

THE REVELATION

Lesson 1

Introduction and Overview

Eschatology is the study of the end times. From the Greek *skhatos*—last, and *ology*—to study. Therefore, eschatology is “the study of the last things.”

The focus of these lessons will be the book of Revelation. Studying Revelation (or The Revelation) requires studying many other passages in the Bible. The word “revelation” comes from the Greek word *apokalypsos* (where we get our word apocalypse) and means *an uncovering, an unveiling, to remove the lid*. Therefore, the book of Revelation is an unveiling of the events of the last days, or perhaps it should be said, “God took the lid off of the last days and showed John what was cooking.”

We will begin our study with a few statements of wisdom concerning any study of eschatology (end times):

1. Prophecy can be described as history revealed before it happens. This is the case with the Revelation.
2. Like a ship’s wake, it’s always clearer to see when Bible prophecy has come to pass as opposed to *how* it will come to pass.
3. We see through a glass darkly (**1 Cor. 13:12**), so the closer we get to the future event the clearer we can see. We may also use the example of natural vision: Things further away are poorly seen and out of focus. The closer we get to these foretold events, the clearer they will become.
4. No man knows the day or the hour, but we must always be ready (**Matt. 24:36**).
5. Finally, know that the Lord does not want us ignorant concerning His will (**Rom. 1:13, 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1, 12:1; Eph. 5:17; 1 Thes. 4:13; 2 Pet. 3:8**). The Revelation was given “**to show his servants things which must come to pass**” (**Rev. 1:1**). God wants to show us things, not hide them from us.

ESCHATOLOGY: A STUDY OF THE CULMINATION OF THE ENTIRE BIBLE

Eschatology has been deemed a daunting, challenging, and confusing study because it encompasses almost the entire Bible and it deals with the conclusion of mankind. One famous book on Revelation contains over 6,000 Bible verse references (nearly 1/5 of the Bible). For this reason, any good Bible prophecy student must have a decent understanding of many of the major books of the Bible.

WHY BOTHER TO STUDY IT?

The Bible promises a special blessing associated with studying Revelation:

- **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**
Revelation 1:3

The study of eschatology is also critical in order to understand the season in which we are living and the tensions and opposition we can expect to ratchet up in the earth. If we understand this season of time, we will know more accurately what to do.

- **And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; 1 Chronicles 12:32a**

We are living in the last days and need to have an understanding of these times. One final reason to study this subject is because Paul taught it. In reference to certain eschatological events he wrote:

- **Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 2 Thessalonians 2:5**

If God had Paul teach it, it's important, and we need to study it.

A Study of Hope and Faith

Dr. Hilton Sutton said, "The Bible is designed to give us hope; therefore, even the study of eschatology should build hope in our life." Studying Revelation will produce hope and faith in our lives. Eschatology should not put fear in you. **God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, love, and a disciplined mind (2 Timothy 1:7).** The Word of God has been given to build faith, not fear. Do not allow the study of Bible prophecy to scare you. It is true, many bad things will happen in the end, but not to those who walk uprightly before God Almighty.

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

THE SETTING OF REVELATION

- Written by the Apostle John from the prison island of Patmos.
 - John was arrested in 93 AD to stand trial before the self-proclaimed "lord and god" Roman Emperor Domitian. He was shipped to Rome to stand trial before the demonized tyrant. Domitian ordered John to burn pagan incense in order to deliver himself. John refused. In a rage, Domitian had John thrown into a vat of boiling oil. John crawled out unharmed.
 - In terror, Domitian had John banished to Patmos (a first century Alcatraz) as a political prisoner. He arrived at Patmos in 95 AD.
 - Church tradition holds that John was accompanied and assisted by Prochorus (**Acts 6:5**) while on Patmos for his 18-month internment. Prochorus willingly went into exile, leaving behind the church he pastored, just to care for the 95 year old John.
 - Church tradition also states that it was Prochorus who penned the Revelation as John spoke what he was seeing and experiencing in the spirit. It is also traditionally held that John was totally blind by this season in his life.

- When Emperor Domitian was assassinated by his own confidants in 96 AD, many of his political prisoners were released, including John.
- John returned to Ephesus to live out his last few remaining years overseeing the comings and goings of the early church. He died a natural death about the year 100 AD, approximately 100 years old.
- A crowd of pagans martyred Prochorus in Antioch not many years after he returned from Patmos. He was serving as the bishop over the Antioch church at the time.

THE KEY TO REVELATION

The book of Revelation is broken into three parts, as clearly declared by Jesus Christ:

- **Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;** **Revelation 1:19**
 1. The things which you have seen: **Revelation 1:1-1:20**.
 2. The things which are (the Church Age): **Revelation 1:20-3:22**. Chapters 2 and 3 are micro-epistles addressed to the individual pastors (angels) of the seven churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.) These are the words of Jesus Christ spoken to the Church, and thus, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 3:22)** .
 3. The things which shall be hereafter: (the Tribulation, Millennial Reign, and Eternity), **Revelation 4-22**. This section of Revelation includes what John saw in heaven, what he saw transpire on the earth during the seven years of the Tribulation, the coming Millennial Reign of Christ, and the new heavens and new earth that are to follow.

OTHER HELPFUL FACTS

- Most Bible prophecy, with the exception of the Rapture, revolves around God keeping His promises to Israel (**Romans 9:4**). Bible prophecy begins with Israel, was delivered unto Israel, and will conclude with Israel.
- The book of Revelation is not entirely chronologically in its presentation. Often a series of events is described and then further detailed later in the book. It is helpful to view the Revelation as a mountain of events culminating at the return of Jesus Christ. Different chapters approach the same mountain from different angles and pathways and reveal events that are taking place simultaneously to the activities of previously mentioned chapters.
- The Church is absent after **Revelation 3:22**, indicative of her catching away (rapture). We will study the Rapture more in depth in Lesson 4.
- The bulk of Revelation (**chapters 6-19**) deals with the seven years of Tribulation; and therefore, great detail is given to its events.
- The Tribulation is also called Jacob’s Trouble (**Jeremiah 30:7**) and details the Jews as a nation, the nations that have persecuted and enslaved her, those that will

oppose her, and the powers of satan in one final attempt to rule the world.

- Many times John observes something in heaven, then turns and sees the results of it in the earth.
- More than any other book in the Bible, Revelation demonstrates the great ministry of angels and their fallen counterparts. There are over 55 references to angels in the Revelation.
- God wants us to understand the events of the Revelation. He does not want these days to take us unaware.

May God grant us insight into these exciting last days!!

THE REVELATION
Lesson 2
Daniel's 70 Weeks:
The Hub of Bible Prophecy

A bulk of The Revelation deals with the events of Daniel's 70th week (**Rev. 6-19**); therefore, it is critical we have a working understanding of this biblical dispensation.

Almost all Bible prophecy revolves around the Jewish people and Jerusalem (...**to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;**)(**Romans 9:4**). We are part of the Gentile Age and have merely been inserted into the timeline of Bible prophecy, having obtained salvation through Jesus Christ only because the Jews rejected Him. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that God would speak to an Israelite about the end of time and show that Israelite how things will unfold. Such is the case with the prophet Daniel.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS

Daniel's 70 weeks is a period of time assigned to the Jewish people as revealed to Daniel the prophet in a vision and expounded upon by the angel Gabriel (**Daniel 9:20-27**). It is this passage of Scripture that helps set the foundation for understanding the book of Revelation.

- **Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**

Daniel 9:24

Most Bible prophecy scholars call Daniel's 70 Weeks "the Hub of Bible Prophecy." Understanding Daniel's 70 weeks is important to understanding Bible chronology and to properly interpret many other scriptures. For this reason, we must study it very thoroughly.

- 70 weeks (Hebrew: **shabuwa**), or 70 periods of seven (can be days or years). Here it is 70 periods of 7 years, or 490 years total (360 days in a Jewish year).
- Determined upon the Jews and their city Jerusalem. Generally speaking, all prophecy revolves around the seed of Abraham (the Israelites), the Promised Land, and Jerusalem—the Holy City.
- God revealed He would accomplish six things in this time frame:
 1. Stop rebellion. This is specifically Israel's continuous rebellion against her God.
 2. Make an end to sins. Israel will continue to sin until after the Tribulation.

3. Atone for sins. Jesus died for the Jews first, but they have yet to receive their Messiah and His salvation.
4. Bring in everlasting righteousness. This refers to the Millennial Reign of Christ and His righteousness and His everlasting Kingdom (**Isa. 9:6,7**).
5. Seal up the vision and the prophet. After this season, there will be no more need for visions or prophets to keep God's people in line "for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (**Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:11**).
6. Re-consecrate the Holy of Holies. The Most Holy place, the Holy of Holies in the Temple, will be cleansed and readied for use by the Lord in His Millennial Kingdom (**Eze. 40-43; Zech. 6:12,13**), having been defiled by the Abomination Desolation.

Note: These things were shown to Daniel as he sought God about the end of Israel's captivity and punishment. God not only said their punishment was over, but that He had a bright and glorious future for them—Jesus the Christ was coming!!

THE TIMELINE OF THE 490 YEARS

The next three verses give us a very specific breakdown of what would transpire over those 490 years.

- **Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Daniel 9:25**

In this verse we are given three sets of time; all three sets are subdivisions of the 70 weeks. The first is 7 weeks, or as previously stated, 7 sets of 7, or 49 years. The second period of time is 62 weeks, or 434 years. The final set of time being the final missing week, or 7 years.

The first period of time

- From the time the command to rebuild Jerusalem was given until its completion was 49 years.
- This commandment concerns the restoration of the city and its wall. This commandment came to Nehemiah in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. (**Nehemiah 2**).

The second period of time

- **And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: Daniel 9:26a**
- This period of time is ended when the Messiah is "cut off" in death (**Dan. 9:26**).
- If we add 69 weeks or 476 (solar) years to the date of Artaxerxes' edict to rebuild Jerusalem (445 B.C.), we will find that Daniel's 69th week ends precisely on Palm Sunday, 32 A.D.

- From the time of the completion of Jerusalem (396 B.C.) until the crucifixion of the Messiah was prophesied to be (62 weeks) 434 years. Ironically, the same week Jesus rode into Jerusalem as their prince and king, they crucified Him.
- **After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.** Daniel 9:26 NIV

This verse reaffirms the proper timeline: Jesus will be cut off (crucified) 62 periods of sevens (434 years) after Jerusalem was restored.

The second part of this verse predicts the coming Antichrist called "the ruler who will come." This verse is also a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The Romans were Gentiles, heathen people of "the prince that shall come;" also foretold by Jesus in **Matthew 24:2** and **Luke 21:6**. The Antichrist is covered more in our Eschatology curriculum Lessons 9, 11, and 12.

The third period of time

Daniel 9:25 speaks of two sets of time, 7 weeks and 62 weeks. Added together, we get only 69 weeks. This missing week is what is called Daniel's 70th week. This 70th week has not been fulfilled yet. **Daniel 9:27** discusses this last week:

- **He [*the prince that is to come, the Antichrist*] will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' [*group of sevens, our missing week*]: In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.** Daniel 9:27 NIV

Jesus Christ called this last week (this last seven) the Tribulation (**Matthew 24:29**). It has not yet occurred. When the Church was born, what is referred to by some as "Jewish Time" stopped and the Church was inserted into time. In essence, Daniel's 70 weeks can be referred to as Jewish Time. Currently, the Church is how God moves in the earth. Before the Church Age, God moved through the nation of Israel. Israel has been put on hold and the Church has been activated. At the Rapture, the Church will be taken out of the earth and the LORD will reactivate Jewish Time and Daniel's last week of time will play out.

