stars, etc.) and earth will cease to exist (Rev. 20:11, 2 Pet. 3:7,10-13). Then, from a Great White Throne, God will judge the dead (spiritually) by their works (Rev. 20:11-13). Anyone who is not recorded in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15).

God During the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

God will destroy the rebels who attack Jerusalem (Rev. 20:9). He causes Satan to be thrown into the Lake of Fire for eternal punishment (Rev. 20:10). God will judge spiritually dead people according to their works (Rev. 20:12). He will also check to see if their names are written in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:15).

Christians During the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Christians are not mentioned during the Final Rebellion and Judgment in Revelation chapter 20. It is possible that Christians will participate in the judgment of the spiritually dead (1 Cor. 6:2-3).

Satan During the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Satan is loosed for a short time at the end of the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:7). He gathers some of the people on earth and convinces them to attack Jerusalem (Rev. 20:7-9). The rebels are swiftly destroyed by God (Rev. 20:9). Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire where he will be tormented forever (Rev. 20:10).

Beast During the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

The Beast and the False Prophet are already in the Lake of Fire and will suffer torment in the Lake of Fire during the Final Rebellion and Judgment (Rev. 20:10).

Non-Christians During the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

During the Final Rebellion, at least some non-Christians (“the nations of the earth—God and Magog”) will be deceived by Satan and convinced to mount an attack against Jerusalem and God’s people (Rev. 20:7-9). They will be destroyed by fire when they attack.

During the Great White Throne Judgment, non-Christians (the dead, spiritually) will be judged by their works (Rev. 20:12-13). Since their names are not written in the Book of Life, they have not accepted Jesus’ payment for their sin debt, and they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire where the devil is tormented (Rev. 20:15). The Lake of Fire is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Events Following the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

After the Final Rebellion and Judgment, a new heaven (i.e., universe) and earth will be created (Rev. 21:1).

The New Jerusalem will come down to the new earth from God (Rev. 21:2). God’s people will live with Him forever in the new creation (Rev. 21:3-27).

Scripture references for the Final Rebellion and Judgment:

Rev. 20:7-15, 21:1-27; John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Cor 6:2-3; Heb. 9:27-28

Chapter 12: Eternity with God

Revelation 21:3-4, 7, 27 — And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” ... He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ... But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

At the beginning of the Great White Throne Judgment, the heaven (i.e., the universe including the stars) and earth will cease to exist (Rev. 20:11). According to Peter, this disappearance will take place with a great noise and fire (2 Pet. 3:10). The present heaven and earth will be worn out and no longer useful. Like a worn-out garment, they will be discarded (Heb. 1:10-12).

After the completion of the Great White Throne Judgment, a new heaven and earth will be created (Rev. 21:1). The new earth will be the location of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, which will come down from God dressed as a bride (Rev. 21:2, 9-10). It is there that God will forever dwell with His people (Rev. 21:3, 22:3-5). All things will be made new and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or curse (Rev. 21: 5,3-4; 22:3). This is the eternal home (Heaven) for all Christians. (See page 64 for additional information about the replacing of the present heavens and earth.)

Eternity with God (also called eternal life) is the inheritance of all believers who have been adopted into God’s family by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 4:4-7; John 3:36; 5:24; 1 John 5:11-12).

Summary

Term Definition:

“Eternity with God” is a term used to describe living forever with God in the New Jerusalem, new heaven, and new earth created by God (Rev. 21:1). It will be a wonderful time of close relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as with all our brothers and sisters in the Lord (Rev. 21:1-7).

Significance of Eternity with God:

Eternity with God is the eternal life that we have been promised in Jesus (John 6:40, 47; 3:15-17; 1 John 5:11-12). It is our inheritance as adopted sons and daughters and joint heirs with Jesus (Rom. 8:14-23; Gal. 4:4-7; Rev. 21:7; Eph. 1:11-14, 18). We will fellowship with our Father God face to face (1 John 3:1-2, 1 Cor. 13:12). This is our future home and destiny in Jesus!

Source of Eternity with God:

The new heaven, new earth, and New Jerusalem come from God. Jesus made a way for us to become God’s heirs and to spend eternity with Him through His payment for our sins (Rom. 6:23; John 3:16; Rom. 8:16-17).

Length of Eternity with God:

Our eternity with God will last forever (Rev. 22:5).

Events Prior to Eternity with God:

The Final Rebellion of Satan and his followers will be followed by the end of the old heaven and earth, then the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:7-15). After that, the new heaven and earth will be created by God (Rev. 21:1).

Events of Eternity with God:

The New Jerusalem will come down from God to the new earth (Rev. 21:2). God will dwell with His people (Rev. 21:3; 22:3-4). There will be no more death, sorrow, or crying (Rev. 21:4). There will be no night in the new city since God is its light (Rev. 21:23-25; 22:5). It will be a wonderful time of close relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as with all our brothers and sisters in the Lord (Rev. 21:1-7).

God During Eternity with God:

God will live among His people in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:3-4; 22:3-5). He will wipe away all tears and ensure that there is no more death, pain, or sorrow (Rev. 21:4). God will make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

Christians During Eternity with God:

Christians will live forever with God in the new creation (Rev. 21:3, 4, 7, 27; Rev. 22:5). They will serve Him and see His face (Rev. 22:3-4).

Satan During Eternity with God:

Satan will suffer for eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Beast During Eternity with God:

The Beast and the False Prophet will suffer for eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Non-Christians During Eternity with God:

People who do not belong to God will be in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). This is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Events Following Eternity with God:

Eternity goes on and on forever.

Scripture references for Eternity with God:

Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; Heb. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:7,10-13; Rev. 21:1-27; Rev. 22:1-5; Gen. 1:6-8, 14-18; Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 51:6; Isa. 65:17-25; Isa. 24:19-20; John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16-17; Gal. 4:4-7; John 3:36; 5:24; 1 John 5:11-12

Chapter 13: Miscellaneous Questions & Information

Psalms 119:130 — The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

This chapter provides information on several questions and issues related to end-time events. Some of this information provides answers to common questions about the End Times. To locate desired information, consult the topic list below or the index in the back of this book.

Topic	Page
Who are the “elect” in Matthew 24?	50
What is the Second Coming of Jesus?	50
When is the Rapture?	50
Is the Rapture secret and invisible?	50
Will only some Christians be raptured?	51
Is the Rapture shown in Revelation 4:1-6?	51
Why did Jesus say He would come as a thief in the night?	51
Will the Temple be rebuilt?	52
How can we recognize the Beast (Antichrist)?	53
What is the Mark of the Beast (666)?	53
How long is the Great Tribulation?	54
Will Christians be persecuted during the Great Tribulation?	56
How does the 70 th week of Daniel fit with the End Times?	56
Is Jacob’s trouble the same as the Great Tribulation?	57
When is the Battle of Armageddon?	58
When do Gog and Magog fight against God’s people?	58
Who are the 144,000 sealed in Revelation?	59
What are the seven seals?	59
What are the seven plagues?	60
What are the three woes?	60
Who are the two witnesses?	61
What is the Day of the Lord?	61
What is the First Resurrection?	63
Where do people go when they die?	63
What is the Lake of Fire (Second Death)?	63
Will the Gospel be preached to all the earth?	63
How does the parable of the wheat and tares relate to End Times?	64
Will heaven and earth be rejuvenated rather than replaced?	64

Who are the “elect” in Matthew 24?

The term *elect* used in Matthew 24:29-31 refers to those *chosen* of God (those born again by faith in Jesus). The term is used in a similar sense today when referring to someone as a *bride-elect* (or *president-elect*). When used in this way, the term means the woman is *chosen* to be a bride, but the wedding has not yet taken place.

Romans 11:7 shows that *elect* refers to the Church (Christians) and not just the national Jews. (Note: Born again Jews are also part of the elect.) This passage says, “...That which Israel [the national Jews] is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen [*election* in KJV] obtained it...” The word *chosen* in this passage comes from the same Greek root as the word *elect* in Matthew 24. Colossians 3:11-13 shows that there is no distinction between Greek [non-Jew] and Jew and, that when *born again*, they both are the chosen [*elect* in KJV] of God. Jew and non-Jew are chosen [*elect* in KJV] by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (1 Pet 1:1-2).

What is the Second Coming of Jesus?

Since the term *Second Coming* is not used in the Bible, there is no authoritative definition to clarify what this term means. However, the Bible does say Jesus will *come* at the gathering (i.e., Rapture) of the Church and this will technically be the second time He comes, it is probably most accurate to use the term *Second Coming* when referring to the Coming of Jesus for His people (the Rapture). This will also be the time when he comes in judgment against the Beast and his followers (2 Thes. 1:6-10).

When is the Rapture?

The Coming of Jesus and the gathering of the people of God (the Rapture) occurs immediately after the end of the Great Tribulation signaled by certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Mat. 24:29-31). It takes place at the beginning of the time period called “The Day of the Lord” (see page 61). The rapture precedes the Wrath of God (Rev. 7:9,13-14; 8:1-7; 14:14-20). Christians are destined to suffer tribulation and persecution (1 Thes. 3:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:12). However, Jesus delivered Christians from the Wrath of God (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9). See page 33 for more information on the Rapture.

Is the Rapture secret and invisible?

In Matthew 24 Jesus warns against claims that He will come secretly (Mat. 24:23). He said that His return would be as visible as the lightning which flashes from east to west across the sky (Mat. 24:26-27). **All** the people on earth will see Him at His coming (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 6:15-17). Another passage referring to the gathering of the Church (Rapture) says that Christians will be rescued from afflictions when the Lord Jesus is “... revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God....” (2 Thes. 1:6-8). Jesus will come, “... with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God....” (1 Thes. 4:16). John said, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and **every eye will see Him**, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” (Rev. 1:7). These passages describe the return of the Lord as a highly visible event to all people.

Some people teach that the return of Jesus for the Church (i.e., the Rapture) will be secret and invisible. This teaching claims that when Jesus takes the Christians out of the world, most people

who remain will be puzzled about what happened to all those people who just disappeared. The idea that the Coming of Jesus and Rapture will be secret is discounted by the Scripture verse above.

Will only some Christians be raptured?

There is only one Rapture, and that takes place at the Coming of Jesus at the end of the Great Tribulation (see “The Coming of Jesus” on page 29 and “The Rapture” on page 33 for more information). All who belong to God will be gathered by angels with the possible exception of the two witnesses and the 144,000 who have a special assignment and protection to serve the Lord during the Wrath of God (see page 39).

Is the Rapture shown in Revelation 4:1-6?

This passage (Rev. 4:1-6) says, “After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne....”

Some people teach that when John is told to, “... Come up here....” the Rapture is being described. There are a couple of issues which indicate that this passage is not talking about the Rapture of the Church.

First, this was simply an invitation to the apostle John to see future events from a heavenly perspective. This is evident at the end of verse one. This is not an unusual way for God to give revelations to man. For example, Paul spoke of a man who was caught up into Heaven and heard inexpressible words (2 Cor. 12:1-4). He explained that this had to do with visions and revelations of the Lord. Ezekiel also saw visions of God when the heavens were opened (Ezek. 1:1). This passage is simply what it claims to be—a time when John was taken up to Heaven to receive revelation about end-time events.

If this had been the occasion of the Rapture of the Church, John should have seen a large group of other saints in Heaven who had been raptured at the same time as he. Revelation chapters four and five give no suggestion of the large group of saints who should be in Heaven if the passage in Revelation 4:1-2 describes the Rapture. Notice that the great multitude of saints does not show up in Heaven until Revelation 7:9-17. This occurs just after the signs in heaven (which immediately precede the Rapture—Mat. 24:29-31, see page 79) and immediately before the outpouring of God’s Wrath.

Why did Jesus say He would come as a thief in the night?

Jesus warned us that He will come as a thief in the night.

Revelation 16:15 — “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

Luke 12:35-40 — “Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; 36 “and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37 “Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them. 38 “And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. 39 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 40 “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Matthew 24:42-51 — “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 “Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 “Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 “But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ 49 “and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 “the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 “and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The primary purpose of these passages is to warn God’s people to be alert at all times. Jesus’ coming will not be unexpected like a thief in the night for those Christians who stay alert and busy about the Father’s business (see following verses).

Revelation 3:3 — “Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore **if you will not watch**, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. [*emphasis added*]

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 — But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. [*emphasis added*]

Will the Temple be rebuilt?

Not necessarily. Some people believe that the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt so that the Beast can set up the Abomination of Desolation there (see chapter on page 17). But there may be other ways this can happen without the rebuilding of a physical temple.

After the resurrection of Jesus, there is no longer a legitimate need for a physical temple as a place of sacrifices for sin. Jesus made one sacrifice for sins that does not need repeating in any form (Heb. 10:11-14). Since He completely paid for sin, there is no longer an offering or sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:18). The old covenant with its animal sacrifices and ordinances has become obsolete and is replaced by the new covenant in Jesus (Heb. 8:13; Heb. 10:8-11). If a new temple is built and sacrifices for sin are offered again, it will be in rebellion against the plan of God for salvation (Heb. 10:28-29; Gal. 4:21-26; Gal. 5:1-6; Rom. 10:3-4).

So, how might the Abomination of Desolation take place without a physical temple and animal sacrifices? God’s people are the *temple* now (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:19-22). It is possible that the sacrifices forbidden by the Beast may be something other than animal sacrifices. The Bible mentions several non-animal sacrifices. For example, there is a sacrifice of thanksgiving and a sacrifice of praise (Ps. 116:17; Heb 13:15). Things sent to support ministry work have also been called sacrifices (Phil. 4:8).

This does not mean that a temple will not be built in Jerusalem. But don’t get stuck on watching for the rebuilding of a physical temple in Jerusalem and miss recognizing the Abomination of Desolation prophecy fulfillment in a different way.

How can we recognize the Beast (Antichrist)?