The events of this last week of time (this last seven years) are what are so clearly described and foretold in **Revelation 6-19**. Never has God so precisely detailed coming events like what will happen during the Tribulation. Daniel didn't see all of the details from where he lived in time. This honor was afforded to John the Revelator.

THE REVELATION

Lesson 3

The Purpose of the Tribulation

The Tribulation is the name given to the last seven years of Jewish Time. It is a seven-year period of time when the Lord will fulfill His covenant with the Jews and conclude the time of man's rule on the earth. The Tribulation will immediately be followed by the Millennial Reign of Christ (**Rev. 20:4-6**). These seven years are Daniel's final week (see Lesson 2—Daniel's 70 Weeks). The emphasis will be on God dealing with His people, the Jews, His enemies, and the nations that have persecuted His people.

The seven years of Tribulation were first revealed to Daniel but the exact details were hidden from him and sealed up.

- **But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed til the time of the end.**
Daniel 12:4,9

These intricate details of the this "time of trouble" were sealed up in a book and hidden until the "time of the end." John saw this same book in the Revelation sealed with seven seals.

- **And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**
Revelation 5:1,2

Only Jesus is able to open the seals (**Rev. 5:5**). As each seal was opened, John saw a new event of the Tribulation revealed (see Lesson 7—The Seven Seals and Matthew 24).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

God does everything on purpose. The purpose of the Tribulation can be found in the angel Gabriel's message to Daniel:

- **Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish [*restrain*] the transgression [*rebellion*], and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity [*atone for sins*], and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**
Daniel 9:24

God revealed He would accomplish six things in the 490 years of Jewish time. The Tribulation will see the completion and fulfillment of this list:

1. Restrain the rebellion. This is specifically Israel's continuous rebellion against her God, but also includes the world's rebellion.
2. Make an end to sins. Israel will continue to sin until after the Tribulation. Her ultimate sin has been the rejection of her Messiah. The horrors of the Tribulation will change this as **Psalm 78:34** declared: "**When he slew them, then they sought him.**"
3. Atone for sins. Jesus died for the Jews first, but they have yet to receive their Messiah and His salvation.
4. Bring in everlasting righteousness. This refers to the Millennial Reign of Christ, His righteousness, and His everlasting Kingdom ushered in on the wings of Israel's long awaited spiritual revival (**Isa. 9:6,7**).
5. Seal up the vision and the prophet. After this season, there will be no more need for visions or prophets to keep God's people in line "**for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest**" (**Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:11**).
6. Re-consecrate the Holy of Holies. The Most Holy place, the Holy of Holies in the Temple will be cleansed and readied for use by the Lord in His Millennial Kingdom (**Eze. 40-43; Zech. 6:12,13**), having been defiled by the Abomination Desolation.

The Tribulation will be a time for the Lord to deal severely with rebellion and sin, in both Israel and the world. It will be very difficult to constantly rebel against God when wave after wave of wrath is being poured out.

THE TRIBULATION'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL

One of the major purposes of the Tribulation is to chasten Israel and bring them back to their God. The Tribulation is not described in pleasant terms. It was first prophesied about in Deuteronomy:

- **When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. Deut. 4:30,31**

This passage foresaw the coming Tribulation and warned Israel of the potential to be forsaken, destroyed, and forgotten by their God. But, if they would turn to the Lord, He would restore them. The Tribulation will work to restore Israel back to their God.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

- **And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of**

trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Jeremiah 30:4-9

Jeremiah calls it the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” and describes it as a time of voices of terror, fear, and no peace. It is during this time that Israel will be brought back to serving Jehovah God and David will be made to reign over Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (**Eze. 34:23,24; 37:22-28; Hos. 3:4,5**).

A Time to Pass Under the Rod

- **As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.** **Eze. 20:33-35,37,38 NAS**

Ezekiel describes the Tribulation as a time when Israel shall “pass under the rod,” and adds to the familiar scene of “wrath” the detail that this will be a “purging” of rebels. Also, a new element of “outstretched arms” is emphasized twice, indicating that mercy will still be available to whomever will cry out for it, as Joel prophesied, “**whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved**” (**Joel 2:32**). Again, this will all be God’s work to cause Israel to know their God once and for all.

A Time of Furious Refining

- **Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.**

Ezekiel 22:19-22

Ezekiel also calls the Tribulation a time to melt and refine Israel. He will gather them to Jerusalem and there they will feel the Lord's heat. Jerusalem is certainly ground zero during the Tribulation. The Spirit of God will work mightily among the Jews in this time. He again, we see the Tribulation being a time when God is working to gather Israel back to Himself. See also **Zechariah 13:8,9** and **Malachi 3:1-3**.

A Time of Uncanny Trouble

- **And at that time shall Michael (the angel) stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. Daniel 12:1**

The angel told Daniel that the Tribulation would be a time of trouble unlike anything any nation has ever seen, yet the elect shall be saved (**Matt. 24:22, Mark 13:20**).

It should be evident that the Tribulation is a time of judgment that the Jewish people must pass through to bring them back to their God. The rest of the world will be affected by it, but we mustn't forget that first and foremost this is Daniel's 70th Week, Jacob's Trouble, a time appointed to his people, the Jews (**Daniel 9:24**).

THE TRIBULATION'S PURPOSE FOR THE GENTILES

The Tribulation will be a tremendous time of God's wrath. It will be used to try all of mankind.

- **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [*trial, proving*], which shall come upon all the world, to try [*test, trial*] them that dwell upon the earth. Revelation 3:10**

The Tribulation will be a time of never-before-seen signs and wonder, calamity, and prophetic chaos. It will come upon the entire inhabited world to try them and give them one last opportunity to receive Jesus Christ.

THE WRATH OF GOD

The parallel purposes of the Tribulation are for God to pour out His wrath and vengeance upon all of His enemies and bring Israel back to Himself. However, even in His wrath, God is merciful. Like with the ancient judgment of Egypt, the wrath of God is gradually ramped up over the seven years of Tribulation allowing mankind to recognize what is happening from the book of Revelation and repent. The final event of the Tribulation is the battle of Armageddon where the armies of the world will be destroyed. The final purpose of the Tribulation is to usher in the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. Alleluia!!

THE REVELATION

Lesson 4

Nine Evidences of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture

The Rapture is the catching away of the saints of God by the LORD Jesus to be with Him in the air.

- **For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**
1 Thessalonians 4:16,17

Caught up together: Greek- *harpazo*: to catch, to snatch, to lead something away, to be caught up.

Though the word “rapture” is not used in the Bible, we get our English word **rapture** from the Vulgate (the Latin translation of the Bible, 4th Century). The Latin word used for the Greek *harpazo* is *raptus* (*rapere*), thus **rapture—to be caught up**.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES AND TYPES

The Bible records three raptures before the Church’s departure, thus establishing a biblical precedent for such an event.

1. The first rapture was Enoch (**Gen. 5:24**). Enoch walked with God. God took Enoch. Enoch was seen no more. A rapture is God “taking” those who serve Him.
2. The second rapture was Elijah (**2 Kings 2:1-13**). Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven and Elisha saw him no more.
3. The third rapture was Jesus Christ (**Acts 1:9**). Jesus was taken up from the earth and received into a cloud. The disciples saw Him no more.

The Bible provides us four types or shadows of the Church’s rapture:

1. Noah—His family of eight was delivered from the wrath and destruction of their day, literally rising above the judgment of God in an ark (**Gen. 7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5**).
2. Lot—Lot’s family of four (eventually only three) was delivered out of Sodom right before the judgment of God fell (**Gen. 19; Luke 17:28,29**).
3. The Mount Sinai Invitation—**Exodus 19** records God’s command for Israel to “come up” after “three days” to meet God on the mountain when they heard His trumpet blow. The blast of the trumpet signaled their command to go up and meet with God. They refused. They shrunk back in fear and disobeyed the command.
4. John’s Revelation—John’s divine prophecy began with the voice of a trumpet calling, “Come up here” (**Rev. 4:1**).

THE RAPTURE—A CHURCH AGE MYSTERY REVEALED

The Apostle Paul was very clear—the Rapture of the Church was a mystery, or hidden truth, concerning the Body of Christ. Thankfully, Paul was permitted to share the facts of this event with the Church.

- **Behold, I shew 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 trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

Just as God took some of His previous servants and even His Son from the earth by means of a rapture, so will He also take the Church from the earth. If Paul hadn't specifically revealed this doctrine to the Church, all we would have are types and shadows of a possible rapture. Now we are guaranteed a way of escape. The Rapture will preserve the Church from the Great Tribulation (**Matthew 24:21; Luke 21:22,36**).

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

It is for this reason, the preservation from the impending wrath of God upon all mankind, that Paul also calls the Rapture “**that blessed hope**” (**Titus 2:13**). (For more information on the Rapture, see our Christianity 101 Lesson 14 and Eschatology Lesson 5.)

NINE EVIDENCES OF A PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

One of the more hotly debated subjects in eschatology is the timing of the Church's departure. Below are several scriptural evidences for a pre-tribulation rapture.

1. God has not appointed His Church (the Lord's body) for wrath (1 Thes. 5:1-11).

The Rapture will provide that way of escape for us. This promise of escaping the day of the Lord is to be used to comfort one another (**v. 11**). It would be bizarre to try and comfort one another with a promise of impending wrath. It would also be unfair to make the last days' Church endure the wrath of God when no other member of the Church in times past had to.

2. Jesus taught that we should pray that we would be counted worthy to escape [to flee away to safety] all the Tribulation (Luke 21:36).

This exhortation from the Lord came at the end of His teaching on the Tribulation in **Luke 21**. How else could one escape these things that shall come upon the “whole earth” (see **Heb. 2:3**)?

3. The Church is the restrainer holding back the full manifestation of the spirit of lawlessness and Antichrist:

- **And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he (Antichrist) will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he (the Church) who now restrains will do so until he (the Church) is taken out of the way. 2 Thess. 2:6,7 NAS**

The only biblical powers able to hold back the fulness of the Antichrist are the Holy Spirit or the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit (as opposed to the apostate church). The Holy Spirit is still in the earth during the Tribulation; therefore, the “he” that is removed must be the Church. The male pronoun “he” accurately describes the Church, also called the Lord’s body (a male body, **Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:24**), the one new man (**Eph. 2:15**), and the perfect man (**Eph. 4:13**). There is no evidence the Tribulation saints will be empowered in the same manner the Church has been. They are a unique type of saint, just as New Testament Church Age saints differ from Old Testament saints (see Lesson 6—The Four Classifications of Saints).