Following are some things that can help us recognize the Beast when he begins to take action at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

The Beast will claim to be God.

At the start of the Great Tribulation, the Beast will claim to be God (2 Thes. 2:3-4), demand and receive worship (Rev. 13:4, 8), and blaspheme against the one true God (Dan. 11:36; 7:8, 25; Rev. 13:5-6).

The Beast will do something that is detestable in God's eyes.

The Beast will set up what the Bible calls the *Abomination of Desolation* (Dan. 11:31; Mat. 24:15). It's an abomination for the Beast to claim to be God and demand worship (2 Thes. 2:3-4). Or this abomination may include something else. Whatever it is, we should be able to recognize it when it happens, especially since Jesus listed it as a sign that would signal the start of the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:15, 21).

The Beast will stop daily sacrifices.

The Beast will put a stop to daily sacrifices in conjunction with placing the Abomination of Desolation at the start of the Great Tribulation (Dan. 11:31; 12:11). Those sacrifices may be something other than animal sacrifices such as praise, prayer, offerings to God, etc. (See "Will the Temple be rebuilt?" above.)

The Beast will have a wound in the head that heals.

Until he declares himself as God and puts an end to sacrifice (i.e., the Abomination of Desolation) it may not be obvious who is the Beast. One possible advance clue is that the Beast will suffer some kind of physical, political, or other fatal wound to the head (Rev. 13:3, 14). This temporarily knocks the Beast out of commission according to Revelation 17:8, "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit ... the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." It seems that this wound occurs before the Great Tribulation. The Beast will be one of seven kings (rulers?) who loses his position or authority—possibly as a result of the wound. Later, he will return to be the eighth king (Rev. 17:10-11). The wound may also be a reference to his loss of position as a ruler.

Refer to the chapter on *The Beast and the False Prophet* (page 25) for more information.

What is the Mark of the Beast (666)?

The Mark of the Beast (the Antichrist) is some type of **identification mark that is placed on a person's forehead or hand** during the Great Tribulation. (Some have theorized that it may be a computer chip or tattoo placed in a person's hand or on his forehead.) Basically, it is a **sign of ownership**, similar to a cattle brand, that declares that the person belongs to the Beast and Satan. It is described in the following Scripture.

Revelation 13:15-18 — He [the False Prophet] was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. *16* He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, *17* and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. *18* Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.

The False Prophet instructs people to make an image (representation) of the Beast, then brings the image to life. The False Prophet also demands that people worship the Beast and his image.

Further, the False Prophet **requires people to receive the mark or the Beast before being able to buy or sell** in the economy controlled by the Beast (see Rev. 13:11-18.)

The number of the *mark* is 666. In the Greek and Hebrew languages, individual letters are used to also represent numbers. This means that any word in the Hebrew or Greek language also has a numeric value that is determined by adding together the individual numeric values of the letters that compose the name. Because of this, it is possible that the name used by the Beast will have a numeric equivalent of 666 (from the Greek or Hebrew letters of his name).

Some have proposed that the 666 may represent a counterfeit of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The number six is sometimes used in reference to man, and three is sometimes used in reference to God. Then three sixes (i.e., 666) would represent man claiming to be God. In this view, Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet represent a counterfeit of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From the passage above (Rev. 13:15-18), **the only way to receive the mark is to agree to worship the image of the Beast.** This is idol worship and would require rejection of the true God—possibly in the form of a renunciation of the lordship of Jesus. This requirement would explain the severe punishment reserved for those who worship the Beast and his image and take the Mark of the Beast.

Revelation 14:9-11 — Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, *10* “he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. *11* “And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Notice that the punishment is reserved for those who worship the image of the Beast **and** receive his mark. Based upon this qualification and the explanation that those who refuse to worship the image of the Beast will be killed, probably no Christians will *accidentally* take the Mark of the Beast. **Any who accept the Mark will first have to renounce Jesus and worship a false god.** Anyone who worships the image of the Beast and receives the Mark will suffer severe punishment (Rev. 14:9-11).

How long is the Great Tribulation?

The term *Great Tribulation* refers to a time of great persecution by the demonic forces of Satan under the earthly leadership of the Beast (Antichrist). **The Great Tribulation lasts 3 ½ years.**

As explained by Jesus in Matthew 24 (quoted below), the Great Tribulation begins with the Abomination of Desolation (see page 17) and ends with the Coming of Jesus (Rapture, see page 29).

Matthew 24:15-31 — “Therefore **when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), *16* “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. *17* “Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. *18* “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. *19* “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! *20* “And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. *21* “For **then there will be great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. *22* “And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. *23* “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. *24* “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. *25* “See, I have told you beforehand. *26* “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. *27* “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will

the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 “For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. 29 “**Immediately after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [*emphasis added*]

The length of the Great Tribulation is described in several passages as shown in the following table. In each case, the Great Tribulation and persecution of the people of God will last 3½ years.

Length of the Great Tribulation		
Length	Reference	Description
42 months	Rev. 13:5-7	Length of time that the Beast is given authority to act in blasphemy and to make war against the saints of God (i.e., 3½ years).
time, times, and half a time	Dan. 7:25	Length of time that the saints of God will be given into the Beast's hands (i.e., 3½ years).
time, times, and half a time	Dan. 12:6-7	Length of time for the power of the holy people to be shattered or scattered (i.e., 3½ years).
time, times, and half a time	Rev. 12:14	Length of time that the woman is protected in the wilderness from persecution (i.e., 3½ years).
1260 days	Rev. 12:6	Length of time that the woman is protected in the wilderness from persecution (i.e., 3½ years).
42 months	Rev. 11:1-2	Length of time that the Gentiles will tread the holy city (Jerusalem) underfoot (i.e., 3½ years).

In each of the references in this table, the length of the Great Tribulation is given as 3½ years. In three passages, the length is described as a *time, times, and half a time*. The length of time that the woman (God's people) is protected in the wilderness is listed as a *time, times, and half a time* in Revelation 12:14 and as *1260 days* a few verses earlier in Revelation 12:6. These passages demonstrate that a time, times, and half a time is the same as 1260 days. When 1260 days is divided by 360 days per year (prophetic years apparently have 360 days per year), the result is 3½ years. This means that the term *time, times, and half a time* should be understood to mean a *year* (i.e., *time*), *two years* (i.e., *times*), and *half a year* (i.e., *half a time*) or 3½ years. This agrees with the 42-month length given in Revelation 11:1-2 and 13:5-7 (i.e., $42 \div 12$ months per year = 3½ years).

In Matthew 24:22, Jesus says that the length of the Great Tribulation will be shortened. It is unclear whether the 3½ years represents the length of the Great Tribulation before or after this shortening. Since the lengths given in the Book of Revelation were provided about forty years after the resurrection of Jesus, the 3½ years is probably the shortened length. If that is the case, possibly the 1290 days and 1335 days of Daniel 12:11-12 may be somehow related to the original length of the Great Tribulation. Possibly, the 2300 days (actually 2300 mornings and evenings) of Daniel 8:13-14 refer to the longer time period that was shortened for the sake of God's people (the elect).

(The 2300 *days* cannot include the Great Tribulation plus the Wrath of God since the host (i.e., God's people) will not be trampled during the Wrath of God.) On the other hand, none of these may relate to the longer time for the Great Tribulation.

Will Christians be persecuted during the Great Tribulation?

During the Great Tribulation, the Beast (Antichrist) will persecute God's people. This should not be surprising since Satan's only purpose is to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). All through history, the people of God have been persecuted by the people who are following Satan. **Jesus was persecuted and He promised that those who follow Him will also be persecuted and hated** (Mat. 10:22-26; 24:9; Luke 21:12-19; John 15:18-21). We are destined for tribulation (persecution, hardship, pressure) (1 Thes. 3:3-4; John 16:33). However, persecution and tribulation cannot separate us from Christ's love for us (Rom. 8:35).

The Beast will especially persecute and kill God's people during the Great Tribulation (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:32-33; 12:7; Rev. 12:13, 17; 13:7; 20:4). He will receive authority to fight against Christians and to prevail in some cases (Rev. 13:7-8). Many Christians will oppose the Beast (Dan. 11:32-33; Rev. 11:3-11). Apparently, the Beast's persecution of the people of God will serve to purify them (Dan. 11:35; Rom. 5:3-4).

Matthew 24:21-25 — “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 “And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. 23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. 24 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 “See, I have told you beforehand. [*Note: If the chosen ones of God were not going to be here, this warning would not have been needed.*]

Daniel 11:31-34 — “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation. 32 “Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*. 33 “And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many days* they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34 “Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

During the Great Tribulation, God will provide some assistance to His people who are persecuted by the Beast (Dan. 11:34). This will include some kind of protection in the wilderness with some assistance provided by the earth (Rev. 12:14-16; Mat. 24:16-20). Christians can count on the Lord's help, no matter what they may go through (Heb. 13:5-6; Mat. 28:20; Ps 23:4).

How does the 70th week of Daniel fit with the End Times?

In the Book of Daniel, there is a prophecy about the events leading up to the time of Jesus' (the Messiah) sacrifice on the cross for our sins (Dan. 24:24-27). Daniel's prophecy covers a span of 70 “sevens,” or “weeks” in many Bible translations. This is generally understood as 70 “weeks” of years or a total of 490 prophetic years. This prophecy predicts that the Messiah will be “cut off” in sacrifice for our sins 69 “weeks” (483 years) after the command to restore and build Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25-26). That prophecy has proven accurate as shown in the following table.

After the 69 weeks, there is a remaining 1 week of the original 70. This is sometimes called “the 70th week of Daniel.” This remaining week appears to describe the Beast (Antichrist, the prince who is to come) making a covenant (agreement, contract) for one week (7 years). But after ½ week (3½ years), he will set up the Abomination of Desolation. If this is actually referring to the Beast (as it appears), then the Great Tribulation is the **second half (3½ years) of Daniel's 70th week** in this

prophecy. However, there are some unanswered questions with this possible interpretation and Christians should remain open to other possible ways for the fulfillment of the 70th week of Daniel.

Note: When calculating dates related to Daniel's prophecy, it is important to distinguish between the 360 days of prophetic years and the 365.24 days of solar years. Prophecy typically uses 360 days per year as shown when comparing Daniel 7:25 with Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; and 13:5 (also see information on the length of the Great Tribulation, page 54). The time period from 445 B.C. to A.D. 32 is 476 solar years (445 + 32 - 1. One year is subtracted to correct for the lack of a year *zero* between B.C. dates and A.D. dates.). Converting 476 solar years to prophetic years results in 483 years (476 solar years times 365.24 days per solar year equals 173,854.24 days; then 173,854.24 days divided by 360 days per prophetic year equals 482.93 prophetic years).

Daniel's 70 Weeks - 7 years equivalent to 1 week of Daniel -		
Date	Length	Description
445 B.C.	—	King Artaxerxes I of Persia issued a command to restore Jerusalem. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem the first time in 445 B.C. to fortify Jerusalem and resettle it with king Artaxerxes' support. (See Neh. 2:1-6 and Norman K. Gottwald, "Ezra and Nehemiah, books of," <i>The Academic American Encyclopedia (Electronic Version)</i> , copyright © 1993 Grolier, Inc., Danbury, CT.)
445 B.C. to 396 B.C.	49 years "7 weeks"	"From Artaxerxes' decree to the arrival of Nehemiah and the covenant renewal celebration at Jerusalem." ¹
396 B.C. to A.D. 32	434 years "62 weeks"	"From the dedication of the second temple to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ." ¹
unknown	7 years "1 week"	"National Israel will enter into a covenant with the future little horn, the Roman prince ([Dan.] 7:8; 11:36) or Antichrist for seven years (Daniel's final or Seventieth Week). In the middle of the week, the Antichrist will break the covenant and demand that the blood sacrifices, restored by Israel in the last days, must cease. He will then set up his image in the Jewish temple and require worship (Mat. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:3, 4)." ¹
¹ Information from the <i>New Spirit-Filled Life Bible</i> , New King James Version, © 2002 by Thomas Nelson, Inc., pp. 1135-1136		

Is Jacob's trouble the same as the Great Tribulation?

There is only one Scripture that mentions *Jacob's trouble* (Jer. 30:7). From this one passage (see Jer. 30:1-11) there is not enough information to say confidently that either the Great Tribulation or the Wrath of God is the same as Jacob's trouble.

When is the Battle of Armageddon?

The **Battle of Armageddon occurs toward the end of the Wrath of God**. It must occur well **after** the end of the Great Tribulation since the Great Tribulation occurs **before** the Wrath of God (see the appendix on page 73). It also takes place during the time period called “The Day of the Lord” (see page 61). For more information on the chronology of these end-time events, see the earlier chapters in this book and the chronological list of end-time events (with timeline chart) beginning on page 69.

The name *Armageddon* (Har-Magedon) occurs only in Revelation 16:16. It refers to the Valley of Jezreel (also called the Plain of Esdraelon) at the foot of Mount Megiddo. This is the place where the kings of the whole earth will be gathered by the spirits (demons) of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet for the war of the great day of God (Rev. 16:13-14). This event occurs toward the end of the Wrath of God and just before the seventh angel pours out his bowl (the seventh plague) (Rev. 16:1, 17).

Another passage which refers to this battle is Revelation 19:19-20. Even though it does not use the name *Armageddon*, it describes the Beast and the kings of the earth assembled for war against Jesus and His army. This gathering occurs just prior to the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-4) which takes place immediately after the Wrath of God. That means that both passages describe the Battle of Armageddon as occurring toward the end of the Wrath of God.

When do Gog and Magog fight against God’s people?

From Revelation 20:7-9, **Gog and Magog** (probably representing hostile nations or enemies of God) **will attack God’s people after the Millennium**. That means that this attack by Gog and Magog has nothing to do with the Great Tribulation, the Wrath of God, or the Battle of Armageddon. Ezekiel (chapters 38-39) describe a similar event where Gog of the land of Magog attacks God’s people.

Gog and Magog are named together in only three chapters in the Bible (Ezek. 38, 39, and Rev. 20:7-9), each of which appear to describe the same event. The events described in these passages are...

1. Gog and Magog will be gathered for war.
2. They will gather on the plain, surrounding the Lord’s people who are dwelling securely at the time.
3. God will send fire from heaven to destroy Gog and Magog.

The two chapters in Ezekiel do not indicate when this event occurs in relation to end-time events other than stating it is the distant future (Eze. 38:8-16). The Book of Revelation, however, clearly shows the timing for the event it describes. **The destruction of Gog and Magog will take place at the end of the Millennium** (see Rev. 20:6-9 and page 41). At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed temporarily and will deceive the nations (including Gog and Magog) into attempting an attack on the saints who are in the beloved city (Jerusalem). This is also alluded to in Ezekiel 38:10-14 where Gog and Magog are described as coming against Israel when they are dwelling securely without bars and walls.

Who are the 144,000 sealed in Revelation?

According to the Book of Revelation, 144,000 servants of God are **sealed (identified as belonging to God and protected for their work)**. These 144,000 are sealed in their foreheads (a mark or sign) to protect them from the plagues of God's wrath (Rev. 7:2-8). This seal is the name of the Father written on their foreheads proclaiming that they belong to and are under the authority of God (Rev. 7:2-3; 14:1; 22:4; Eze. 9:3-7). (Compare this to those who receive the Mark of the Beast in their foreheads or hands to identify them as servants of the Beast and Satan. Rev. 13:15-18)

There are 12,000 individuals coming from each of the tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:2-8 — *Note: In this list the tribe of Dan is replaced by the tribe of Manasseh, and the tribe of Joseph would include the tribe of Ephraim*). They have a song that only they can sing (Rev. 14:3). They are without fault and are redeemed from mankind as a first fruits offering to God (Rev. 14:4-5, compare with Lev. 23:10-11). They ride with Jesus wherever He goes (Rev. 14:1,4), and are probably part of the armies of Heaven who go to battle along with Jesus during the Wrath of God (Rev. 19:11-15).

The sealing of 144,000 takes place as part of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12; 7:1-8). They are sealed after those who were killed (for the word of God) appear in Heaven during the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11). The 144,000 are sealed before the 7th seal, which begins the seven plagues of the Wrath of God. Possibly, the 144,000 come from those martyrs who may be a type of first fruits offering to God. Their sealing also occurs after certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Rev. 6:12-14; 7:1-8).

The 144,000 are sealed shortly before the gathering of the Christians (the Rapture) by Jesus. The first support for this idea is that they are sealed before the great multitude (out of the Great Tribulation) appear before the throne (Rev. 7:1-14). The second support of this is that they are with the Lamb (Jesus) and follow Him before the reaping of earth's harvest by Jesus (i.e., the Rapture) (compare Rev. 14:1-5 with 14:14-20).

What are the seven seals?

In the Book of Revelation there is a description of a scroll that is written on the inside and on the back. This scroll is sealed with seven seals (Rev. 5:1). The seven seals on the scroll are probably similar to wax seals used in the past to protect letters from being opened by unauthorized persons. The technique involved placing some hot candle wax on the edge of the letter to seal it together. To guard against tampering, a signet ring or other device was used to impress a unique image into the wax before it completely hardened. The Lamb (i.e., Jesus) was the only one with the authority to break the seals and open the scroll (Rev. 5:2-10).

The first four seals release certain authority against the people of the earth. Since the Wrath of God does not occur until the seventh seal is opened, this release of authority is not associated with the seven plagues of the Wrath of God. The signs in the sun, moon, and stars that occur immediately after the Great Tribulation take place when the sixth seal is opened (Mat. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-14). This means that **the first four seals are connected with the Great Tribulation**. Possibly, this is the spiritual release of authority that is given to the Beast (Antichrist) to permit him to act for forty-two months (Rev. 13:5; compare Job 1:9-12; 2:3-7). The fifth and sixth seals both show people taken to Heaven. The final seal begins the seven plagues of the Wrath of God.

When Jesus opened the **first seal** on the scroll, a white horse was seen with a rider who had a bow (for shooting arrows). The rider was given a crown and he went out conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:1-2). Apparently, this represents authority given to subdue and control many kingdoms on the earth.

When Jesus opened the **second seal**, a fiery red horse went out. Authority was granted to the horse's rider to take peace from the earth so that people would kill each other. The rider was given a great sword (Rev. 6:3-4). Authority is being given to increase discord and hatred among the earth's inhabitants.

When the **third seal** was opened, a black horse was seen with a rider carrying a pair of scales. Scales were used in buying and selling to determine the worth of goods. A voice declares that a quart of wheat will be sold for a denarius (about one day's wages for a worker). Three quarts of barley will also be sold for a denarius (Rev. 6:5-6). Possibly, these high prices are the result of control exercised by certain individuals over buying and selling as a result of the requirement that people take the Mark of the Beast before they can buy or sell (Rev. 13:16-17). The price increase may also be the result of food shortages caused by natural or artificial occurrences. The oil and wine will not be harmed (not limited or high priced?) as a result of the opening of this seal (Rev. 6:6).

When the **fourth seal** is opened, a pale horse appears with a rider named Death. Hades (the grave) is following after this rider (Rev. 6:7-8). Authority is given to this rider to kill more than a fourth of the people of the earth. The sword, hunger (famine), death (plague or disease in some translations), and the beasts of the earth will be used to kill those of the earth.

When the **fifth seal** is opened, the souls of people who have been killed (martyred) for their testimony for God appear beneath the altar in Heaven (Rev. 6:9-11). There will be others who are also killed in service to Jesus after this point (Rev. 6:11).

When the **sixth seal** is opened, certain signs are seen in the sun, moon, and stars (Rev. 6:12-14). This is a very important set of signs since it is also given in relationship to the end of the Great Tribulation, the Coming of Jesus, and the beginning of the Wrath of God (see page 79). The people of the earth will attempt to hide from the presence of the Lord, realizing that the day of His wrath is upon them (Rev. 6:16-17). This realization occurs when Jesus is seen at His coming (Rev. 1:7; Mat. 24:30; see page 29). To protect them from the plagues during the Wrath of God, 144,000 Israelites are sealed for protection during their coming work on earth (Rev. 7:1-8). **A great multitude** who are described as coming out of the Great Tribulation (those gathered by Jesus, raptured) also **appear in Heaven** as part of the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 7:9-17).

When the **seventh seal** is opened, there is silence in Heaven for about thirty minutes (Rev. 8:1). Following this, seven angels are given trumpets to announce the seven plagues of the Wrath of God (Rev. 8:2-6; see page 39).

What are the seven plagues?

A set of seven plagues are described twice in the Book of Revelation. These plagues are poured out upon the people of the earth by angels of God as judgment for following the Beast (Antichrist). This time period is called the Wrath of God. For more information on the descriptions of the seven plagues, see page 87. For more information on the Wrath of God, see page 39.

What are the three woes?

The *three woes* are the last three of the seven plagues of the Wrath of God (Rev. 8:13; Rev. 9:12; Rev. 11:14). Apparently, plagues number five, six, and seven are especially hard on the people on earth (the unbelievers left after the Rapture). The first woe is the plague (#5) of locust. These hurt men with their stings for five months (Rev. 9:1, 3-6). The second woe is the plague (#6) that

releases the four angels at the Euphrates River (Rev. 9:12-15). These angels and their army kill a third of mankind (Rev. 9:15-19).

The third woe follows when the second woe is completed (Rev. 11:14). The third woe is the plague (#7) that completes the outpouring of God's wrath (Rev. 11:15; 16:17). It includes a terrible storm with great hail and an earthquake. See page 39 for more information on the Wrath of God. See page 87 for more information on the seven plagues.

Who are the two witnesses?

The Book of Revelation describes two witnesses who **testify against the Beast (Antichrist) and his followers**. They have the power to create serious trouble for those who try to harm them (Rev. 11:3-9). These two witnesses will testify for God for 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3).

These two witnesses are the *two olive trees* who are, "...the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." (Rev. 11:4; Zech. 4:11-14). The Bible does not otherwise identify these two witnesses. Some have guessed that they may be Moses and Elijah—possibly based upon the passage at Matthew 17:1-3. However, this would mean that Moses dies twice (Deut. 34:5-7; Rev. 11:7). Some have theorized that the two witnesses may be Enoch and Elijah since it appears that neither of these two individuals physically died on the earth (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). If this is the case, then they would finally die after finishing their testimony for God (Rev. 11:7). However, there is nothing that says that these two witnesses are not some unknown individuals who will fulfill this call upon their lives.

Toward the end of the Wrath of God, between the sixth and seventh plagues, the Beast will finally kill the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7). The people of the world will rejoice greatly at the death of these two witnesses (Rev. 11:10). After 3½ days, the two witnesses will be brought back to life and called to Heaven while their enemies watch (Rev. 11:8-12). This is followed by a great earthquake and then the seventh plague of the Wrath of God (Rev. 11:13-15).

What is the Day of the Lord?

The *Day of the Lord* is a day of salvation (deliverance) for the people of God and a day of vengeance and wrath against those who oppose God or His people (Isa. 2:12, 17-21; 13:1-16; Jer. 46:10; Joel 1:15). It will be a dark and terrible day for those who do not belong to God (Joel 2:1, 11, 31; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph. 1:14-18; Mal. 4:5).

The Day of the Lord begins with the return of Jesus (see page 29) followed by the seven plagues of God's wrath (see pages 39 and 87) and other events. The Day of the Lord ends with the end of our current heaven and earth (see page 64), the Great White Throne Judgment (see page 43), and the Lake of Fire for all who are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life (see page 63). The following table shows the timing of certain events related to the Day of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord is not just one 24-hour earth day—it is much longer. Events that take place in the Day of the Lord stretch from the return of Jesus (immediately after the Great Tribulation) all the way through the end of our current heaven and earth, which occurs about 1,000 years later. (See the timeline on page 69.) In the context of talking about the Day of the Lord, Peter tells us that a day is as a thousand years in the Lord (2 Peter 3:7-8 with 3:10-11) which fits with the amount of time between various events the Bible includes in the "Day of the Lord."

Events Related to the Day of the Lord	
Event Description	When Event Occurs
Signs in the sun, moon, and stars, heavens shake, earth moved out of place (Isa 13:9-13, see page 79)	Immediately after Great Tribulation (Matt 24:29-31) When 6 th seal opened by Jesus (Rev 6:12-14) Just before the Day of the Lord (Acts 2:20; Isa 13:9-13)
Return of Jesus and rapture of God's people (2 Thes 1:6-10)	Immediately after Great Tribulation (Matt 24:29-31)
Outpouring of God's Wrath in seven plagues—The Wrath of God (Rev 6:15-17, 8:1-7, 11:15-18; Rev 16:1-21; 2 Thes 1:6-8)	After the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:30, with Rev 6:12-17) When 7 th seal opened by Jesus (Rev 8:1-7) After Jesus gathers (harvests) His people (rapture) (Rev 14:14-19)
Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:14-16; 19:17-21)	During the 6 th plague of God's Wrath (Rev 16:12-16) Just before Millennium (Rev 19:17-21)
Our current heaven and earth pass away (2 Pet 3:10-13)	After the Millennium (Rev 20:7,11) After Gog & Magog attack (Rev 20:7-9, 11) Just before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-12)
Unbelievers go to Lake of Fire (2 Thes 1:6-10)	After Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15) Before new heaven and earth (Rev 20:15 and Rev 21:1)

The Day of the Lord is described as beginning with certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Joel 2:30-31; Amos 8:9; Joel 3:9-16). These celestial signs make up the transition event (see pages 75 and 79) that signals the end of the Great Tribulation and the beginning of the Wrath of God (see timeline on page 69). The Rapture of the people of God also takes place just before God pours out His seven plagues of judgment (during the Wrath of God). The Day of the Lord includes the outpouring of the Wrath of God as seven plagues (see page 39).

We know that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (1 Thes. 5:1-9; 2 Pet. 3:4-14), which is also used to describe the Coming of Jesus (Rev. 16:15; 3:3). The Day of the Lord is also called the Day of Christ (2 Thes. 2:1-3; Phil. 1:6,10), and it is the day when Jesus comes (Luke 17:24; see page 29).

What is the First Resurrection?

The first resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6) is the resurrection of those who belong to Jesus that takes place at His coming (Mat. 24:29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; 1 Cor. 15:50-52). All those who are resurrected in the first resurrection belong to God and are safe from condemnation and the Lake of Fire because they have placed their faith in the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins (1 Thes. 5:9-10). Those who have died and don't belong to God will not be resurrected until they are summoned to appear at the Great White Throne Judgment where they will answer for their deeds and their sin (Rev. 20:12-15).

Where do people go when they die?

Christians (those who are born again by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus for payment of their sin-debt, John 3:3-7, 14-17; Rom. 10:9-10, 13) will go be with the Lord when they physically die (2 Cor. 6-8; Phil 1:22-24). Christians will not receive their immortal body until the Coming of Jesus and the resurrection (Rapture) (Mat. 24:29-31; 2 Thes. 1:6-10; 1 Cor. 15:50-52; 2 Cor. 5:1-5). After the creation of the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem coming down from God, they will live eternally with God (Rev. 21:1-7, 24-27; 22:1-5, see page 47).

Non-Christians (those who have rejected Jesus' payment for their sin-debt) will go to a place of torment when they physically die (Luke 16:22-31). They will be brought before God at the Great White Throne Judgment where their works will be judged (Rev. 20:11-13). Since their names will not be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they will go to the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15, see "What is the Lake of Fire (Second Death)? below).

What is the Lake of Fire (Second Death)?