4. The Church is absent from the Revelation after Chapter 3.

The words “church” and “churches” are found in **Revelation Chapters 1-3**, 19 times. From **Chapter 4** onward, the term “church(es)” is not used again until **Revelation 22:16**, as a closing remark to the epistle. **Chapters 6-19**, which deals with the Tribulation, makes no mention at all of the Church. The saints mentioned in **Revelation 6-19** are spoken of as either belonging to the 144,000; the two witnesses, or the tribulation saints. It is evident that these are different classes of saints, just as New Testament saints are a different classification of saint than the believers before Moses and those in covenant with God under the Mosaic Law (see Lesson 6—The Four Classifications of Saints).

5. There is a marked change in divine-attitude toward mankind after Revelation 3.

There is a marked change in the tone of the book of **Revelation** from **chapter 1-3**, then **4** and **5**, then **chapters 6-19** from mercy to one of judgment as follows:

- **Chapter 1** is an introduction to the **Revelation**—mercy.
- **Chapters 2** and **3** are micro-epistles written to help the churches—mercy.
- **Chapters 4** and **5** take place in heaven with many different activities around the throne of God—mercy.
- **Chapters 6-19** are all about wrath and judgment being poured out on sinful man—no mercy.
- See point 2—the Church is not appointed to wrath.

6. John doesn’t recognize the identity of the Tribulation Saints in Revelation 7.

It is hard to imagine the great Apostle John failing to recognize the Body of Christ, for whom he had labored for nearly 65 years, yet he does not recognize this body of believers standing before the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, the Bible doesn’t call this group of believers the Church. They are called “servants” who have come “out of great tribulation.” This subtle observation further supports the fact that the Church is gone before the Tribulation. All saints (or believers) from all dispensations are

collectively called the Heavenly Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife (**Rev. 21:2,9,10**).

7. The nation of Israel is not spoken of in Revelation 1-3, but is spoken of constantly from Revelation 6 onward.

The Revelation's emphasis on Israel further implies that the Lord is, once again, dealing with mankind strictly through the Jewish people. This point helps further reiterate the fact that the Tribulation is "Jacob's Trouble," not the Church's (**Jer. 30:4-9**).

8. The Revelation is largely of Jewish character and focus.

- **Matthew** is the Jewish gospel containing 92 O.T. references. **Hebrews** is the Jewish epistle containing 102 O.T. references. **The Revelation** contains approximately 285 O.T. quotes.
- Jesus is referred to as the "Lamb," a Jewish idiom, 27 times after **Revelation 1-3**. *Lamb* is used only four times in the rest of the N.T., and never by Paul.
- The 144,000 come from the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- **Chapters 11 and 14** use language relating entirely to Jewish worship: temple, altar, temple worship, court of the temple, Holy City, olive trees, ark of the covenant, etc.
- The woman and the manchild of **Chapter 12** are Jewish.
- Michael (**Rev. 12:7**) always stands for the Jewish people (**Daniel 10:13-21**). He has never been a symbol for the Church.
- The remnant of **Revelation 12:17** is Jewish.

9. The Rapture date is a mystery.

Since the Antichrist's peace treaty kicks-off the Tribulation, a mid-Tribulation (3.5 years) or post-Tribulation (7 years) rapture could be accurately predicted to the day. Furthermore, what's the point of a post-tribulation rapture when the Lord is coming back at the same time to destroy His enemies and all of His saints are supposed to be with Him (**Jude 14,15; Rev. 19:11-15**)?

It should be overly evident from these nine proofs that the Church, the Lord's body, will not be here to see God Almighty bring Israel back to Himself, complete Daniel's 70th week, and punish His enemies. We are to preach His Gospel and win the lost until He's ready to deal with Israel again. Amen! Let us not neglect our great salvation!

THE REVELATION

Lesson 5

The Major Characters of Revelation

Before studying the Revelation, it will be beneficial to have a brief introduction to each of the major characters covered in John's vision. This will help us to understand their place and purpose in prophecy.

Jesus Christ: The Son of God. The book of Revelation is His revelation. This book is a record of what He revealed to John. He is referred to as "the Lamb" 27 times in the Revelation.

John: John the beloved. John the Revelator. The last of the original 12 disciples and apostles. John is the only one of the 12 Apostles of the Lamb to die naturally at about 100 years old. He wrote his three epistles and the Revelation after his release from Patmos. It is historically held that Prochorus (**Acts 6:5**) aided John during his 18 months on Patmos.

Angels: *angelos*- messengers. Angels are mentioned over 55 times in the Revelation. There are five different types of angels in Revelation:

1. Quite possibly it is Jesus Christ being described as an angel in **Revelation 10:1-11:3**. This angel is very likely the Lord because of the following description:
 - a. Clothed with a cloud (**1 Thes. 4:17**; over 100 Bible references to God and clouds).
 - b. Rainbow upon his head (**Eze. 1:28, Rev. 4:3**).
 - c. Face as the sun (**Matt. 17:2, Rev. 1:16**).
 - d. Feet as pillars of fire (**Dan. 10:6, Rev. 1:15**).
 - e. Roars like a lion (**Jer. 25:30,31; Hosea 11:10; Joel 3:16**).
 - f. Swears by God (**Amos 6:8, Hebrews 6:16-18**) "there shall be no more delay."
 - g. He calls the two witnesses "My two witnesses" (**Rev. 11:3**).
2. Pastors, messengers to the seven churches of **Revelation 2** and **3**.
3. Redeemed men used by God in Revelation:
 - a. John's guide through heaven (**22:8,9**)
 - **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**
 - b. Possibly the harvest angel (**14:14**) for he is crowned with a golden crown. Angels are never described as possessing crowns.
 - c. See **Rev. 21:17** "the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."
4. Fallen angels, bound for the appointed time of judgment:
 - a. The demon locust hoard (**9:3-10**)
 - b. Apollyon/Abaddon, the angel and king over the bottomless pit (**9:11**)

- c. The four angels bound in the Euphrates River (9:14,15)
- d. Satan and his angels (12:9)
5. Heavenly beings carrying out the orders of God directly from the throne, of which there are over 20 described in Revelation:
 - a. The strong angel at the throne (5:2)
 - b. The myriads of angels at the throne (5:11)
 - c. The four angels holding the four winds (7:1)
 - d. The angel with the seal of God (7:2)
 - e. The worshiping angels at the throne (7:11)
 - f. The seven angels with the seven trumpets (8:2)
 - g. The angel with the golden censer (8:3)
 - h. The “Woe, woe, woe” angel (8:13)
 - i. Michael and his angels (12:7)
 - j. The Gospel angel (14:6)
 - k. “Babylon is fallen” angel (14:8)
 - l. “Mark of the beast” warning angel (14:9)
 - m. Harvesting angel (14:14)
 - n. Harvest ordering angel (14:15)
 - o. Vintage angel (14:17)
 - p. Vintage ordering angel, having power over fire (14:18)
 - q. Seven angels of the seven last plagues (15:1)
 - r. The “Babylon the great is fallen” angel (18:1,2)
 - s. The angel casting the great stone (18:21)
 - t. The angel standing in the sun (19:17)
 - u. The angel with the key to the bottomless pit (20:1)

24 Elders: (Rev. 4:4,10,11; 5:8-11,14; 7:11-13; 11:16-18; 19:4) These men are only seen sitting in 24 thrones around the throne of God. The exact identity of the 24 elders is unknown. The exact nature of their heavenly authority is not known. It is clear they are men redeemed from the earth by the atoning work of Jesus Christ for they are seen dressed in white raiment (Rev. 3:4,5,18) and crowned with golden crowns (2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11) proclaiming:

- **Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . . And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. Revelation 5:9b,10**

They are redeemed men already in heaven; therefore, it is likely that these 24 elders are representatives of the Old and New Testament saints, i.e., twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles of the Lamb (Luke 22:30). Furthermore, the combined 12 tribes and 12 apostles are also linked to the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10-14). The 24 elders are seen worshipping God throughout the Revelation.

4 Creatures: (Rev. 4:7-9; 5:6-14; 6:1-8; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4) These appear to be the same four creatures (KJV-beasts) seen in Isaiah 6:2,3, also called seraphim (Heb., *seraph-*

to burn, copper colored; see also **Eze. 1:5-14**) having six wings. Isaiah's seraphims were seen above the throne (**Isa. 6:1-6**) having six wings. Ezekiel's "creatures" were observed under the throne supporting it (**Eze. 1:26**) having four wings. John's creatures were seen in the midst of the throne (**Revelation 4:6**) also having six wings. They are mostly seen worshipping the LORD at the throne. They are seen in both Isaiah and Revelation saying, "Holy, holy, holy." One of the four creatures delivers the seven vials of wrath unto the seven angels of wrath (**Rev. 15:7**).

The Crystal Sea (Mingled with Fire): (**Rev. 4:6; 15:2**) The sea of redeemed humanity before the throne of God. In **Revelation 15:2**, the crystal sea is mingled with fire, probably indicative of the new addition of tribulation saints, having come through the fire of the Tribulation.

The 144,000 Witnesses: (**Rev. 7:2-8; 14:1-5**) This group of men are called "the servants of our God." They are made up of 12,000 men from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. They are believed to be equivalent to 144,000 Apostle Pauls, evangelizing and preaching the Gospel throughout the whole world during the Tribulation. The fruit of their ministry will be the greatest revival in human history (**Rev. 7:9; 15:2**). This great revival will take place in the first half of the Tribulation. More will be said in Lesson 6—The Four Orders of Saints.

The Tribulation Saints: (**Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 12:10,11,17; 13:7-10, 15; 14:12,13; 15:2-4; 20:4**) These "tribulation saints" are first described by one of the 24 elders in chapter seven. These are described as an innumerable company of men, women, and children from all nations who convert to Christianity after the Church is raptured. Generally speaking, they are the converts of the 144,000 witnesses. They reject the Antichrist and accept Jesus Christ. These include those martyred during the Tribulation. More will be said in the Lesson 6—The Four Orders of Saints.

The Martyrs: Not every saint during the Tribulation will be martyred, but a great many of them will be. Many of them will be beheaded (**20:4**). Since this is the only unique manner of death described in the **Revelation**, it leads us to believe that this may be the most common manner of martyrdom during the Tribulation (**6:11**). From under the heavenly altar, the martyred saints demand vengeance for their death (**Rev. 6:10**). God will avenge them (**19:2**).

The Two Witnesses: (**Rev.11:3-12**) These two men are prophets and begin their work in the last half of the Tribulation. They are given the Old Testament signs and wonders of Moses (**Exodus 7:14-25; ch. 8-10**) and Elijah (**1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46; James 5:17**) to use at will. They are given an assignment (testimony) that will take three-and-one-half years to complete. Then the beast from the Abyss will kill them in Jerusalem. At this time Jerusalem is called a spiritual Sodom and Egypt (**11:8**). This describes how wicked and depraved it will be during the Antichrist's rule. Their bodies will lie dead in the streets for three-and-one-half days then be resurrected and raptured by the Spirit of God.

The Dragon: Satan. Midway through the Tribulation he will be cast down to the earth, limiting his dominion (**Rev. 12:7-9**). He will no longer be the prince of the power of the air.