The Lake of Fire is a place of torment and eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:10, 14:9-11). The Lake of Fire is also called the "Second Death" in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 20:14-15, 21:8).

Those who go to the Lake of Fire include: The Beast (Antichrist) and False Prophet (Rev. 19:20); the Devil (Rev. 20:10); Death and Hades (Rev. 20:14); anyone who worships the Beast and receives his mark (666) on his forehead or hand (Rev. 14:9-11); and anyone not found written in the Book of Life at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:15).

Those who are specifically declared to be secure from (protected from, not subject to) the Lake of Fire (the Second Death) include: those whose names are written in Jesus' Book of Life (i.e., born of God, saved, Rev. 3:5, 21:27); those who overcome through faith in Jesus (Rev. 2:11, 1 John 5:4-5); and those who have a part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6).

Will the Gospel be preached to all the earth?

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus says, "And this **Gospel** of the kingdom **will be preached in all the world** as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." This may be fulfilled by Christians going to all peoples of the world with the Gospel message as a result of the persecution of Christians during the Great Tribulation. These persecutions will cause many Christians to leave the comfort of big cities and go to more remote locations (Mat. 24:15-16). Persecution during the first century was a significant factor in Christianity's rapid spread throughout the earth (Acts 8:1-5).

Another method of possible fulfillment for this prophecy is explained in the Book of Revelation. This involves an angel who preaches the Gospel to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people on earth

(Rev. 14:6-7). This event appears to take place at the end of the Great Tribulation (see the detailed chronological list beginning on page 70).

How does the parable of the wheat and tares relate to End Times?

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 — Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 “but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 “But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 “So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 “He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ 29 “But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 ‘Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’ ”

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” 37 He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 “The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. 39 “The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 “Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 “and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

This parable of Jesus describes end-time events. Notice that the tares (planted by the devil) grow together with the wheat (those planted by God). At harvest time the tares are gathered first and bound together in bundles. They are then set aside *to be* burned later. Notice that they are not burned immediately since this would interfere with the harvesting of the wheat.

The gathering of the tares into bundles serves to separate them from the wheat. In a similar sense, the Great Tribulation will serve to make a clear distinction between those who belong to God (those who refuse to take the Mark of the Beast) and those who do not (those who receive the Mark of the Beast). Everyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life (i.e., those who do not belong to God) will worship and follow the Beast during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13:8). The people of God will not worship or follow the Beast.

The binding of the tares serves to identify the tares for later burning. In a similar sense, the Mark of the Beast will serve this purpose during the Great Tribulation. Those who do not belong to God will accept the Mark of the Beast so they can buy and sell (Rev. 13:16-17). All who accept the Mark of the Beast are identified (marked) for future suffering in the Wrath of God (Rev. 14:9-11). This suffering is from the plagues of the Wrath of God and will occur **after** the gathering of the people of God (the harvest or Rapture, Rev. 14:14-20).

Will heaven and earth be rejuvenated rather than replaced?

The Bible teaches that the present heaven (i.e., the universe) and earth will pass away and be **replaced by a new heaven and earth** (Rev. 20:11; 21:1). The current heaven and earth will pass away during the latter part of the time period called “The Day of the Lord” (see page 61). This must refer to the literal heaven and earth (rather than governments) since one of the features of the new earth is the absence of seas—a literal, physical characteristic (Rev. 21:1). The New Jerusalem will come down to the new earth (Rev. 21:23). There will be no need for the sun or the moon for the glory of the Lord will illumine it (Rev. 21:23) and there will be no night there (Rev. 21:24-25). The

absence of night also shows that the old earth has passed away since God made a covenant which promises that seasons, day, night, cold, and heat would not cease as long as the earth remains (Gen. 8:22). Passages teaching that the earth and heavens will be replaced with new ones include the following.

Revelation 20:11 — Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Revelation 21:1 — Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Peter 3:10-13 — But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. *11* Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, *12* looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? *13* Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Isaiah 65:17 — “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Isaiah 66:22 — “For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain.

Hebrews 12:26-27 — whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” *27* Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

2 Corinthians 4:18 — while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Mark 13:31 — “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Chapter 14: Preparing for the End Times

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 — But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Do you want to know the truth— no matter what it is or what it costs you?

Learning the truth may require you to give up some of your pet theories or doctrines. But who wants to keep any beliefs that are not true? Learning the truth will also challenge any misplaced feelings of peace, comfort, and security that you may have. However, there is no true peace and security except in knowing the Truth—Jesus (Jn. 14:6; Jn. 16:33; Rom. 8:38-39). Knowing the truth may cost you everything—but it is worth it! (Mat. 13:44).

A common reaction among people when preparing for the End Times is to begin storing food and other supplies in anticipation of shortages. While it is wise to maintain some extra supplies, it is very easy to begin trusting in those supplies rather than in Jesus (Mat. 6:19-21, 25-34). A simple test for determining your motives in accumulating extra supplies is to ask yourself if you are willing to share those supplies with others who may need them. If you are reluctant to share your extra supplies because there may not be enough for you and yours, maybe your accumulations are too important to you (Jn 15:12-14; Gal. 6:2). We are called to put our trust in God for He is well able to meet our needs—even in hard times (Deut. 8:4, 15-16; Pr. 28:27; Phil. 4:11-13, 19).

The number one thing you must do to prepare for the final days of this world is to be sure that you are right with God. All men are sinners (Rom. 3:23). If you have broken even one of God's laws—no matter how small—you are guilty of being a lawbreaker (James 2:10-11). As a sinner, you deserve (earn) death (Rom. 6:23).

No amount of good works can counterbalance your sin and make you right with God because God is perfect and cannot allow imperfection and sin into His presence (Rom. 3:20). Yet there is hope! Jesus paid your sin debt for you so that you can be set free in Him (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:18). Jesus took your sins (and your death penalty) in His body on the cross so you can be righteous in Him (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21).

You can receive salvation and eternal life by believing what God says and accepting Jesus' payment for your sins (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:8-11; 1 John 5:11-13).

1. Acknowledge your sins (Luke 18:13-14).
2. Repent and turn to God (Rom. 2:4-5; Acts 26:20).
3. Place your faith in Jesus rather than in your own efforts to be good or acceptable (Rom. 10:3; 10:9-13).

You can know for sure that you have eternal life when you put your trust in Jesus (John 20:31; 1 John 5:10-13).

After receiving salvation through faith in Jesus, work to grow and mature as a Christian — a disciple of Jesus (John 8:31-32; 15:4-21; Acts 11:26). Learning to consistently practice the following will help you mature.

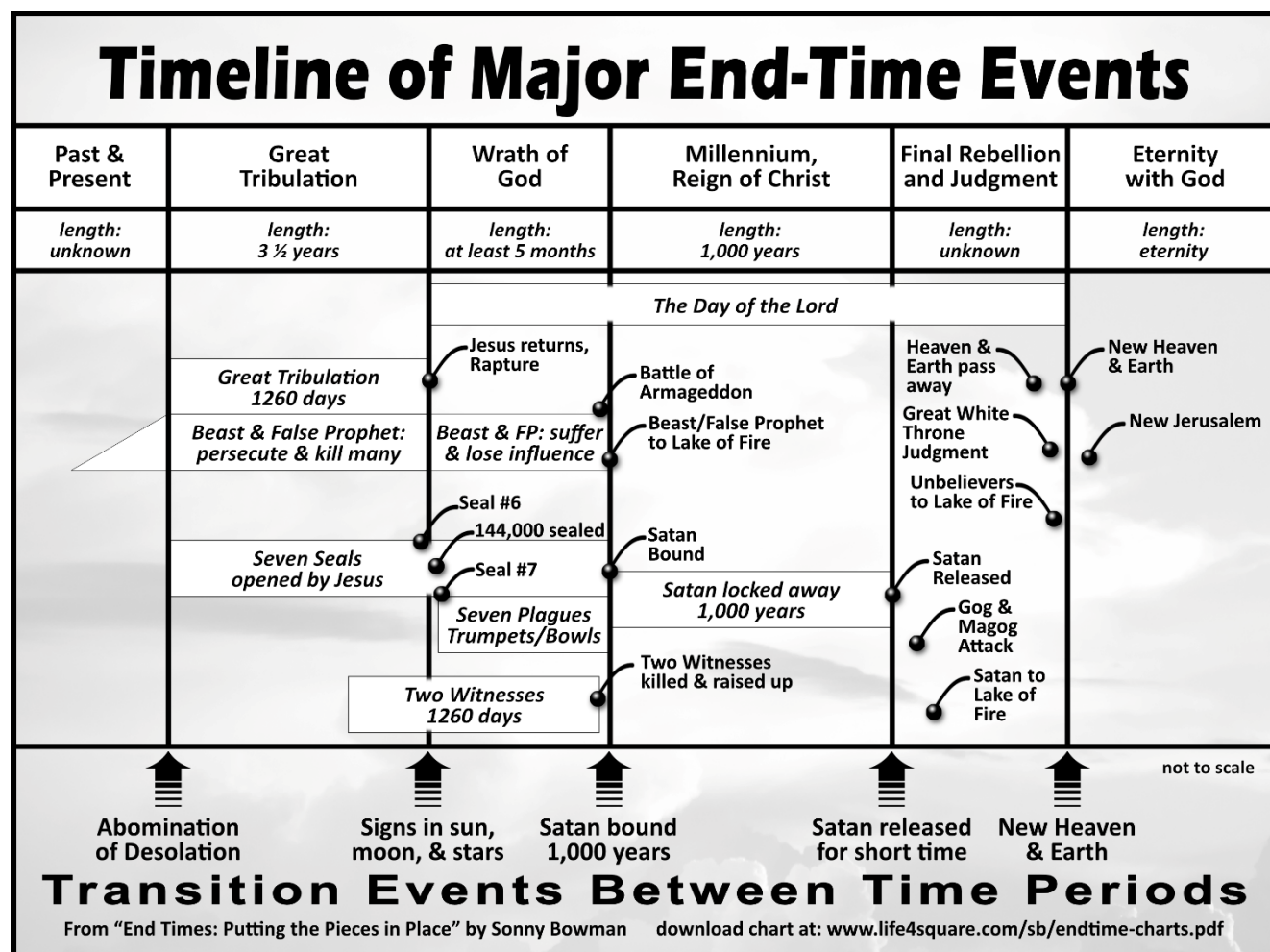
1. Read and study God's Word—the Bible (especially the New Testament) (Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. Do what the Word of God says (don't deceive yourself, James 1:22-25; Luke 6:46-49).
 - a. Forgive others (Mat. 18:21-35; Rom. 12:14-21).
 - b. Love others (1 Cor. 13; Rom. 13:8-10; 1 John 4:19; John 13:35).
 - c. Serve Jesus and others rather than yourself (2 Cor. 5:15; Phil. 2:3-5; Rom. 15:1-2).
3. Pray, listen to God, and obey God (1 Thes. 5:14-22; Mat. 7:24-27).
4. Hold loosely to ideas and theories that are based on passages that could have multiple interpretations or meanings. Be ready to change your beliefs any time you find that they do not match God's Word (1 Thes. 5:21).
5. Trust God's faithfulness (1 Cor. 10:13). He will never leave you or abandon you (Mat. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6).
6. Persevere—Never give up! (Heb. 12:1-3; 10:36; 6:15; Mat. 10:22; 13:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:11)
7. Stay focused on following Jesus, rejecting the fear and confusion that may try to flood your mind (Heb. 12:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Cor. 14:33).

Besides helping to prepare you for the End Times, maturing as a Christian will equip you for successful everyday living. There is no greater joy than spending your life loving and serving Jesus and the people He died to redeem. God bless you!

Graphical Timeline

The relationships of various end-time events are shown using two different formats in this section. The graphical timeline illustration provides a visual overview of how various events play out in relationship to one another. Following that is a table with a detailed list of end-time events provided in chronological order and grouped by the time periods and transition events that apply (see page 75 for more information on transition events).

This timeline chart provides a visual overview of major time periods, transitional events, and key events of the End Times. A free, full-color version of this chart can be downloaded at www.life4square.com/sb/endtime-charts.pdf.



Detailed Chronological List of Events

The following table is a detailed chronological list of end-time events. Major Time Periods and transitional events between them are shown in the left column. The right column provides a detailed list of the activities that occur during the time period listed in the left column. In some cases, the details associated with a particular major event may occur in a slightly different order than shown.

Chronological List of End-Time Events	
Time Period	Detail Events that Occur During the Time Period
Past and Present	Birth of Jesus (the Messiah), <i>Rev. 12:1-5</i> Resurrection of Jesus, <i>Rev. 12:5; Acts 1:9-11</i> Dragon cast out of heaven, <i>Rev. 12:7-13</i> Messages to the seven churches, <i>Rev. 2:1 to 3:22</i> Sinful activity of the Great Harlot (Babylon), <i>Rev. 17:1-6</i>
-Transition Event- Abomination of Desolation	Abomination of Desolation set up by the Beast, He blasphemes God, and stops daily sacrifices, <i>Mt. 24:15, Dan. 11:31, 12:11, 2 Thes. 2:3-4</i>
Great Tribulation	First seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, rider with bow on white horse goes forth conquering, <i>Rev. 6:1-2</i> Second seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, rider with sword on red horse takes peace from earth, <i>Rev. 6:3-4</i> Third seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, rider with scales on black horse affects food prices, <i>Rev. 6:5-6</i> Fourth seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, rider named Death on pale horse with power to kill one fourth of people on earth with sword, hunger, death, and beasts, <i>Rev. 6:7-8</i> God's people instructed to flee to mountains, <i>Mt. 24:15-21</i> Woman flees to the wilderness for protection for 3½ years, <i>Rev. 12:6,13-17</i> The Beast (Antichrist) and False Prophet begin persecutions and blasphemy, <i>Rev. 13:1-18, Dan. 11:31-45</i> Authority given for Beast to act for 3½ years., <i>Rev. 13:5, (Dan. 12:11)</i> God's people persecuted, <i>Rev. 13:7, Mt. 24:21-22, Dan. 11:33-35, 12:7</i> False prophets & signs to deceive people, <i>Rev. 13:13-14, Mt. 24:23-26</i> The False Prophet makes image of Beast and demands its worship, <i>Rev. 13:14-15</i> Mark of the Beast (666) required by False Prophet for buying or selling, <i>Rev. 13:16-18</i> Great Harlot (Babylon) is desolated by the Beast and his kings, <i>Rev. 17:7-18</i> Fifth seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, those martyred for Jesus appear under altar in heaven, <i>Rev. 6:9-11</i>

Continued on the next page...

Chronological List - Continued	
Time Period	Detail Events that Occur During the Time Period
-Transition Event- Signs in Sun, Moon & Stars	Sixth seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, a great earthquake with other signs and events, <i>Rev. 6:12</i> Signs in sun, moon, stars and sky, <i>Rev. 6:12-14, Mat. 24:29, Joel 2:30-31; Joel 3:13-16</i> The Day of the Lord begins (<i>see page 61</i>) Son of Man (Jesus) seen in the sky, <i>Rev. 6:16, Mat. 24:27,30</i> People of earth mourn because of coming wrath, <i>Rev. 6:15-17, Mat. 24:30</i> 144,000 men sealed for protection from plagues of the Wrath of God, <i>Rev. 7:3-8, 14:1-5</i> Gospel preached by angel, warning against taking the Mark of the Beast (666) or worshipping him, <i>Rev. 14:6-12</i> Rapture of the saints, resurrection and new bodies <i>Rev. 14:14-16, Mt. 24:31, Joel. 3:13, Dan. 12:1-3</i> Great multitude of saints (out of Great Tribulation) appear before the throne of God in heaven, <i>Rev. 7:9-17, 15:2-4</i> Grapes (nations) gathered for outpouring of Wrath of God, <i>Rev. 14:17-20</i> Judgment seat of Christ and rewards for Christians, <i>2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 22:12; Luke 14:14;</i>
Wrath of God	Seventh seal (of seven) opened by Jesus, silence in heaven for ½ hour, then angels prepare to blow trumpets announcing each of seven plagues of the Wrath of God, <i>Rev. 8:1-6</i> Marriage Supper of the Lamb, <i>Rev. 19:7, 9 (timing unclear)</i> Wrath of God is poured out as seven plagues (angels with trumpets & bowls), <i>Rev. 6:16-17, 8:1-6, 15:1,5-8, 16:1, 19:11-18, Joel 3:13, Dan. 12:1</i> Details of the judgment against the Great Harlot (Babylon), <i>Rev. 18:1-24</i> First plague is poured on the earth, results in burns and sores, <i>Rev. 8:7, 16:2</i> Second plague (of seven) is poured on the sea, the waters become blood, <i>Rev. 8:8-9, 16:3</i> Third plague is poured on rivers, they become blood and bitter (poisoned), <i>Rev. 8:10-11, 16:4-7</i> Fourth plague poured on sun causing it to be darkened and scorch men, <i>Rev. 8:12-13, 16:8-9</i> Fifth plague opens the bottomless pit, smoke and locusts come out to hurt men with their stings for 5 months, <i>Rev. 9:1-12, Rev. 16:10-11, Joel 2:1-11</i> Sixth plague poured on Euphrates River releasing angels and armies to kill men, <i>Rev. 9:13-21, 16:12-16</i> Two witnesses of God who prophesy for 3½ years are killed by the Beast, <i>Rev. 11:3-14</i> The Beast (Antichrist), False Prophet, and Satan gather the nations at Armageddon to attempt to fight against God, <i>Rev. 16:14,16, Rev. 19:19-21</i> Seventh (last) plague produces earthquake and a great hailstorm, the wrath is completed, <i>Rev. 11:15-19, 16:17-21</i> Beast and False Prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire, <i>Rev. 19:20</i>

Chronological List - Continued	
Time Period	Detail Events that Occur During the Time Period
-Transition Event- Satan Bound 1,000 Years	Satan is bound for 1,000 years and thrown into the bottomless pit, <i>Rev. 20:1-3</i>
Millennium	1,000-year reign of Jesus and God's people, <i>Rev. 20:4-6</i> The nations of those who survive through the Wrath of God must keep the Feast of Tabernacles and worship Jesus every year to get rain and avoid plagues, <i>Zech. 14:16-19</i>
-Transition Event- Satan Released a Short Time	After 1,000 years, Satan is loosed from his prison in the bottomless pit to attempt to deceive the nations, <i>Rev. 20:7-8</i>
Final Rebellion and Judgment	Gog & Magog and the nations are gathered by Satan, then defeated in battle against Jesus and God's people in Jerusalem, <i>Rev. 20:8-9, Ezek. 38, 39</i> Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire where he is tormented forever, <i>Rev. 20:10</i> The Great White Throne Judgment where the spiritually dead will be judged, <i>Rev. 20:11-15</i> The heavens and earth cease to exist, <i>Rev. 20:11; Heb. 1:10-12; Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 51:6</i> The spiritually dead are resurrected in preparation for judgment before the Great White Throne, <i>Rev. 20:12-13</i> Those people whose names are not written in the Book of Life are thrown into Lake of Fire which is the second death, <i>Rev. 20:14-15</i> The Day of the Lord ends (<i>see page 61</i>)
-Transition Event- New Heaven and Earth	New heaven and earth are created to replace the old ones, <i>Rev. 21:1</i> New Jerusalem comes down out of Heaven from God to the new earth, <i>Rev. 21:2,9-27</i>
Eternity with God	God lives among His people forever in the New Jerusalem, <i>Rev. 21:3-4, 22-27; Rev. 22:3-5</i>

Appendix B: Tribulation or Wrath?

1 Thessalonians 3:4 — For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 — and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

One of the major points of confusion about end-time prophecies in the Bible is caused by the failure to accurately distinguish between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. All the events of the Great Tribulation occur before any of the events of the Wrath of God. Therefore, the first step necessary for understanding end-time prophecies is to get a clear understanding of the difference between the Great Tribulation and Wrath of God. Unless this difference is clearly understood, it is virtually impossible to correctly understand end-time event sequences and inter-relationships. Therefore, this chapter provides a simple overview of the major differences between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. The Great Tribulation is covered in more detail beginning on page 21 and the Wrath of God is covered in more detail beginning on page 39.

The Difference

The *Great Tribulation* and the *Wrath of God* are...

- **two different events**
- **coming from two different sources**
- **for two different purposes!**

The Great Tribulation

The Great Tribulation is...

- **a time period of intense persecution on the earth,**
- **caused by Satan through the Beast,**
- **with the purpose of deceiving and harming as many people as possible.**

The Great Tribulation is a time of intense persecution. It is orchestrated by Satan through the Beast (the Antichrist) in an effort to deceive and destroy many people. Satan's goal is to keep people from accepting the payment Jesus made for our sins—thus preventing their salvation and deliverance from judgment. Satan also desires to be worshipped and to do as much damage as he can to the people who worship only God.

An important clue to remember when studying end-time events is that **the Great Tribulation is demonic in origin**. It includes the persecution and killing of many people by Satan's representative—the Beast. The Beast (also called the Antichrist) will reign during the Great

Tribulation. He will demand worship and conquer many countries. The Great Tribulation will be a time of intense evil. The source of the Great Tribulation is Satan (Rev. 13:2-4). Satan's purpose for the Great Tribulation is to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). A major characteristic of the Great Tribulation is the deception of those who do not love the truth (2 Thes. 2:9-12).

The Wrath of God

The Wrath of God is...

- **a time period of terrible judgment and suffering (by seven plagues) on the earth,**
- **caused by God through His angels,**
- **with the purpose of judging and punishing the Beast (Antichrist) and all those who follow the Beast.**

The Wrath of God is a time of judgment (wrath) which will be poured out as seven plagues upon the kingdom of the Beast and those who followed (served) the Beast. Its purpose is to punish the Beast and those who have taken his mark during the Great Tribulation.

The Wrath of God is godly judgment against evil. This judgment takes the form of seven plagues poured out against the Beast and those who worship him. These seven plagues are administered by the angels of God. The purpose of the Wrath of God is to punish the Beast and his followers (Rev. 14:9-10). The major characteristic of the Wrath of God is severe punishment of those who do not belong to God.

Appendix C: Transition Events

Matthew 24:15, 21 — “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Several Bible passages concerning End Times (like Mat. 24:15-21 quoted in part above) describe certain transitional events that mark the end of one major time period and the beginning of the next. These are called *transition events* and *interlocking events* in this book.

These transitional events serve a function similar to that of interlocking edges in pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. These passages establish time relationships between other end-time events. As with a jigsaw puzzle, these interlocking events assist in connecting the Bible end-time pieces together in their proper relationships. (See the table on page 85 for additional information.)

The five major end-time transitional events are summarized in this table with detailed information following the table. Please note that each transition event is shown in a different row at the center column of the table with the preceding time period in the column to the immediate left, and the following time period in the column on the right.

Transition (Interlocking) Events				
Prior Time Periods		Transition Event		Next Time Periods
Past & Present Time	➔	Abomination of Desolation	➔	Great Tribulation
Great Tribulation	➔	Signs in Sun, Moon, Stars	➔	Wrath of God
Wrath of God	➔	Satan Bound 1,000 Years	➔	Millennium
Millennium, Reign of Christ	➔	Satan Released	➔	Final Rebellion & Judgment
Final Rebellion & Judgment	➔	New Heaven & Earth	➔	Eternity with God

Abomination of Desolation – First Transition Event

This *transition event* marks the **beginning of the Great Tribulation** and the reign of the Beast (Antichrist).

Matthew 24:15, 21 — “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

21 “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

In this passage in Matthew, Jesus explains that the Abomination of Desolation signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Daniel explains that the Abomination of Desolation is set up by the Beast (the Antichrist) when he puts an end to daily sacrifices and claims that he is God.

Daniel 11:31, 36 — “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.

36 “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”

Daniel 8:11-12 — He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

According to 2 Thessalonians, the return of Jesus and His gathering of the people of God (i.e., the Rapture) will occur sometime after the Beast (son of perdition, the Antichrist) sets up the Abomination of Desolation, declaring himself to be God. Therefore, the Rapture (gathering of the people of God) cannot occur before the start of the Great Tribulation. See the next transition event (below) and pages 33 & 50 for more information on the Rapture.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 — Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars – Second Transition Event

This *transition event* marks the **end of the Great Tribulation** and the **beginning of the Wrath of God**.

Certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars are described in several Bible passages describing the End Times. These celestial signs form a very important transitional event that establishes time relationships between several end-time events. The following information provides general information on the significance of these signs as an interlocking event to the end-time puzzle. More detailed information is provided on these celestial signs beginning on page 79.

Matthew 24:29-31 — “Immediately after the tribulation of those days **the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** 30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Matthew passage says that these celestial signs will occur **immediately after** the Great Tribulation and just **before Jesus returns for His people (Rapture)**. The next passage from Revelation shows that these signs occur at the opening of the sixth seal. This takes place just **before the 144,000 are sealed in Heaven and the Wrath of God is poured out** in the form of seven plagues from God.

Revelation 6:12-17; 7:1-4 — I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and **the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15** And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, **16** and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **17** “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” **1** After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. **2** Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, **3** saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” **4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

This interlocking event clearly places the Rapture **after** the Great Tribulation and **before** the Wrath of God.

Satan Bound for 1,000 Years – Third Transition Event

This *transition event* marks the **end of the Wrath of God** and the **beginning of the Millennium**.

After the seven plagues of the Wrath of God, Satan is bound for 1,000 years. Apparently, this prevents him from interfering with the universal peace experienced on earth during the millennial reign of Christ. The Millennium begins with this binding of Satan.

Revelation 19:15-21; 20:1-3 — Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. **16** And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. **17** Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, **18** “that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great.” **19** And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. **20** Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the Lake of Fire burning with brimstone. **21** And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. **1** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; **3** and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Satan Released a Short Time – Fourth Transition Event

This *transition event* marks the **end of the Millennium** and the **beginning of the Final Rebellion and Judgment**.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time from his 1,000-year prison. Once released, he will deceive the people who do not belong to God and convince them to rebel and attack the people of God. The Great White Throne Judgment follows the rebellion.

Revelation 20:7-9 — Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

New Heaven and Earth – Fifth Transition Event

This *transition event* marks the **end of the Final Rebellion and Judgment** and the **beginning of an Eternity with God**.

After the Great White Throne Judgment, a new heaven (universe) and earth will be created. The New Jerusalem will descend from God to the new earth. Believers will spend eternity with God in the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:1-3 — Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, 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 heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Interlocking Events in the End-Time Puzzle

One of the more obvious and important transitional or interlocking events in the end-time puzzle involves certain signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

- According to Matthew 24:29-30, these signs occur **immediately after** the Great Tribulation.
- In Isaiah 13:9-13, these same signs occur **immediately prior** to the Wrath of God.
- In Revelation 6:12-17, these same signs occur **just before** the 144,000 are sealed, a great multitude appears before the throne of God, and the Wrath of God begins.

Since the signs in the sun, moon, and stars signal the end of the Great Tribulation, any events following those same signs must also occur after the Great Tribulation. This means that the sealing of the 144,000, the appearance of the great multitude in Heaven, and the Wrath of God must all occur **after** the end of the Great Tribulation. (See Appendix D: Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars – page 79)

The Great Tribulation precedes the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which occur also before the Wrath of God. All events in the Great Tribulation occur **before** the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. All events that are part of the Wrath of God occur **after** the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. Therefore, all events of the Great Tribulation **must** occur before any events of the Wrath of God.