The Great Whore (Mystery Babylon): This is a system of false religion—a one-world religion that denies the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It began at Babylon with the first spiritual rebellion against God, led by Nimrod (**Gen. 10:8-12**). After Nimrod’s death, his widow, Semiramis, claimed to give birth to a miraculously conceived son, Tammuz. Tammuz was killed by an animal but raised from the dead three days later. This cult eventually spread throughout the world, though the names changed from culture to culture:

- Assyria: Ishtar and Tammuz
- Egypt: Isis and Osiris
- Phoenicia: Astarte (Ashtoreth) and Baal
- Greece: Aphrodite and Eros
- Rome: Venus and Cupid

In this regard, Babylon became the “mother of harlotries” for all the subsequent cultures.

God frustrated this original Babylonian apostasy by confounding the languages and disrupting the first one-world government (**Gen. 11:5-9**). Later He commanded that humanity be ordered by national boundaries and ruled locally (**Deut. 32:8, Acts 17:26**) rather than by a supreme. Of course the devil wants to do just the opposite. Throughout time she has affected all nations and all the world’s leaders have committed idolatry (called spiritual fornication and adultery) with her (**17:2**). The Whore rides upon the beast (system). His rise gives place to her rise.

Her full name is given as: **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (17:5)**. Spiritists and sorcerers have controlled every world empire from behind the scenes, from ancient Egypt to the Roman Empire. The Whore (demonized religious system) has ridden upon all of the world’s great empires and damned many to eternity in hell (**Rev. 17:15**). Satan is currently using the Babylonian system of spiritual idolatry to turn the world away from the truth of God’s Word and prepare his way. The Antichrist does not want the Whore. He will only tolerate her long enough to use her to gain the position he wants. After three-and-one-half years of political ascent, the Antichrist will use the power of the ten kings to destroy her (**Rev. 17:12-17**) that he alone might control the world. He will succeed for only forty-two months before being destroyed by the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The Antichrist/the Beast: There are over 100 passages of Scripture dealing with the Antichrist. Antichrist refers to both a man and a spiritual system. Only **1 John** uses the term “antichrist,” and clearly teaches that the spirit of antichrist is already at work in the earth and has been since the first century. He is a politician that will rise to power through intrigue and flatteries (**Dan. 11:21**). He will be the fiercest dictator the world has ever known, but only for forty-two months. He will be thrown alive into the lake of fire with the False Prophet (**Rev. 19:20**). His other biblical titles include: “the little horn” (**Dan. 7:8**); “the prince that will come” (**Dan. 9:26**); “the king who will do according to his will” (**Dan.**

11:36); “the man of sin” (**2 Thes. 2:3**); and “the son of perdition” (**2 Thes. 2:3**). More will be covered in Lesson 7—The Two Beasts.

The False Prophet (aka the second “beast”): Part of the great rebellion of man during the Tribulation will be the rise of a new religious system (not the Great Whore, Mystery Babylon) led by the False Prophet.

- The False Prophet will be a mere mortal possessed by a demon spirit (**Rev. 16:13**).
- The False Prophet will be the spokesperson for the Antichrist:
 - Promoting his worship (**13:12**).
 - Instituting the mark of the beast (**13:16-18**).
 - Executing/martyring anyone who rejects the mark of the beast or refuses to worship the Beast’s image (**13:15, 20:4**).
 - Controlling all commerce (**13:17**).
 - He will deceive the whole earth through the signs and wonders he can perform (**Rev. 13:13,14; 2 Thes. 2:9-11; Mark 13:22; Matt. 24:24**).
- His religious system will be the “antichurch.” The groundwork for this final religious movement is already at work (**2 Thes. 2:3-12**) in the earth today and at work in many churches.
- He will be thrown alive into the lake of fire with the Antichrist (**Rev. 19:20**).

This concludes a brief overview of the numerous characters presented in the **Revelation**.

THE REVELATION

Lesson 6

The Four Orders of Saints

What is a Saint?

According to the Bible languages, a saint is any person who serves God with holiness and reverence. There is nothing “Catholic” about Bible saints. Both Old and New Testaments speak of saints. The Old Testament (KJV) refers to God’s people as *saints* 34 times. The Lord is called the King of saints (**Rev. 15:3**). We will see that each of the four orders of saints had unique callings, assignments, and destinies in God Almighty and we will see that God relates to each of them differently.

- **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.**
Revelation 17:5

This passage from the Revelation references the Whore of Babylon and helps us see the two major orders of saints—those before the cross and those after the cross. The Whore has been killing saints from the beginning.

This lesson will help to reveal the nature of our calling, our assignment, and our relationship with God through Jesus Christ as the Church. After all, we can’t run our race if we don’t know our lane or the route.

Saints in the Hall of Faith

The famous **Hebrews 11** hall of faith readily demonstrates to us that God used uniquely called “saints” or holy ones from the very beginning, though their personal walk with Jehovah and their assignments all varied. There are three Bible dispensations represented by the saints referenced in the **Hebrews 11** hall of faith (for more on *Dispensationalism*, see How to Study the Bible, Lesson 2).

Different Kinds of Old Testament Saints

Age of Conscience

- Abel, Enoch, and Noah all served God before the flood. There was no covenant between God and man at this time; yet, they served God and accomplished His will. These men were not Jews. They had a unique relationship with God.

Age of Promise

- Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph all served God during the dispensation of Promise. God made His first covenant with Abraham. This made Abraham and all of his future descendants unique. These men were not referred to as Jews but as the Patriarchs. Jacob and Joseph died in Egypt but their offspring flourished becoming a great people called Israel. They had a unique relationship with God.

Age of Law

- Moses and Joshua served God under the dispensation of Law, and served by leading God's people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.
- Rahab served God by believing Him, delivering the spies, and was then chosen to become the great grandmother of David, and progenitor of Jesus Christ.
- Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah all served God under the dispensation of Law but during the time of the judges (after Moses and Joshua, but before the kings). They served in a totally different way than those before and after them.
- David, Samuel, and the prophets served Jehovah during the time of the kings. These each had a relationship with God that was unique to their time and assignment.

All who came before the life of Jesus are referred to as Old Testament saints. Together, these Old Testament saints were the "captivity" that Jesus Christ led captive out of hell (*Sheol, Hades, the grave*) (**Eph. 4:8**). Many of these saints were resurrected from their graves after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (**Matt. 27:52,53**).

- **Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:8 NASB**

After Christ's resurrection the believers or saints are called the Church (**Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18,24**), the Body of Christ (**1 Cor. 12:27**), or New Testament saints (**Acts 9:13, Rom. 1:7**). The New Testament or New Covenant has now been in effect for 2,000 years. It is the longest running covenant God has ever made.

New Testament Saints

New Testament saints from **Acts 1** to the **Revelation 3:22** are uniquely called "the Church" and "the body of Christ." The Bible does not describe any other order of saints in these terms. Just as there were different kinds of Old Testament saints, there have been different groups of New Testament saints, each called by God to walk with Him in unique manners.

- The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb- These men were the Lord's first disciples and among the first to be born again after the resurrection (**John 20:22**). Their uniqueness amongst the New Testament saints is evidenced by the fact that their names, and their names alone, are written on the 12 foundations on the wall of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Matthias replaced Judas the traitor (**Acts 1:26**).
 - **And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:14**

Not even the great Apostle Paul's name is written there. Our names will not be there either. This testifies to the unique calling and purpose of these 12 men.

- The Beholding Saints- This group of 500+ believers are a small, unique group that Jesus Christ selected to reveal Himself to in bodily form after His resurrection. It is

apparent this is a special group of saints for they are limited in number and these special occurrences are specifically described in **1 Corinthians 15:4-7**. This list begins with Peter (Cephas) and concludes with Paul. Paul makes an interesting statement about these theophanies (divine appearances):

- **And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.**
1 Corinthians 15:8

This verse seems to indicate that the Lord Jesus Christ no longer appears to believers today like He did to that unique group of New Testament saints. Does He still appear today? Absolutely! Even supernaturally through visions, dreams, trances, etc. But it appears He no longer manifests Himself in the same way that Paul and this select group saw Him. These saints were part of a unique group given this rare honor in time. Jesus will not appear to us in this manner.

- Foundational Apostles and Prophets-

- **Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;** **Ephesians 2:19,20**

Though apostles and prophets still exist today, foundational apostles and prophets do not. The foundation has already been laid for the New Testament Church. The New Testament authors are good examples of foundational apostles and prophets. There were eight New Testament authors but over 24 apostles mentioned therein. No one alive today can be a foundational apostle or prophet.

- The Church Universal-

By Church Universal we mean every born again believer since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the Body of Christ and every member in particular with all of its giftings, callings, anointings, and assignments, among every nation, tribe, and tongue. The Church Universal is still at it today preaching the Gospel, establishing churches, making disciples, casting out devils, and advancing the Kingdom.

THE DISPENSATIONAL TRANSITION

The Church's rapture will reinstate Daniel's final week of Jewish and prophetic time. However, this final period of seven years will be unique, in that, though it will be Jewish in nature and emphasis, Jesus Christ has already been resurrected, sin has been atoned for, and salvation has been purchased. This will produce two more unique orders of saints, neither of which are ever biblically called the Church or the Body of Christ.

- The 144,000 Jewish Servants- These unique saints are called "the servants of our God" by the angel in **Revelation 7:3**. The angel places the seal of God (*as with a*

signet ring) in the forehead of 12,000 men from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. In the vision, John sees the 144,000 servants are sealed on earth and the next thing he sees is an innumerable multitude from all over the earth in heaven worshipping the Lamb. It is believed by many that these 144,000 servants will be evangelists on the order of the Apostle Paul. However, they will win very few Jews to the Lord for Temple worship will continue in Jerusalem until the Abomination of Desolation and even after the Desolation, the Jewish remnant is told to flee Israel for the wilderness. The next time the Bible records these 144,000 is in heaven in **Revelation 14**.

- **And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. Revelation 14:3**

Their uniqueness as saints is further attested to by their testimony:

- They have the seal of God in their foreheads (7:3,4).
 - They sing a new song unique only to them (14:3).
 - They are virgins (14:4).
 - They follow the Lamb wherever He goes (14:4).
 - They are redeemed from among men (14:4).
 - They are the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb (14:4). This fact would seem to imply that they are the first to be born again during the Tribulation.
 - In their mouths was found no guile (14:5).
 - They are without fault before the throne of God (14:5).
- **Tribulation Saints**- After seeing the 144,000 Jewish witnesses in **Revelation 7**, John looks and sees an innumerable multitude of all nations, kindreds, people, and languages. These are predominantly Gentile converts at the throne of God before the Lamb. They are clothed with white robes, they have palm fronds in their hands, and they are worshipping the Lord:
 - **And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Revelation 7:10**

John doesn't recognize this body of believers. When asked who they are, the angel's reply does not reference the Church. The angel tells us specifically what kind of saints they are—**"these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation"** (Rev. 17:14 NASB). These saints are also given promises unique to them:

- They are before the throne of God (7:15).
- They serve God night and day in His temple (7:15).
- God shall dwell among them (7:15).
- They shall hunger no more (7:16).
- They shall thirst no more (7:16).