Unfortunately, some who teach about end-time events list the seven plagues of the Wrath of God as part of the Great Tribulation. This error has led to much confusion about the End Times. To clear this up, a definite distinction must be made between the events that occur during the Great Tribulation and those that occur during the Wrath of God. This distinction is explained in the appendix on page 73.

Appendix D: Signs in Sun, Moon, and Stars

Matthew 24:29 — “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Overview

The relationships of certain end-time events to other events can be determined from their relative relationships to the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. The Great Tribulation will be followed by the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which will be followed by the Coming of Jesus and His gathering of God’s people (i.e., the Rapture), which will then be followed by the Wrath of God.

Each occurrence of the description of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars (as listed in the tables below) forms a helpful *interlocking event* (see page 75). This event is a reference point showing how far down the road of prophecy a particular event is in relation to other events. The signs in the sun, moon, and stars also serve as a *transitional event* marking (identifying for us) the end of the Great Tribulation and the beginning of the Wrath of God (see “Time Periods Covered in the Book of Revelation” chart on page 83).

Details

Certain celestial signs in the sun, moon, and stars are described in several places in the Bible. In each case, these celestial signs are chronologically connected with major end-time events including: the Great Tribulation, the Coming of Jesus, the Wrath of God, and the Day of the Lord. Thus, they provide important interconnecting information **establishing the time relationship between the Great Tribulation, Coming of Jesus (Rapture), and the Wrath of God**. The Coming of Jesus (the Rapture) and the Wrath of God both take place during the Day of the Lord.

This particular event with these celestial signs also serves as an important transition event that signals the **end of the Great Tribulation** and the **beginning of the Wrath of God** time periods. The first question that needs to be addressed is whether or not various Bible passages detailing these celestial signs are actually describing the same end-time event. The evidence that they actually describe the same event is strong.

In each Scripture passage listed in the next table, the descriptions of these celestial signs in the various passages are virtually identical. This fact and the associated events indicate that these passages are describing the same celestial event.

Besides helping us determine that the passages describe the same celestial set of signs, the next table helps us see which major end-time events either immediately precede or immediately follow the celestial signs. As a result, the celestial signs serve as type of *sign post* (see page 12) to let us know when we reach a certain point in the End Times.

Further insights are found in the second table, which compares the celestial signs as described in two particular passages: Matthew 24:29-31 and Revelation 6:12 – 11:19.

Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars		
Scripture Passage	Sign Description in the Passage	Associated End-Time Event
Matthew 24:21,29-31	sun darkened, moon does not give light, stars fall, heavens shaken	End of Great Tribulation, Jesus returns, & gathering of God's people (Rapture)
Revelation 6:12-17	sun turns black, moon like blood, stars fall, sky splits, earthquake	Gathering of God's people (Rapture) & start of Wrath of God
Joel 3:12-16 (compare Rev. 14:14-20)	sun dark, moon dark, stars dark, shaking occurs	Start of winepress harvest of Wrath of God
Joel 2:10-11	sun dark, moon dark, stars dark, shaking occurs	Start of Day of the Lord (Wrath of God)
Joel 2:30-32	sun turned to darkness, moon to blood	Before Day of the Lord (Wrath of God) & deliverance of God's people (Rapture)
Isaiah 13:9-13	sun dark, moon dark, stars dark, shaking occurs	Start of Day of the Lord & Wrath of God
Isaiah 24:19-23	sun ashamed, moon abashed (both dark), earth shaken	Start of Wrath of God
Isaiah 34:2-8	heavens rolled up as a scroll, host of heaven (stars) fall	Start of Wrath of God

Since these celestial signs occur immediately **after the Great Tribulation** and **before the Wrath of God** (see table above), we have an important clue about End Times. These signs show that when the Great Tribulation ends, it is followed quickly by the Wrath of God.

These passages also answer the often-asked question, "When does the Rapture take place?" The Coming of Jesus and His gathering of God's people (i.e., the Rapture) takes place at the end of the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:29-31) but before the outpouring of the seven plagues of God's wrath (Rev. 6:12-17).

Therefore, we know that Christians will go through the persecutions caused by the Beast (Antichrist) during the Great Tribulation. We also know that Christians will be raptured (resurrected if dead or changed if still alive when Jesus comes) before the outpouring of the seven plagues sent as punishment by God on the Beast and the Beast's followers. Please refer to the chart above and the one below for details that support this understanding.

From the second table (below), we see in detail that the two passages (Mat. 24:29-31 and Rev. 6:12 – 11:19) describe the same future event when they describe the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. By lining up the descriptions at the points where they are the same, an overall view of the relationship (sequence) of the Great Tribulation, Rapture, and Wrath of God is revealed.

Matthew & Revelation Passages Compared		
End-Time Event	Matthew 24:29-31	Revelation 6:12 - 11:19
immediately after the Great Tribulation	24:21,29	
sixth seal broken		6:12
earthquake—mountains & islands moved		6:12, 14
sun darkened, becomes black as sackcloth of hair	14:29	6:12
moon does not give its light and becomes like blood	24:29	6:12
stars fall from sky as figs from shaken tree	24:29	6:13
powers of heavens shaken; sky split apart like scroll	24:29	6:14
all tribes of earth will mourn while kings & others hide; they ask the rocks to fall on them to hide them from wrath of God	24:30	6:15-16
sign of Son of Man appears in sky and people see the Lamb (Jesus)	24:30	6:16
Son comes on clouds of the sky	24:30	
all tribes of earth see Son of Man coming; people see God on throne and the Lamb	24:30	6:16
Son sends angels with great trumpet	24:31	
angels gather elect (i.e., Rapture)	24:31	
great day of God's wrath has come		6:16-17
judgment held off until 144,000 sealed		7:1-8
great multitude in heaven from every nation		7:9
the great multitude have come out of the Great Tribulation		7:13-14
The Wrath of God is poured out		8:6 plus

Following is a chronological list of these events as derived from these two Scripture passages.

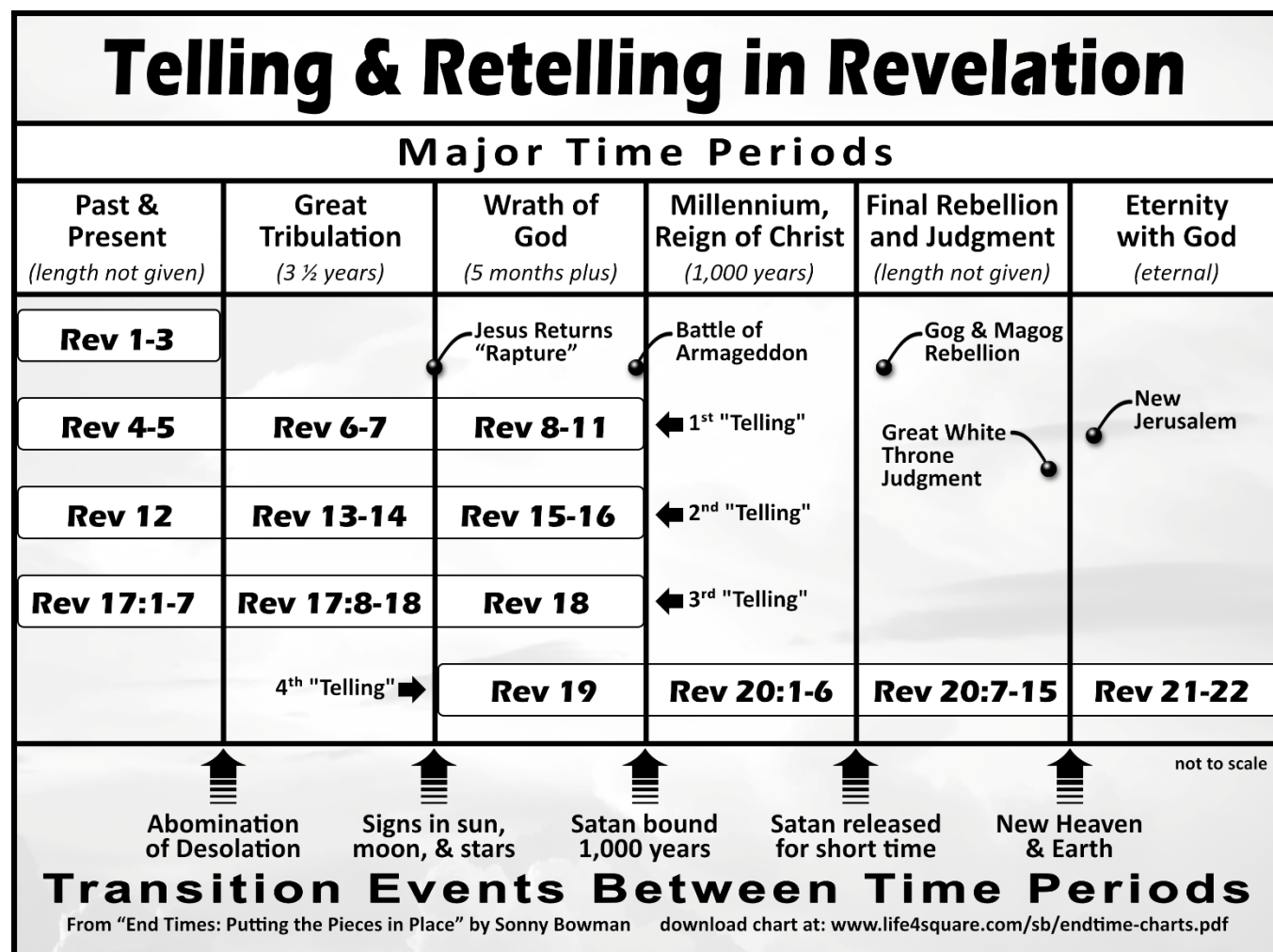
1. The time of great tribulation. (Mat. 24:21,29)
2. Sixth seal is broken. (Rev. 6:12)
3. Signs in the sun, moon, stars, and sky — “transition event” (Mat. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-14)
4. All people will see the sign of the Son of Man in the sky. (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 6:16)
5. The people of the world mourn because they realize that God is about to pour out His wrath in judgment against them. (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 6:15-16)
6. Jesus comes on the clouds. (Mat. 24:30)
7. Jesus sends His angels to gather His Church. (Mat. 24:31)
8. Wrath held off until 144,000 sealed (protected) (Rev. 7:1-8)
9. The people of God stand before the throne of God in Heaven (they have come out of the Great Tribulation). (Rev. 7:9-17)
10. God pours out His wrath in the form of seven plagues on the earth. (Rev. 8:6 to 11:19)

Appendix E: Telling and Retelling in Revelation

Revelation 10:11 — And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

Overview

The Book of Revelation describes end-time events in **four separate chronological sequence groups** providing **four different vantage points for the same overlapping time periods**. This **telling and retelling** results in several events being described more than once in the Book of Revelation. If someone thinks that the Book of Revelation description of End Times proceeds in a single chronological order from chapter 1 through chapter 22, it will be very confusing to understand. The following chart illustrates how chapters in the Book of Revelation cover the various end-time events. (*Note: The Apostle John tells the prophetic descriptions in the order he received them.*)



Time Periods Chart

The chart above shows the six major time periods described in the Book of Revelation. The time periods covered by each of the “Tellings” (i.e., chronological groupings) of chapters in the Book of Revelation are shown by labeled bars in the chart. For example, the bar for the 1st “Telling” includes Revelation chapters 4 through 11, and covers three major time periods—Past and Present, Great Tribulation, & Wrath of God.

Each of the six major time periods in the chart is separated on this chart by “Transition Events Between Time Periods” (see page 75). Each of these transition events (shown at the bottom of the chart) identifies the end of one major time period and the beginning of the next. They serve as important *markers* (or *sign posts*, see page 12) that help us know where we are in the sequence of end-time events. By referring to the Time Periods chart when reading the Book of Revelation, the chronological sequence of events can be understood more easily. (A free, full-color version of this chart can be downloaded at www.life4square.com/sb/endtime-charts.pdf.)

A Modern Illustration

Understanding the chronological arrangement of the Book of Revelation may be somewhat easier if you think of it as four people who are called to court to testify about an accident they witnessed. When the first person takes the witness stand, he describes the events that he saw in chronological order. The second witness then tells what he saw in chronological order. Since his perspective was different, the second witness will probably leave out some things that the first witness mentioned. He will also provide some information that was not given by the first witness. It would be a mistake to think that everything the second witness described happened **after** everything the first witness described.

As the judge and jury listen to all four witnesses repeat the events as they saw them, a clear picture will usually begin to emerge. If a particular item was mentioned only by the third witness, that item can be placed in its proper position in time by comparing the rest of witness number three’s testimony to that of the other witnesses. The judge and jury must watch for clues to use in correctly merging the three testimonies into one chronological sequence of events. This provides an overall picture that is much more complete than a description by only one witness.

The Gospel Example

If someone read the New Testament for the first time, it would be very confusing if that person thought there was a single chronological sequence from Matthew 1 through John 21. Things make much more sense when the reader understands that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are telling about the same basic set of events, but from different perspectives. Once this is understood, there is great benefit to having these different viewpoints for the Gospel story. In a similar fashion, end-time events are much easier to understand when the reader understands that the prophecies in the Book of Revelation provide several different perspectives for many of the same series of events.

Four Separate “Tellings” of Events

In a similar fashion to the four Gospels, the Book of Revelation tells and retells the same events from different perspectives to provide a much clearer representation of what will happen. It is important to look closely to determine the places in the Book of Revelation where these tellings and retellings of prophet events start over. (The events described **within** each of these tellings are

basically in chronological order.) The chart above helps identify these four tellings by showing the approximate time periods described in the various chapters of the Book of Revelation. As shown in the chart above, the four tellings of end-time events chronologically overlap one another to provide additional details for each event. This **telling and retelling** of events and time periods in the Book of Revelation leads to the **repeating of several end-time events**, each from a slightly different vantage point with a slightly different emphasis. For example...

- The **Great Tribulation** is described three times (Rev. 6:1-8; 13:1-18; and 7:7-17)
- The **Rapture** (i.e., gathering of God's people) is described three times (Rev. 7:9-17; 14:13-16; and 18:4)
- The **Wrath of God** is described four times (Rev. chapter 8-11; chapter 15-16; chapter 18; and 19:11-21).

While some of these descriptions are less clear than others, once a basic understanding of the chronological order of the Book of Revelation is seen, each event becomes clearer in its relationship to surrounding events.

Important Transition Events

There are five important end-time events that occur at the transition from one major prophetic time period to the next. These transition events are shown at the bottom of the chart above. They are also described in more detail in the following table, which shows the verses and information related to each of the transition events identified in the chart. **Transition events connect one major time period to the next one.** These transition events are similar to interlocking edges in jigsaw puzzle pieces that help connect puzzle pieces in the proper way (see pages 78 and 75).

Transition Events Between Major Time Periods		
Transition Event	References	Significance
Abomination of Desolation	Mat. 24:15-21; Daniel 11:31; 12:11; 2 Thes. 2:3-4	This identifies the beginning of the Great Tribulation when the Beast (Antichrist) claims to be God (an abomination to God), stops daily sacrifices, and causes desolation.
Signs in the sun, moon and stars	Rev. 6:12-14; Mat. 24:29-31	Identifies the end of the Great Tribulation and the beginning of the Wrath of God. They also signal the Coming of Jesus and gathering of the Church (i.e., Rapture).
Satan bound for 1000 years	Rev. 20:1-3	Identifies the end of the Wrath of God and the beginning of the Millennium.
Satan released for a short time	Rev. 20:7-9	Identifies the end of the Millennium and beginning of the Final Rebellion & Great White Throne Judgment.
New heaven and new earth	Rev. 20:11; 21:1-2	Identifies the end of the Final Rebellion & Great White Throne Judgment and the beginning of Eternity with God.

Additional Information

For those who are interested in more details about how events are not necessarily in chronological order in the Book of Revelation, consider the following. There is not a simple, once-through chronological sequence to the events described in the Book of Revelation. Instead, there are several different groups of events that are chronologically arranged within the group. This telling and retelling results in some events described in one group being preceded by events in another group that is described later. By determining where each group of descriptions begins and ends, it is easier to understand the relationship between individual events described in the four different “tellings” in Revelation. Fortunately, this is not as difficult as it may seem. (See chart on page 83.)

Revelation **chapters 1 through 3** provide introductory information and messages to the seven churches located in Asia during the lifetime of John.

First Telling of Events

Chapter 4 begins the first description of the End Times when John is called to Heaven to see future events. **Chapters 4 through 11** provide a chronological list of many events that will occur during the End Times—especially during the Great Tribulation and Wrath of God. This section explains how John received the visions. It also describes the opening of the seven seals and the outpouring of the seven plagues of the Wrath of God. Revelation 10:11 says that John must prophecy **again** concerning these end-time events. This “telling” ends with the last plague of the Wrath of God.

Second Telling of Events

Beginning in chapter 12, the prophecy of end-time events starts over from the time when Jesus was born. **Chapters 12 through 16** provide a chronological description of end-time events during the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. These chapters cover mostly the same period of time as described in chapters 4 through 11. However, additional details are provided with a somewhat different emphasis. This chronological sequence set includes descriptions of the activity of the Beast (Antichrist) during the Great Tribulation and the seven plagues of the Wrath of God. As in the previous description, this “telling” ends with the last plague of the Wrath of God.

Third Telling of Events

The prophecy of end-time events starts over again with chapter 17. **Chapters 17 and 18** provide the history of the wickedness of the woman on the scarlet beast (Babylon). Possibly this woman represents false religion or world systems (see Rev. 17:1,2,4). Chapters 17 and 18 also describe the hatred of the Beast for the woman and her punishment by God (Rev. 17:16; 18:5-8). As in the previous two telling groups, this “telling” ends with God’s wrath and plagues (Rev. 18:4-8, 20).

Fourth Telling of Events

End-time prophecies start over again beginning with chapter 19 when a great multitude appears in Heaven (compare Rev. 19:1-7 with Rev. 7:9-17). In the **remaining chapters (19-22)** in the Book of Revelation, the Wrath of God and following events are described. The earlier sequence groups of end-time prophecies (in Revelation) did not extend past the last plague of the Wrath of God. However, this last chronological sequence group covers the time of the Wrath of God and all events that follow it on to eternity. This group includes descriptions of the defeat of the Beast and his armies by Jesus during the Wrath of God. It also describes the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment, the new heaven and earth, and the New Jerusalem. This chronological sequence goes much further into the future than the earlier sequence groups, each of which ends at the finish of the Wrath of God. This last “telling” ends with God’s people living eternally with Him.

Appendix F: The Seven Plagues Compared

Revelation 14:9-10 — Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 “he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation....

Overview

There are two sets of seven plagues described in the Book of Revelation as part of outpouring of the Wrath of God. On the surface, these may appear to be two separate events. Actually, they are two descriptions of a single set of seven plagues poured out against the Beast (Antichrist) and his followers during the Wrath of God. Possibly each of the seven plagues is announced by an angel blowing a trumpet followed by another angel pouring out a bowl (the plague) onto the earth.

When compared, there are striking similarities between the two sets of plague descriptions. Yet there are also some significant differences in the descriptions of each plague. Some of the differences between the two sets of plague descriptions can be resolved by recognizing that the set announced by the trumpets is described more from a spiritual or heavenly vantage point, while the set with bowls poured out is described more from a natural or earthly vantage point. The trumpets list of plagues focuses more on the spiritual sources of the plagues while the bowls list of plagues focuses more on the earthly, observable results of the plagues. This may be most evident with plague #5. In this plague, the trumpet-announced version describes an angel of the abyss, smoke rising from the abyss, and some supernatural (demonic) “locusts” that torment only those people who do not have the seal of God on their forehead. In comparison, the bowl version of this plague describes earthly results such as how the Beast’s kingdom is darkened and the people suffer pain.

Two Descriptions of the Seven Plagues

The Wrath of God is a time when God punishes the Beast (Antichrist) and those people who followed the Beast (Rev. 14:9-11). The outpouring of God’s wrath takes place during the time period called “The Day of the Lord” (see page 61). This punishment primarily includes seven plagues that are poured out upon the earth, the Beast, and those who followed the Beast. These seven plagues of the Wrath of God are described in detail in **two places** in the Book of Revelation. In the first description, each plague is initiated by an angel blowing a **trumpet** (Rev. 7-11). In the second description, each plague is initiated by an angel pouring a **bowl** upon the earth and people (Rev. 16).

Even though these two sets of plague descriptions have significant differences, the similarities between the two strongly demonstrate that both descriptions apply to a **single set of seven plagues**. Following are some observations supporting this conclusion.

- Both sets of plagues are judgments and wrath that come from God (compare Rev. 6:17 and 11:8 with Rev. 15:1 and 16:19).
- The effects of the corresponding plagues in each set of descriptions is the same: 1) the first plague in each set affects the earth, 2) the second affects the sea, 3) the third affects the

rivers, 4) the fourth involves the sun, 5) the fifth affects men, 6) the sixth affects the Euphrates River, 7) and the seventh includes a hail storm and earthquake.

- The descriptions of the last plague in each set or descriptions are almost identical, and each one “ends” God’s wrath (see Rev. 10:7, Rev. 11:15, and Rev. 16:17).
- Sequentially, each description set falls within the “Wrath of God” time period as told, then repeated, in the Book of Revelation (see the chart on page 83 and chronological table beginning on page 70 as well as the following table).

The conclusion that the two plague descriptions (trumpets and bowls) refer to a single set of seven plagues is further supported by comparing the events that precede and follow each set of plague descriptions as shown in the following table.

Events Surrounding Plagues		
	– Trumpets Announce – Seven Plagues Described in Revelation 8 – 11	– Bowls Poured Out – Seven Plagues Described in Revelation 16
Events Just Prior to the Plagues	Signs in sun, moon, & stars Rev. 6:12-14	
	People mourn, Rev. 6:15-17	Warning against taking Mark of the Beast, Rev. 14:9-12
	144,000 sealed, Rev. 7:1-8	144,000 with Jesus, Rev. 14:1-5
	Rapture, Mat. 24:29-31, see pages 33 & 79	Rapture, Rev. 14:9-12
	Great multitude in heaven out of Great Tribulation, Rev. 7:9-17	People victorious over Beast (during Great Trib.) are in heaven, Rev. 15:2-4
	Beginning of Wrath of God, Rev. 6:17	Beginning of Wrath of God, Rev. 15:1, 6-8
Events Following the Plagues	After the plagues are described, the text starts over chronologi- cally with the birth of Jesus, Rev. 12:1-5. See page 83.	After the plagues are described, the text starts over chrono- logically with the activity & judg- ment of the harlot, Rev. 17:1-6. See page 83.

This conclusion becomes even more evident when looking at the “Telling & Retelling in Revelation” chart on page 83. Notice that the plagues list announced by trumpets is included in chapters 8-11 of the Book of Revelation, which is during the Wrath of God major time period. Next, notice that the plagues list poured out by bowls is included in chapter 16 of the Book of Revelation, which is also during the Wrath of God major time period. Again, it is apparent that the two sets of plague descriptions apply to the same set of seven plagues poured out during the Wrath of God.

Seven Plagues, Descriptions Compared

The following table compares the similarities between the two sets of plague descriptions.

Seven Plagues Compared		
Plague number (its primary effect)	Seven Trumpets More Heavenly Perspective (Revelation chapters 8-11)	Seven Bowls More Earthly Perspective (Revelation chapter 16)
#1 (on earth)	hail, fire, & blood thrown to earth, 1/3 earth burned (8:7)	poured onto earth, becomes malignant sore on men (16:2)
#2 (on sea)	burning mountain thrown into sea, sea becomes blood, 1/3 sea creatures die (8:8-9)	poured into sea, sea becomes blood, all sea creatures die (16:3)
#3 (on rivers)	star (Wormwood) falls on rivers, waters become bitter (8:10-11)	poured into rivers, waters became blood (16:4-6)
#4 (on sun)	1/3 of sun, moon, and stars darkened (8:12)	poured on sun, sun scorches men with fire (16:8-9)
#5 (torment of men)	angel of abyss, plague of locusts darken sky and torment men 5 months (9:1-11)	Beast's kingdom darkened, men gnaw their tongues because of the pain (16:10-11)
#6 (Euphrates River)	4 angels at Euphrates, armies, plagues of fire, smoke, & brimstone (9:13-21)	poured on Euphrates, way prepared for kings of east, Armageddon (16:12-16)
#7 (storm, earthquake, hail)	Mystery of God is finished (10:5-7), Voices from heaven, Kingdom established, lightning, thunder, earthquake, hailstorm (11:15-19)	Voices from heaven, "It is done," lightning, thunder, earthquake, huge hailstones (16:17-21)

Initially, the two sets of descriptions appear to be describing two different sets of seven plagues. This is especially true if the descriptions of only one plague are compared. However, when the descriptions of all of the plagues are compared, it becomes more evident that there is only one set of seven plagues described in the Book of Revelation. There are some differences between the two sets of descriptions that are hard to reconcile if there is only one set of plagues. However, the large degree of similarity between the two sets of descriptions presents a strong case for believing that both descriptions apply to a single set of seven plagues.

It appears that the two sets of descriptions are provided from **two different perspectives**. (This would be similar to two people on opposite corners describing the same accident that they witnessed.) The plague descriptions initiated by trumpets give more emphasis to the spiritual activities associated with the plagues as seen from Heaven—a more heavenly or spiritual realm perspective. The descriptions initiated by bowls give more emphasis to the results of the plagues as experienced by people on earth—a more earthly or physical realm perspective. This is especially apparent when comparing both descriptions for plagues #5 and #6. This difference in emphasis would account for at least some of the differences between the two sets of descriptions. Following are more details comparing the two descriptions for each of the seven plagues.

First Plague:

Revelation 8:7 — The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Revelation 16:2 — So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Notice that in both cases, the first plague is poured out upon the earth. Other than this similarity, these two descriptions differ considerably. If the perspective theory concerning the viewpoint of the descriptions is correct (see chart and text above), then the chapter 8 description is how the plague looks from a heavenly (or spirit realm) perspective and the chapter 16 description is from an earthly (or physical realm) perspective that shows how it looks to people on earth.

Second Plague:

Revelation 8:8-9 — Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Revelation 16:3 — Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man*; and every living creature in the sea died.

Both of these descriptions show that the second plague is poured out upon the sea. In both descriptions, the water of the sea becomes blood. This is hazardous to sea creatures causing widespread death. It is unclear why one description says that a third of the living creatures in the sea die while the second says that every living creature in the sea dies. (The Greek in 8:9 says, "... and died the third [part] of the creatures in the sea, having souls" The Greek in 16:3 says, "... and every soul of life died the things in the sea.")

Third Plague:

Revelation 8:10-11 — Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Revelation 16:4-6 — Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."

The third plague is poured out upon the rivers and springs of water. This causes man's drinking water sources to turn to blood (i.e., bitter or poisoned). The contamination of the water sources causes the death of many people. There is no serious discrepancy between these two plague descriptions.

Fourth Plague:

Revelation 8:12 — Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Revelation 16:8-9 — Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

The fourth plague affects the sun. The sun, moon, and stars will be darkened, yet the sun will produce increased radiation which will scorch people. Possibly this is an increase in UV radiation

with a greatly increased incident of skin cancer. It may also refer to an increase in surface temperature of the earth accompanied by a darkening of the visible light from the sun. Possibly, the darkness is a result of smoke or ashes in the atmosphere since the stars are also darkened. There is no serious discrepancy between these two plague descriptions.