- The sun won't beat down on them any more (7:16).
 - They won't experience heat any more (7:16).
 - The Lamb shall feed them (7:17).
 - The Lamb shall lead them to living fountains of water (7:17).
 - God shall wipe away all their tears (7:17).
 - They will rest from their labors (14:13).
 - Their works will follow them (14:13).
 - They stand on the sea of glass (15:2), the sea of glass being all saints up until the rapture of the Church.
 - They are given the harps of God (15:2).
 - They sing the song of Moses (15:3).
- The Martyred Saints- Revelation records that some saints are called to be martyred. These are another unique set of saints given and set in time for the will of God, for their martyrdom is foreordained.

- **And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and [*even*] their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled [*completed*].**

Revelation 6:9-11

Jesus implied that not every believer would be martyred during the Tribulation:

- **And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.**

Luke 21:16

This group's uniqueness is indicated by the fact that they are given white robes and it is intimated that their martyrdom was foreordained. They are given orders unique to them:

- **rest for a little season, until your fellowservants also and your brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**

Revelation 6:11b

Collectively, all saints from Adam to the Tribulation are called the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2,3,9,10). Each category of saints has their own unique relationship with

Jesus Christ. Thank God we walk out our salvation now. Rejoice in your calling and for your placement in time. Fear not and serve God!

THE REVELATION

Lesson 7

The Seven Seals and Matthew 24

The events of the Daniel's 70th week begin to unfold as the Lord Jesus opens each of the seven seals of Daniel's prophecy.

- **But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.** Daniel 12:4,9

The intricate details of this “time of trouble” were sealed up in a book and hidden until the “time of the end.” John saw this same book in the Revelation sealed with seven seals.

- **And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book [scroll] written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals [wax signet]. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book [scroll], and to loose the seals thereof?** Revelation 5:1,2

THE SEALS OPENED

Only Jesus is able to open the seals (**Rev. 5:5**). As we will see, the events unleashed by these seals correspond with **Matthew 24:3-14**. The opening of these 7 seals begins the 21 judgments of God upon the earth—7 seal judgments, 7 trumpet judgments, and 7 bowl judgments. Each of these seven seals is opened in heaven with an acute reaction in the earth.

THE FIRST SEAL (**Rev. 6:1,2**)-The Antichrist's Rise to Power

- **And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.**

The first seal reveals the rise of the Antichrist. The rider is a single man with a bow, symbolizing aggression and domination. He is given a crown. This symbolizes his rise to power in fulfillment of **Daniel 7:8, 24,25; 8:9,10; 9:23-25; 11:36-45**. The Church's departure will free him up to grow in power. The white horse symbolizes his false messiah-like nature. He comes promising peace, but can never deliver this. His covenant with Israel is part of this false peace. He will seek “world dictator” status. Of interesting note: war, famine, and death follow this world leader in the next three seals. Bad government always tends to produce war, famine, and death.

Matthew 24 is key to understanding the timeline of these seals. Jesus spoke of the rise of powerfully deceitful leaders claiming to have the answers to save mankind:

- **Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. Matthew 24:4b,5**

The Antichrist will be the chief of these deceivers during the Tribulation.

THE SECOND SEAL (Rev. 6:3,4)-Peace Departs and War Follows

- **And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**

The second seal unleashes a rider who is authorized to take peace from the earth. The red horse is symbolic of bloodshed and the great sword is surely indicative of the wars that will follow. No doubt, besides the wars and rumors of wars that will precede this horsemen, the world's murder rates will soar as will national, civil, and class conflicts. The absence of peace will produce total strife and conflict everywhere. Peace will not return until the Prince of Peace returns (**Isa. 9:6,7**).

In **Matthew 24** Jesus foretold the progression of these seals before John saw them opened.

- **And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation [*ethnos*-people group] shall rise against nation [*ethnos*], and kingdom against kingdom: . . . Matthew 24:6,7a**

The departure of peace will produce wars, saber-rattlings, national tensions, ethnic and racial tensions, and kingdom tensions. I believe we can already see this escalating.

THE THIRD SEAL (Rev. 6:5,6)-Famine and Inflation

- **And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beast say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.**

The third seal reveals a horsemen who holds a pair of scales in his hand, such as were used in the buying and selling of food goods. A penny was a day's wage and a measure is about a quart. So the food prices will be so high a quart of grain will cost a day's wage, or about \$60 for a loaf of bread (as of 2016).

Matthew 24 continues the Lord's prophecy concerning this Tribulation timeline and parallels the Third Seal:

- **... and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows [*birth pangs*].**
Matthew 24:7b,8

THE FOURTH SEAL (Rev. 6:7,8)-Death and Hell

- **And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale [*choloros-green*] horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.**

Death and Hell are personified here and are described with personal pronouns: *him* and *them*. This verse indicates the terrible success of the first three riders—the conqueror, no peace/producing war, and famine. Even the beasts of the earth will begin to kill people like never before (perhaps as a return of the coliseums). These calamities will affect one quarter of the world's inhabitants. (Est. World Population by 2025: 8.1 billion. Rapture: -2 billion. 6 Billion on earth after Rapture. 1.5 billion dead by the opening of the Fourth Seal.)

The Fifth Seal (Rev. 6:9-11)-Lesser Tribulation Martyrs

- **And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**

This passage reveals that persecution to the point of martyrdom will begin when the Antichrist comes to power, even though he will feign peace with Israel. The ministry of the 144,000 witnesses will usher in a tremendous revival. Many of these martyrs will be included in the death toll of the Fourth Seal. These saints are seen in heaven crying out for vengeance upon their still living persecutors.

Matthew 24 forewarns those living in that day of this very phenomenon:

- **Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.**
Matthew 24:9,10,13

THE SIXTH SEAL (Rev. 6:12-17)-Cosmic Disturbances and Great Dread

- **And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens 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 that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

The Sixth Seal seems to be the Lord's response to the Abomination Desolation and to signal the mid-Tribulation Rapture and resurrection of the Tribulation saints of God. This is confirmed by cross-examining **Matthew 24:29**, **Mark 13:24**, and **Luke 21:25**. Notice that even the pagan's recognize that God is about to pour out His wrath.

Matthew 24:29

- **Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: Matthew 24:29**

Mark 13:24 gives a description of the affliction following the Abomination Desolation.

- **But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. Mark 13:24,25**

Luke 21:25 gives a description of what will happen in Judea after the Antichrist desolates the Temple and declares that Jerusalem must be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled. This further places the Sixth Seal being opened at the halfway point of the Tribulation.

- **And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity [*to have no way out*]; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Luke 21:25,26**

The consistent reference of stars falling from heaven to the earth is probably a reference to demonic forces being cast down to the earth, no longer free to roam the heavenlies over cities and nations (**Eph. 6:12**). **Isaiah 13:10** and **Joel 2:10** and **3:15** reveal that

astronomic stars will not give their light at this event, not fall to the earth. Stars are often representative of spiritual entities (**Judges 5:20; Job 38:7; Isa. 14:13; Dan. 8:10; Rev. 12:4**).

THE SEVENTH SEAL (Rev. 8:1)-Heavenly Silence

- **And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**

Not since the creation of the angels has heaven been silent. This has been called the calm before the storm. The worst is yet to come. Jesus called it “great tribulation.”

THE REVELATION Lesson 8 The Beast System

Though he is more notoriously known as the Antichrist, the evil, end-time world dictator of the Bible is called the Beast. God chose this term on purpose.

Beast (therion): a wild animal, savage, ferocious, bestial, dangerous due to venom or wild nature

It is beyond brilliant to describe world governments as beasts for nothing has done more damage and harm to mankind than the organism known as a national government. The governments of the world are rapidly deteriorating and will continue to do so until the Lord Jesus Christ receives His Kingdom (**Isa. 9:7**).

In the Revelation, *beast* is applied to the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and reveals many things about their nature and behavior. They will be venomous, uncontrollable, untamable, ferocious, and destructive.

DANIEL AND REVELATION'S HARMONY

Much of what John saw in the Revelation concerning the Beast was first revealed to Daniel in his visions. The nature of the Beast that John saw matched the description given to the kingdoms which Daniel saw.

- **And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.**
Revelation 12:3
- **And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.**
Revelation 13:1 NAS
- **After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.**
Daniel 7:7 NAS

The main beast of the Revelation (**11:7; 13:1**) is a spiritual governmental system that has persecuted Israel from the beginning of her existence. The seven heads represent the six kingdoms that have oppressed Israel through history and include the seventh, the final kingdom that will do the same. John's vision also reveals that satan has been behind this

mighty beast system the whole time. The term *beast* is applied to both the king and the kingdom (**Dan. 2:38**).

Daniel and Revelation Comparison

<i>Daniel's Colossus (Neb.'s Dream)</i>	<i>Daniel's 4 Beasts</i>	<i>Corresponding World Empire</i>	<i>John's Vision of the Fourth Beast</i>
Daniel 2:31-45	Daniel 7:2-8	World History	Rev. 13:2, 17:8-12
--	--	Egyptian	
--	--	Assyrian	
Head of Gold	Lion with wings	Babylonian	Mouth of a Lion
Chest of Silver	Bear with 3 ribs in mouth	Medo-Persian	Feet of a Bear
Loins of Brass	Leopard with 4 wings	Greek	Like a Leopard
Legs of Iron	Terrible and nondescript beast with iron teeth	Roman	A beast with the previous traits
Feet/10 Toes of iron/clay	Terrible beast with 10 horns	The Federated Roman Empire	Ten horns are ten kings
Smiting Stone	--	Christ's Kingdom	

Nebuchadnezzar (**Dan. 2**) saw the world empires as man would see them—represented by beautiful and precious metals, i.e., gold, silver, brass, etc. God revealed the same kingdoms to Daniel (**Dan. 7**) as He (God) saw them—vicious, beastly, merciless, selfish, ferocious, i.e., the carnivorous lion, bear, leopard, etc. Also of note is the decrease in value of the metals representing the successive kingdoms: gold—silver—brass—iron—iron and clay, indicating the deterioration of man's ability to lead and govern the world.

The Seven Empires Enumerated

- 1) **Egyptian**—The nation of Israel's growth and initial slavery (**Gen. 15:13**). Israel was initially favored by Egypt, but satan perverted that kingdom and persecution arose.
- 2) **Assyrian**—Enslaved the ten tribes of the northern kingdoms of Israel about 740 BC.
- 3) **Babylonian**—Led by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians defeated the Assyrians and absorbed their empire. Three waves of Babylonian war and siege emptied Jerusalem along with the two tribes of the southern kingdom 107 years after Assyria had enslaved the 10 tribes of the north. Belshazzar preceded Nebuchadnezzar.
- 4) **Medo-Persian**—The Medes and Persians defeated Belshazzar (he saw the famous writing on the wall). Darius, the Mede, defeated Belshazzar the night of Daniel's famous interpretation (**Dan. 5**). Israel was released from captivity under the Persian kings Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. Three waves of captivity answered by three waves of return.

- 5) **Greek**—The fall of the Medo-Persian Empire gave way to the Greek empire led by Alexander the Great. The Greek tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes was a forerunner to the Antichrist. He killed over 80,000 Jews and sold another 40,000 into slavery.
- 6) **Roman**—The fall of the Greek empire allowed the rise of the Roman empire. This was the Gentile empire of John’s day, known for its horrific persecution of the Jews and then the Church, even as its power rapidly began to fade.
- 7) **The Revised-Roman Empire**—This empire has yet to be resurrected. Its heyday will last the first half of the Tribulation. This will be the kingdom the Antichrist will come out of when he defiles the Temple and declares himself to be God. His 42 month kingdom will be the eighth kingdom of **Revelation 17:11**:
 - **The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth (kingdom) and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. NAS**

Satan will directly promote this last incarnation of the Beast—both the government and its leader (the kingdom and the king). He has done so time and time again throughout history in an attempt to destroy Israel.