Fifth Plague:

Revelation 9:1-11 — Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. 7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' *teeth*. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Revelation 16:10-11 — Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

The fifth plague is directed against men. In both descriptions, men are severely tormented by this plague. Darkness will also accompany this plague according to both descriptions. The first description presents a view into the spirit world describing what happens in the spirit realm during this plague. The second description shows what is visible in the physical realm. There is no serious discrepancy between these two plague descriptions.

Sixth Plague:

Revelation 9:13-21 — Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is 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 and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed; by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. 20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Revelation 16:12-16 — Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 "Behold, I

am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The sixth plague is poured out on the Euphrates River in both descriptions. In both cases, the way is prepared for armies and war. According to the first description, a third of the people will die in the battle. This is the Battle of Armageddon according to the second description. The first description presents a view into the spirit world to show what is happening during this plague. The second description shows what is seen in the physical realm. There is no serious discrepancy between these two plague descriptions.

Seventh Plague:

Revelation 11:15-19 — Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.” 19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Revelation 16:17-21 — Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

These two descriptions are definitely describing the same plague. In both cases, the seventh plague is accompanied by loud voices in Heaven announcing the end of the reign of men on the earth (11:15 & 16:17). Both declare God’s wrath (11:18 & 16:19). Both include lightnings, noises, thunderings, earthquake, and hail (11:19 & 16:18,21). There is no serious discrepancy between these two plague descriptions.

Summary of the Seven Plagues

In summary, there is very strong evidence to support the belief that the two description sets of the plagues (trumpets and bowls) apply to a single set of seven plagues poured out during the Wrath of God. That conclusion is assumed in this book. It would be extremely difficult to attempt to reconcile the idea that these are two separate sets of seven plagues each (14 plagues total) occurring at different times during the End Times.

Index

1

144,000 sealed – 59

6

666 – 23, 53, 54, 63, 71
explained – 53

7

70 weeks of Daniel – 56

A

Abomination of Desolation – 7, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,
22, 23, 25, 27, 30, 52, 53, 56, 70, 76, 85
chapter – 17
historical background – 20
summary – 19
tips for recognizing – 18
transition event – 76
Antichrist (Beast) – 8, 21, 23, 25, 27, 70, 73, 76
tips for recognizing – 26, 53
Antiochus IV – 20
Armageddon – 26, 58

B

Battle of Armageddon – 26, 58
Beast – 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,
30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 48, 50, 53,
54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 70, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 85,
86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91
chapter – 25
mark of (666) – 53
summary – 27
tips for recognizing – 26, 53
wound in the head – 53
Body, Immortal – 63
Book of Life – 43, 44, 45, 63, 64, 72
Book of Revelation – 84
chart – 11, 83
chronology – 83, 84, 86
retelling – 16, 83
sequence groups – 16, 83, 84, 86
born again – 50

C

chart
Book of Revelation sequences – 11, 83
timeline – 11, 69
chronological
appendix – 69
Book of Revelation events not – 83
chart of events – 69
detailed list – 70
events are not – 7
Coming of Jesus – 26, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37, 50, 60
chapter – 29
summary – 30

D

daily sacrifices – 18, 19, 20, 26, 53, 56, 70, 76, 85
Daniel
70 weeks – 56
Abomination of Desolation – 20
prophecy – 20
Day of the Lord – 39, 40, 61, 62, 65
explained – 61
Death – 63
Where do people go after death? – 63
Dragon (Satan) – 19, 23, 25, 28, 40, 58, 70, 77, 91

E

earth rejuvenated? – 64
elect – 21
who are they? – 50
End Times, preparing for – 67
Epiphanes – 20
eternal life – 67
Eternity with God – 47

F

False Prophet – 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 40, 42, 44, 45, 48,
53, 54, 58, 70, 71, 77, 91
chapter – 25
summary – 27
Festival of Dedication – 20
figurative or literal – 8
Final Rebellion and Judgment – 43, 44, 72

G

Gog & Magog – 43, 44, 58, 72
 Gospel – 14, 25, 34, 63, 71
 Gospel preached to all the earth – 63
 Great Tribulation – 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 50, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 85, 86, 88
 chapter – 21
 details – 70
 Jacob's trouble? – 57
 length – 54
 persecution of Christians – 56
 summary – 22
 Great White Throne Judgment – 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 72, 78, 85, 86

H

Hades – 63
 Hanukkah – 20
 heaven rejuvenated? – 64

I

Immortal Body – 63
 interlocking events – 75, 78
 Abomination of Desolation – 70, 76
 appendix – 75
 described – 78
 new heaven & earth – 72, 78
 Satan bound 1000 years – 72, 77
 Satan released – 72, 77
 signs in sun, moon & stars – 71, 76, 79
 table – 75, 85
 trib to wrath – 71
 introduction chapter – 5

J

Jacob's trouble – 57
 Jesus, Coming chapter – 29
 Judgment Seat of Christ – 44, 71

L

Lake of Fire – 26, 27, 28, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 63, 71, 72, 77
 Beast & False Prophet in – 26
 Satan in – 41, 72
 Those not in Book of Life – 45
 literal or figurative – 8
 little horn – 8, 17, 25, 27

M

Maccabees – 20
 Man of lawlessness, the Beast – 19, 21, 25, 26
 Mark of the Beast – 23, 25, 53, 54, 60, 64, 70, 71, 77, 88, 90
 explained – 53
 Marriage Supper of the Lamb – 71
 Mattathias – 20
 Mid-Trib Rapture Theory – 36
 Millennium – 34, 40, 41, 42, 43, 58, 72, 77, 78, 85, 86
 chapter – 41
 summary – 42
 miscellaneous information chapter – 49

N

nations – 22, 26, 41, 42, 43, 58, 63, 71, 72, 77, 78, 83, 92
 new heaven & earth – 43, 47, 64, 78, 85
 New Jerusalem – 44, 45, 47, 48, 64, 72, 78, 85
 New Living Translation, Rev. 7.14 – 38

P

parable of wheat & tares – 64
 Persecution of Christians – 21, 56, 73
 plagues – 8, 15, 22, 26, 27, 30, 31, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 59, 60, 61, 64, 71, 72, 74, 78, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92
 compared, appendix – 87
 explained – 60
 Post-Trib Rapture Theory – 37
 preparing for End Times – 67
 Pre-Trib Rapture Theory – 36
 Pre-Wrath Rapture – 37

R

Rapture – 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 50, 51, 59, 71, 76, 79, 80, 81, 85, 88
 chapter – 33
 Mid-Trib Theory – 36
 Post-Trib Theory – 37
 Pre-Trib Theory – 36
 Pre-Wrath – 37
 Rev. 4.1-6? – 51
 secret & invisible? – 50
 summary – 37
 theories – 36
 when? – 37, 50, 80
 resurrection – 43, 70, 72
 Retelling in Book of Revelation – 16, 83

S

sacrifices – 18, 19, 20, 26, 53, 56, 70, 76, 85
 salvation – 67

Satan bound, 1000 years, transition event – 77
 Satan loosed, transition event – 77
 Scarlet Beast – 86
 sealed, 144,000 – 59
 Seals – 59, 86
 Second Coming – 34, 50
 chapter – 29
 Second Death – 44, 45, 48, 63, 72
 Seven Plagues – 15, 22, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 59, 60, 61,
 71, 74, 86, 87, 88, 89, 92
 compared, appendix – 87
 explained – 60
 Seven Seals – 59, 86
 Sign Posts chapter – 13
 Signs in sun, moon & stars
 appendix – 79
 transition event – 76
 Syrians – 20

T

tares & wheat parable – 64
 Telling & Retelling in Revelation – 83
 Temple – 18, 20, 52, 92
 rebuilt? – 18, 26, 52
 Thief in the night – 51, 62, 65
 Three Critical Keys! chapter – 15
 Three Woes – 60
 time, times, and half a time – 23, 55
 timeline chart – 11, 69
 transition events – 75, 78, 85
 Abomination of Desolation – 70, 76
 appendix – 75
 described – 78

new heaven & earth – 72, 78
 Satan bound 1000 years – 72, 77
 Satan released – 72, 77
 signs in sun, moon & stars – 71, 76, 79
 table – 75, 85
 trib to wrath – 71

Tribulation or Wrath
 appendix – 73
 difference – 15
 two witnesses – 61

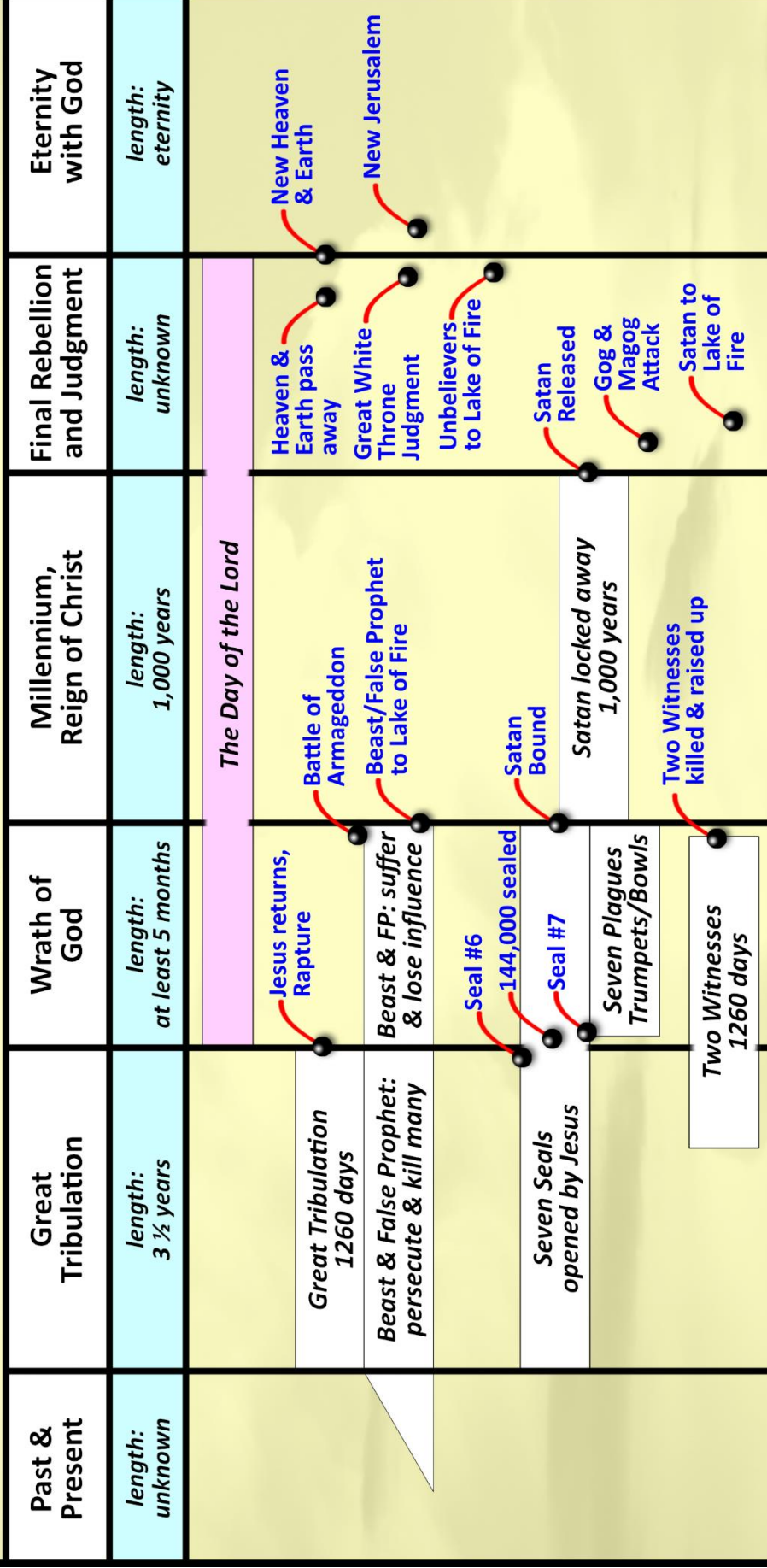
U

using this book – 8

W

weeks of Daniel – 56
 wheat & tares parable – 64
 Where do people go when they die? – 63
 White Throne Judgment – 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 72,
 78, 85, 86
 Witnesses, two - explained – 61
 Woes, Three – 60
 works – 14, 43, 44, 45, 65, 67, 91
 Wrath of God – 8, 15, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31,
 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 50, 54, 57, 58, 59, 60,
 61, 64, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 85, 86,
 87, 88
 chapter – 39
 summary – 39
 Wrath or Tribulation
 appendix – 73
 difference – 15

Timeline of Major End-Time Events



Abomination of Desolation

Signs in sun, moon, & stars

Satan bound 1,000 years

Satan released for short time

New Heaven & Earth

not to scale

Transition Events Between Time Periods

From "End Times: Putting the Pieces in Place" by Sonny Bowman download chart at: www.life4square.com/sb/endtime-charts.pdf

Telling & Retelling in Revelation

Major Time Periods

Past & Present <i>(length not given)</i>	Great Tribulation <i>(3 ½ years)</i>	Wrath of God <i>(5 months plus)</i>	Millennium, Reign of Christ <i>(1,000 years)</i>	Final Rebellion and Judgment <i>(length not given)</i>	Eternity with God <i>(eternal)</i>
Rev 1-3		Jesus Returns "Rapture"	Battle of Armageddon	Gog & Magog Rebellion	New Jerusalem
Rev 4-5	Rev 6-7	Rev 8-11	1 st "Telling"	Great White Throne Judgment	
Rev 12	Rev 13-14	Rev 15-16	2 nd "Telling"		
Rev 17:1-7	Rev 17:8-18	Rev 18	3 rd "Telling"		
	4 th "Telling" →	Rev 19	Rev 20:1-6	Rev 20:7-15	Rev 21-22



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