- **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power [dunamis], and his seat, and great authority. Revelation 13:2**

Just as every previous incarnation of the beast has had satan’s blessing and power, this last will be fully supported by him as well. The description of the final beast lets us know he and his kingdom will have the combined traits of the last three Gentile kingdoms: mostly Greek in nature with the body of a leopard, lumbering but deadly feet of the bear like Medo-Persia, and loud and crushing with the lion’s mouth of the Babylonian empire.

- **Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. Revelation 17:9-11 NAS**

This verse is the angel’s detailed explanation to John of the vision of the Whore riding upon the same beast (**17:3-8**). The interpretation is as follows:

- The seven heads are seven mountains—the seven Gentile kingdoms (**Isa. 2:2**).
- The woman (Whore) sitting on them indicates her great influence over them.
- Each kingdom had a king over them, hence seven kings.
- Five of them have come and gone: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.
- The sixth kingdom, or the “one that is” refers to the kingdom of John’s day, the Roman Empire.

- The seventh kingdom has not yet come, but when its time comes it will be brief, lasting only three and one half years. This kingdom will have 10 kings (**Dan. 7:7,8,23,24; Rev. 17:12-16**). The Antichrist will be one of these 10 kings. He will overthrow three of them, and the others will give him their power and authority (**Rev. 17:13**).
- The beast that was, and is not, is the Antichrist. He is part of the seventh kingdom for a brief three and one half years, and then through his maneuvers becomes the eighth and final king/kingdom. This eighth kingdom also only lasts three and one half years (**Rev. 13:5**). For more on the Antichrist, see Eschatology—Lessons 9,11, and 12.

THE RESURRECTED HEAD

- **And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound [strike, smite, to blow] was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound [strike, smite, to blow] was healed.** Revelation 13:3,12

The heads are individual empires. John observed one of the heads or kingdoms had been wounded to death, but this wound was healed; therefore, the kingdom restored. In the first century, as the Church spread, the Roman Empire died out. The Church has been the great restraint hindering the Beast System, preventing its resurrection. It is my opinion the mortally wounded head was and will be the Roman Empire. The rapture of the Church will provide the dragon the opportunity and freedom to resurrect his Gentile Colossus for a short seven years.

Not only did the Lord show Nebuchadnezzar future kingdoms, but He also revealed to the pagan king the coming of Christ's Kingdom, also known as the Millennial Reign.

- **Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote [to strike] the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.** Daniel 2:34,35

All the imagery of this vision represents kingdoms; therefore, Christ's Kingdom is the stone made without hands that smote the Colossus (the system of kingdoms) in its feet (The 10 Federation Roman Empire), destroying it and becoming a great mountain called Mt. Zion, and filling the whole earth. Of the increase of this kingdom there shall be no end (**Isa. 9:7**). This is the Millennial Kingdom.

- **And in the days of these kings (the ten kings) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.**
Daniel 2:44,45

The Beast and the Beast System will be destroyed by the Seconding Coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus will destroy the Colossus when He establishes His Earthly Kingdom and He will cast the Antichrist into the lake of fire alive (**Rev. 19:20**).

REVELATION

Lesson 9

The Seven Trumpet Judgments

Trumpets are used throughout the Bible to communicate and make pronouncements. Trumpets signal an order given. Whereas the previous seven seals removed a spiritual restraint allowing things to happen, these trumpets, blown by God's messengers, command things to happen.

- **And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. Revelation 8:2,6**

These judgments are the beginning of what causes men's hearts to fail **"them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"** (Luke 21:26).

The blowing of these trumpets is preceded by an angel offering incense with the **"prayers of all saints"** upon the altar in heaven which is before God's throne (Rev. 8:3-5). It appears that the prayers of the saints (perhaps the prayer "thy kingdom come," or "vengeance is yours, Lord") are what are being answered with the wrath of God. Consequently, the sweet smelling savor of these prayers brings about furious wrath and vengeance upon wicked mankind.

- **And the angel took the censer [fire pan], and filled it with fire of the altar [of sweet incense], and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. Revelation 8:5**

If the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1) was the calm before the storm, the fire tossed to the earth begins the storm of God's wrath. These judgments begin the last half of the Tribulation, or the Great Tribulation. Jesus did not speak of this half of the Tribulation in much detail because in quoting Isaiah 61:1 and 2 He declared He was anointed **"to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,"** (Luke 4:19), but He stopped short of **"and the day of vengeance of our God"** (Isa. 61:2).

THE TRUMPETS

The First Trumpet

- **The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. Revelation 8:7**

This first judgment of hail and fire is very reminiscent of Egypt's seventh plague (Ex. 9:23). A third part of the world's greenery is burned up, no doubt affecting food supplies and revenue. There is no mention of human fatalities, but one can only imagine.

The Second Trumpet

- **And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.** Revelation 8:8,9

Most believe this burning mountain will be a divine asteroid/meteorite. The “sea” is usually a reference to either the Mediterranean or Red Sea. In this case, more than likely it is the Mediterranean Sea because of its proximity to Israel. It only seems probable that the third part of the sea affected is the area surrounding ground zero; thus, killing all the sea life in the area and turning the sea red with blood. One can only speculate on any possible tsunamis produced and the number of lives consequently killed on shore.

The Third Trumpet

- **And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.** Revelation 8:10,11

Some speculate this is another meteorite whose impact poisons a third part of the world’s water system. Another belief is this is an angel because: 1) the fifth trumpet causes another star to fall from heaven described as a “him” to whom is given a key; 2) this star has a name, Wormwood; 3) it’s a star falling from heaven (**Rev. 12:4**); 4) it poisons aquifers; 5) the poisoned water kills many; and 6) the fifth trumpet unleashes demons. It must be supernatural for it doesn’t fall in one single place but upon a great myriad of locations—a third of the rivers and springs.

The Fourth Trumpet

- **And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.** Revelation 8:12

This judgment is a partial fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, “**And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:**” (**Acts 2:19**). These four judgments have fallen upon “thirds” revealing a divine pattern and not mere coincidence of calamity. Furthermore, darkness is often used to signify God’s judgment (**Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18,20; Zeph. 1:14,15; Isa. 13:10; Mark 13:24**).

The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe!)

- **And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit [an horde of scorpion locusts are unleashed]; And it was**

commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing; neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. **Revelation 9:1,2a,4,11**

This trumpet judgment is called the first “Woe,” based on the declaration of an angel in **Revelation 8:13**. This supernatural judgment unleashes a horde of bizarre looking demons to torment, but not kill, mankind for five months. They move like locusts, are prepared like battle horses, possess the face of men with hair like women, crowns like gold, teeth like a lion, and possess the tail and sting like a scorpion. The worst scorpion (the bark scorpion) sting symptoms include: severe pain/burning, muscle twitching, unusual head, eye, and neck movements, drooling, sweating, vomiting, high/low blood pressure, accelerated heart rates, and restlessness. Men shall seek death but not be able to find it.

The Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe!)

- **And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.**

Revelation 9:13-15

This trumpet commands an angel to loose four fallen angels that have been bound in the Euphrates River. These four fallen angels are authorized to kill a third of the human race that is still living. These four angels muster a demon army totaling 200 million supernatural troops. It has been speculated that each of the four angels will be over 50 million troops and will take them in each of the four cardinal directions. Humans will be killed by three plagues produced by this army: fire, smoke, and brimstone (**9:18**). Those who are not killed still will *not* repent.

The Seventh Trumpet (Third Woe!)

- **But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.** **Revelation 10:7**
- **And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there were seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.** **Revelation 11:15,19**

The seventh trumpet is the final woe. It signals the completion of the mystery of God (10:7). The blowing of this trumpet lasts for a season of time. What “mystery of God is fulfilled?” The only event that seems to fit the parameters set forth is the casting out of satan from the heavenlies. This seventh trumpet is clearly sounded at the halfway point of the Tribulation (11:2; 12:13,14).

Three reasons why this “mystery” is satan’s expulsion:

1) This harmonizes with the first pronouncements in heaven after the trumpet is sounded, i.e., **“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord.”**:

- **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.**

Revelation 11:15b

- **because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.**

Revelation 11:17c

At this time, God Almighty will take possession of what He purchased through Christ back at Calvary—all authority, as Jesus Christ said, **“All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18)**. Until this point, satan and his angels will still be ruling over the nations as the **“spiritual wickedness in high [heavenly] places” (Eph. 6:12)**.

2) This event is detailed in **Chapter 12**. This is clearly the third “woe” as declared by the angel in **8:13**.

- **Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.**

Revelation 12:12b

3) The casting out of satan has been declared numerous times by the prophets:

a) **Isa. 14:15- thou shalt be brought down to hell**

b) **Isa. 24:21- punish the host of the high ones**

c) **Isa. 25:7- he will destroy . . . the face of the covering cast over all people**

d) **Isa. 27:1- with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea**

e) **Eze. 28:16,17- I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee . . . I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee**

His fall to earth will begin the great persecution of the Jews requiring their flight into the wilderness (12:13-17). Thanks be to God we won’t be here in those days!!

REVELATION Lesson 10 The Seven Bowl Judgments

There are a total of 21 judgments brought about upon mankind in the Revelation. The first seven are released by the opening of the seven seals in heaven (see Lesson 7), kicking off the events of the Tribulation. The second group of seven judgments will be heralded and commanded by the seven trumpets (see Lesson 9), culminating at the middle part of the Tribulation. The last group of seven judgments will be poured out of seven vials or bowls during the last half of the Tribulation. These last seven judgments will complete the wrath of God (**Rev. 15:1**).

Yet, even before these final judgments are executed, God Almighty once again extends mercy to mankind by warning them with the voice of three angels:

The First Angel is given the Gospel:

- **And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.**

Revelation 14:6,7

The Second Angel declares Babylon's destruction:

- **And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**

Revelation 14:8

The Third Angel warns concerning the Beast System:

- **And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

Revelation 14:9-11

THE FINAL PLAGUES

After these three warnings, God no longer extends mercy to mankind throughout the rest of the age. During the last half of the Tribulation, God will be dealing with mankind through judgment. The preparations for these final seven judgments require the Temple in heaven to be opened.

- **And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Revelation 15:5-8**

These final plagues are apparently stored in the Temple of God in heaven. The presentation of them to the angels for use upon the earth causes the glory of God to manifest in the Temple. These judgments begin in heaven and their use glorifies God Almighty. These seven judgments are the “great tribulation” of **Matthew 24:21** and unfold over the last three and one half years of the Tribulation.

The First Bowl

- **And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. Revelation 16:2**

This judgment is the first of 4 to mirror 1 of the 10 plagues of Egypt’s judgment. The word “sore” in this verse is translated boil. These boils will break out only on those who worship the beast. This is a selective judgment just like the 10 plagues of Egypt. The Tribulation saints who are still alive will dwell in their own Goshen of safety.

The Second Bowl

- **And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. Revelation 16:3**

This is a repeat of the Egypt’s first plague. Assuming that this sea is the Mediterranean Sea, all of Europe, Northern Africa, and most of the Middle East will be horribly affected. All life in the Mediterranean will be destroyed. The stench alone would be unbearable and the floating carcasses of all sea life will, no doubt, hinder shipping lanes. The opportunity for disease can only be imagined.

The Third Bowl

- **And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of water and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.**

Revelation 16:4-7

This is an expansion of Egypt's first plague. The angel over the waters testifies that God is just in turning the world's water supplies to blood. This is an answer to the prayers of the martyred saints in **Revelation 6**. Without the adequate water, the world will crumble into chaos and rioting.

The Fourth Bowl

- **And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.**

Revelation 16:8,9

Imagine a divine heat wave that produces fire-like burns. Ironically, this heat wave follows the corruption of all water. What will the Mediterranean smell like? How will the damned find relief without any available drinking water? They must call out to God, but most won't. Malachi prophesied about this coming day:

- **For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.**

Malachi 4:1,2

Those that fear God will not only survive this season, but they'll flourish like stalled cattle, partaking of Christ's supernatural healing powers.

The Fifth Bowl

- **And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.**

Revelation 16:10,11

This judgment is a replay of Egypt's ninth plague. This plague is aimed directly at the Antichrist's kingdom. This is a darkness so tangible and palpable it inflicts a pain that

induces tongues gnawing. The boils of the first bowl judgment are still afflicting mankind at this point. For all of this, mankind still refuses to repent.

The Sixth Bowl

- **And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they shall see his shame. And he gathered them together into the place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**
Revelation 16:12-16

The Euphrates River was the eastern boundary of Abraham's promised land and the Roman Empire. It is over 1,800 miles long and has served as a natural boundary for the East and the West from the beginning of time. This judgment will take place near the end of the Tribulation as it prepares the way for the battle of Armageddon to take place. The Euphrates is dried up and three lying spirits go forth to compel the kings of the East to gather their armies. In the midst of this judgment is an exhortation from God to the remnant of believers still alive at this time—Don't quit now!

The Seventh Bowl

- **And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent [135 lbs.]; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.**
Revelation 16:17-21

This final judgment incorporates Egypt's seventh plague of thunder and hail. This final judgment brings to completion the wrath of God and the end of the time of Jacob's trouble. This judgment is two-fold: the greatest earthquake in history, leveling every city of the world destroying Babylon, and hurling great hailstones (135 lbs. each) to the earth. **Job 38:22,23 NLT** states:

- **Have you visited the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of hail? (I have reserved them as weapons for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war.)**

By now mankind knows of a surety this is the hand of God Almighty, but still they choose to blaspheme Him rather than repent. Praise be to God we can serve Him now!!

REVELATION

Lesson 11

The Glorious Appearing and the Battle of Armageddon

The Lord's long-awaited divine appearing to mankind is spoken of often in the Old Testament, being prophesied several times by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Israel longed to see this promised day. However, Israel failed to see that the prophets had foretold two divine appearances, a first and second advent.

The First Advent (Latin: *adventus: arrival, coming into view or being*) was the arrival of Jesus Christ as an infant human, born to redeem mankind (**Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Micah 5:2; Hosea 11:1**). This first advent was defined by the "Word made flesh" fulfilling the prophecies of Savior. The first appearance of God was in humility and the form of a servant, being ultimately rejected, beaten, spit upon, and crucified upon a sinner's cross. For this reason, much of Israel missed the hour of their visitation (**Luke 19:44**). They were looking for God to come first and foremost as a conquering Lord and King, and not as a redeeming Savior. The Second Advent will be the total opposite of the Lord's first appearing:

- **And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.**

Revelation 19:11,12

What a contrast between the newborn babe in a manger, dependent upon the nurture and protection of a father and mother. His first appearance in Jerusalem fulfilled **Zechariah 9:9**, "**riding upon an ass, and upon a colt [male ass], the foal [young] of an ass.**" His second appearance to Israel will be upon a white warhorse. We must realize the first course of business upon the Lord's return is to destroy His enemies. Tim LaHaye points out that verses **11** and **12** reveal the Lord's threefold nature at the Second Advent: Righteous Judge, Righteous Warrior, and Righteous King. The Day of the Lord will reveal His nature as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

THE DAY OF THE LORD

The Second Advent is also called the Day of the LORD. **Titus 2:13** calls it His "**glorious appearing.**" This will be a day of divine judgment and war. Consider the following descriptions of the Day of the LORD:

- It shall come as a destruction from the Almighty (**Isa. 13:6, Joel 1:15**).
- Every man's heart shall melt (**Isa. 13:7**).
- Cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate (**Isa. 13:9**).

- A day of vengeance, where His sword will be made drunk with the sinner's blood (**Jer. 46:10**).
- A day no one escapes (**Lam. 2:22**).
- A time of doom for the nations (**Eze. 30:3 NAS**).
- A great and terrible day, no man can survive (**Joel 2:11**).
- A day of darkness and not light (**Amos 5:18**).

THE SETTING

Right before the Lord's return a bulk of Israel will have fled into the wilderness of Edom, a remnant of Israel will still be in Jerusalem, and the armies of the world and the enemies of God will have gathered themselves together in three locations and pursuits:

1. By the prompting of the three unclean spirits the armies of the east will be in the Valley of Jezreel to await the Lord's return and do battle with Him (**Rev. 16:16**).
2. A "flood" will be moving against the remnant of God's people in Edom (**Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 12:13-17**).
3. Nations will be moved against Jerusalem (**Zech. 12:1-9**).

It is as though these three offensive movements against God Almighty and His people demand His action. Once again, the focus will be on Israel. Israel will repent and cry out to their God, and once again, God will hear their cry and deliver them (**Isa. 64:1-12; Zech. 12:10; Hosea 6:1-13; Matthew 23:39**). The Battle of Armageddon will be Satan's final attempt to annihilate God and His elect nation—Israel.

BATTLE VS. CAMPAIGN

The term "battle" is misleading. The Greek word used for battle is *polemy*, or a *campaign or war*. Wars and campaigns are made up of numerous "battles." The Campaign of Armageddon appears to be comprised of three distinct battles on the Day of the Lord. The total rebellion of mankind at this final showdown is summarized in **Psalm 2**.

The saints of God will return with the Lord in this mighty campaign:

- **And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.**
Jude 14,15
- **And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**
Revelation 19:14,15

As prophesied, the Lord returns in the air with His holy angels, and His holy saints (**Acts 1:11**). We don't do any of the fighting. This is the Lord's battle. The Lord has several weapons in His arsenal with which He will destroy His enemies:

- Breath of His lips (**Isaiah 11:4**).
- Supernatural flesh consumption (**Zech. 14:12**).
- By confusion and turning on each other (**Zech. 14:13**).
- By the hand of Judah (**Zech. 14:14**).
- In flaming fire (**2 Thess. 1:7-10**).
- The brightness of His coming (**2 Thess. 2:8**).
- The sword of His mouth (**Rev. 19:15**).

THE BATTLE ITINERARY

The Bible records that He will confront His enemies in three locations, delivering Israel and Jerusalem, but destroying the wicked:

Edom/Bozrah

Wonderfully enough, the Lord's first destination when He returns is Edom and Bozrah, the exact place where the remnant of Israel will flee to escape the wrath of the Antichrist (**Dan. 11:41; Matt. 24:15,16; Rev. 12:6, 13-17**). The Antichrist will send a contingent of his forces to wipe out the remnant of Israel seeking refuge in these mountains. Edom is the first place the Lord's heavenly sword will fall.

- **For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea [Edom], and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.**
Isaiah 34:5
- **Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save." Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come. I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm achieved salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."**
Isaiah 63:1-6 NIV

See also **Isaiah 34:1-8** and **Micah 2:12,13**.

Jerusalem

After Bozrah and Edom, the Lord moves north to deliver the besieged Jerusalem. God will supernaturally draw His enemies to His holy city:

- **I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel,**
Joel 3:2a (3:12)
- **And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city [Jerusalem], and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [200 miles].**
Revelation 14:19,20

The winepress here is the Valley of Jehoshaphat, also called the Valley Kidron. This valley is the eastern border of Jerusalem, separating the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. Jerusalem will be surrounded by her enemies in one last attempt to annihilate Israel off the map.

- **In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.**
Zechariah 12:8a,9
- **Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle.**
Zechariah 14:1-3 NAS
- **And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.**
Zechariah 14:12,14

See also **Zechariah 12:1-9** and **Joel 3:1-17**. Blood will fill this valley about 5 feet deep for over 180 miles. From here, the Lord moves 50 miles north to the Valley of Jezreel, to the place known as Armageddon.

Armageddon

The final battle of the campaign takes place at Armageddon.

- **And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Revelation 16:16**

Armageddon comes from the Hebrew *Harmegedon* or “Mountain of Rendezvous.” The location is also called the Plain of Esdraelon, and the Jezreel Valley (**Josh. 17:16**). Three significant mountains overlook the valley: Tabor, Gilboa, and Carmel. Because of its immense size (95 sq. miles), flat geography for infantry, numerous overlooking hills for artillery, and the Mediterranean Sea a short distance to the east for Naval support, it is considered the perfect place to wage war. It is also the single bloodiest piece of ground on the planet, having been the location for more military conflict than any other parcel of ground on earth. Consider the following historical generals and the battles fought in this location:

- Thotmes III (1500 B.C.) “Megiddo is worth a thousand cities”
- Rameses (1350 B.C.)
- Barak (1250 B.C.) **Judges 4, 5:19**-Barak defeated the Canaanites.
- Gideon (1150 B.C.) **Judges 6:23-7:33**-Gideon defeated the Midianites.
- Sargon (722 B.C.)
- Sennacherib (710 B.C.)
- Josiah (609 B.C.) **2 Chronicles 35:22-24, 2 Kings 23:29,30**-Pharoah Necho killed Josiah.
- Nebuchadnezzar (606 B.C.)
- Ptolemy (197 B.C.)
- Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.)
- Pompeii (63 B.C.)
- Titus (A.D. 70)
- Khorsu (A.D. 614)
- Omar (A.D. 637)
- St. Louis of France, the Crusades (A.D. 909)
- Saladin (A.D. 1187)
- Ottoman Forces (A.D. 1616)

Here at Armageddon, the armies of the world will gather themselves together in anticipation for the Lord’s return, in order to fight against Him and defeat Him. See also **Joel 3:1-17**.

- **And I saw the beast [Antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received**

the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 19:19,20

This entire war, with its three battles, only lasts one day. Jesus Christ does all the fighting and His enemies do all of the dying.

THE SUPPER OF THE GREAT GOD

- **And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.**

Revelation 19:17,18, 21

The Great Supper of God was prophesied by Job (39:27-30), Ezekiel (34:4, 17-21), and Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:27,28; Luke 17:34-37). By God's will, the world's fiercest warriors will become bird food.

THE TRIUMPHANT TOUCH DOWN

Until this point in the future narrative, there is no evidence the Lord has touched His foot upon the earth. After the final battle at Armageddon, He will finally touch down on the Mount of Olives. This is the very place from whence He ascended into Heaven in Acts 1:10-12:

- **In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD shall be the only one, and His name the only one.**

Zechariah 14:4,9

With all of His enemies dead, the Antichrist and the false prophet in hell, and satan bound, Jesus Christ will be free to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

REVELATION
Lesson 12
The Final Judgments
And The Millennial Reign of Christ

- **Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.** **2 Timothy 4:8**

The Lord God is *the* Righteous Judge. Eternal judgment is one of the six principles of Christ's doctrine (**Heb. 6:2**). All of time and creation is headed toward a final judgment day. The Bible teaches that every human being will answer to God; yet, all judgment has been given to Jesus Christ and He will judge without respect of persons (**1 Peter 1:17**).

- **And hath given him [Jesus] authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.** **John 5:27**
- **And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.** **Acts 10:42**

Judgment is appointed to all of us (**Heb. 9:27**) and He will judge both the quick (saved) and the dead (unsaved) (**2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5**).

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

The Judgment Seat of Christ is the place of judgment for all believers.

- **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.** **2 Corinthians 5:10 NAS**
- **But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought [*despise, make of no account*] thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.** **Romans 14:10,12**

Every believer will stand before this judgment seat. The good news is this judgment does not decide eternal salvation. The bad news is it does decide our eternal rewards. These rewards are based upon the works we do for Jesus after we have obtained salvation through faith.

- **Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble [straw]; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day**

shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

Every Christian's work will be tried by the fire of God to see what "sort it is." Not all of our works will be rewarded. Some of our works will be found to be wood, hay, and straw. Faith and joy are two necessary ingredients to change works into biblical "good works" worthy of a reward. The rewards will then be distributed in proportion to our faith and faithfulness in this life:

- **And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. See Luke 19:11-17**

We will not stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ upon death. Instead, all Christians will appear here at one time, sometime after the Rapture, but before the wedding supper of the Lamb and the return of the Lord with His armies:

- **Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.**

1 Corinthians 4:5

New Testament Rewards

Our rewards are meted out in terms of authority and glory. Not only will authority over cities be distributed, but crowns will also be given. Crowns also indicate authority, power, and glory. The New Testament speaks of five crowns:

- **Incorruptible crowns (1 Cor. 9:25)**- given to those who strive to serve God.
- **Crown of rejoicing (1 Thes. 2:19)**- given to those who win the lost.
- **Crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8)**- given to those who finish their race and keep the faith, looking joyful for the Lord's return.
- **Crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4)**- given to those who live as examples to the flock.
- **Crown of life (Rev. 2:10)**- given to those who are faithful unto death.

THE TRIBULATION

We have previously covered the Tribulation as the judgment of the Jews (Lesson 3—The Purpose of the Tribulation). The horrific events of the Tribulation will both judge Israel for her rejection of God and bring about her true repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ. Israel has rejected the Godhead:

- In Samuel's day she rejected the Father (**1 Samuel 8:7**).
- During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, she rejected the Son (**Luke 23:18**).

- During the early church she rejected the Holy Spirit (**Acts 7:51,54-60**).

As promised and evidenced so many times prior, God will judge Israel by a wicked ruler. During the judgment of the Tribulation it will be the Antichrist judging Israel. Israel will repent and look to the one they pierced (**Zech. 12:10**). God will deliver them and in that day Israel shall become a nation again—in one day (**Isa. 66:8**).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

God's divine judgment continues after the battle of Armageddon. The Lord will judge the nations. The Jews and the Saints will be excluded from this because they just passed through their judgment (furthermore, the Jews are not reckoned among the nations **Numbers 23:9**).

- **I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat [*Jehovah has Judged*], and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.**
Joel 3:2

It is possible that the Valley of Jehoshaphat will be a valley formed by the supernatural return of the Lord.

- **In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.**

Zechariah 14:4 NAS

Here, the remnant of the nations will gather to be judged by the King of Kings:

- **When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. **Matthew 25:31-40****

It appears that the Church will help the Lord in this judgment:

- **Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world [*kosmos*, the inhabitants of the earth]?** **1 Corinthians 6:2a NAS**

The nations will be judged based on how they helped and treated the Lord's brethren. This appears to be in regard to who helped the Jews in the last half of the Tribulation as they fled from the wrath of the Antichrist. The help provided is very similar to the needs of refugees: hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment (internment camps?). The goats are those who never cared for the Lord's brethren. Evidently, there even saved nations after the Millennial Reign of Christ, dwelling in the new earth (**Rev. 21:24, 22:2**).

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

With His enemies destroyed, the Lord will be free to establish His 1,000 year reign. He will rule from Jerusalem and His leadership is described as such:

- Peace (**Isa. 11:2, 9:6, 11:5-9**).
- Universal, covering the whole world (**Dan. 2:35**).
- Authoritative (**Ps. 2:9, Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15**).
- Justice (**Ps. 2:10-12, Isa. 9:7**).
- Merciful toward the poor (**Isa. 11:4**).
- Righteous (**Isa. 32:1**).
- Joyful (**Isa. 9:3,4**).
- Glorious (**Isa. 24:23**).
- Removal of the curse (**Isa. 11:6-9, 65:25**).
- One pure language (**Zeph. 3:9**).

This will be a unique season in man's history. There will be two kinds of people on the planet: born again saints with glorified bodies governing the world's cities, states, and nations; and mortals living life as we currently experience it. Humans will continue to procreate and repopulate the earth. Because there will be no curse, the population of man will increase tremendously under Christ's righteous rule. The millennia will end with satan being unloosed to tempt mankind and fight against God one last time (**Rev. 20:7-15**). He will lose.

See also **Daniel 7:13,14**.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE OF JUDGMENT

This throne of judgment is the final place of reckoning for the wicked unbeliever. This judgment will take place after the Millennial Reign of Christ, and after the final battle with satan.

- **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it [God the Father], from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place**

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for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. **Revelation 20:11,12,15**

The sea, death, and hell all give up their dead to be judged by the Father (**Rev. 20:13**). The unsaved dead are judged according to two books: the book that records their works and the book that records whether or not they received salvation through Jesus Christ. This is the final judgment and it results in the second death. The first death is dying spiritually unto God. The second death is being cast into the Lake of Fire for eternal separation from God (**20:14**). This is the final and eternal resting place of the damned, forever separated from God and tormented in perpetuity. This is where satan, his angels, the fallen angels, and all the wicked will burn forever.

Those who have received salvation through Jesus Christ will enjoy eternity in His presence. Amen!

THE REVELATION

Lesson 13

The Tribulation Timeline

Now that we have studied all of the major characters and events of the book of Revelation, we can put them together in a cohesive timeline and produce a working timeline of Daniel's 70th Week. There is no general consensus on the exact timeline of every detailed event of the Tribulation. The chronologies of some events are very clear while others are more vague. We will major on the events we can clearly place on our timeline, and minor on the uncertain events.

THE GENERAL TIMELINE

The Revelation may best be understood by evaluating the chronological order of the events of the seven years of Tribulation. We will now look at the events that will follow the departure of the Church (Lesson 4 thoroughly proves the pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church.)

1) The Rapture of the Church

The exact date of this event is unknown and clearly yet future. What is clear is that the Rapture must happen before the Antichrist can be revealed (**2 Thes. 2:3,4**). The Scriptures clearly teach that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent (likely to occur at any moment).

2) The Seven-Year Peace Treaty (The Beginning of the Week)

- **And he [the prince that shall come, the Antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years]: Daniel 9:26,27a**

The political leader known biblically as the Antichrist will make a peace treaty with Israel for seven years. This peace treaty is the only event provided in the Bible account that corresponds to Daniel's final week of time; therefore, it is commonly believed that it will be this treaty or covenant (not the Rapture) that will "kick-start" the seven years of Tribulation. The striking question that must be asked is, "What causes the need for a peace treaty with Israel?"

- i) The opening of the first seal corresponds with the rise of this politician and his political ambition. He is given a bow and he goes forth conquering and to conquer (**Rev. 6:2**).
- ii) A time of great political tension throughout the world producing wars and rumors of wars corresponding to the second seal and the red horse (**Rev. 6:3,4; Matt. 24:7**).
- iii) A time of inflation, financial instability, famine, and pestilence brought about by the third seal releasing the black horse (**Rev. 6:5,6; Matt. 24:7**).
- iv) An increase in Jewish persecution (**Matt 24:9; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12**).

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- v) Jewish Temple worship will be permitted to take place in Jerusalem with a rebuilt Temple.
- vi) The 144,000 witnesses go forth evangelizing the world (**Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10**), reaping a tremendous harvest of souls (**Rev. 7:9**). It is likely that, just as Jesus Christ had 3.5 years of unhindered ministry, these witnesses will likewise have 3.5 years of unhindered ministry.

3) The Middle of the Week

There are multiple events that are clearly revealed to begin at the mid-Tribulation point:

- **The Rapture of the great multitude**
The great company of new believers will be raptured at the middle of the Tribulation (**Rev. 7:9-17**). Some believe the 144,000 will continue to minister into the Great Tribulation, leading others to Christ (**Rev. 18:4**).
- **The 7 Trumpet Judgments**
These judgments are heralded in this season concluding with the seventh trumpet resulting in satan being cast down to earth (**Rev. 12:3-9**). Satan gives his power to the beast and causes his world dominance.
- **The Ten Kings destroy the Babylonian System (Rev. 17:16-18)**
The kings will politically defer to the Antichrist and give him their power. Together they will cast off and essentially render the Babylonian religious system dead. Now everyone will be forced to worship the Antichrist.
- **The Abomination Desolation (Dan. 9:27)**
You can almost see the devil's temper tantrum in being kicked out of heaven by causing the Antichrist to defile the earthly Temple. This is one event that can be definitively nailed down in the timeline. See more below.
- **Beast reigns 42 months (Rev 13:5)**
From this point forward the Antichrist (the Beast) will be the singular leader in charge of the revised/resurrected Roman Empire, becoming the final beast system. The Antichrist will have much trouble in his kingdom during these years.
- **Holy City tread down 42 months (Rev. 11:2)**
The Antichrist will rule his kingdom from Jerusalem for 3.5 years. He will begin a terrible persecution of the Jews he once briefly protected.
- **The Woman flees for 42 months (Rev 12:6,14)**
This turn of events will cause the Jews to flee to the wilderness where God has provided a place of refuge for them.
- **Two witnesses prophesying 42 months (Rev. 11:3)**
The two witnesses begin their ministry at this exact time and minister exclusively in Jerusalem. Perhaps the flight of the Jews gives way to their uprising.
- **The 3 Angels warn of the coming Judgments (Rev. 14:6-13)**
In one last act of mercy, God warns the earth of the coming events and sets before them life and death, commanding them, in essence, to choose life.

- **Institution of the Mark of the Beast and the Worship of His Image**
With the Babylonian system of worship destroyed, the False Prophet institutes the mark of the Beast and Beast worship. Those who reject it are executed.

The Abomination Desolation is a term referring to the defilement of God's holy sanctuary. This event signals the halfway point of the Tribulation and a turn for the worse. This term is first used in **Daniel 9:26,27; 11:31** and **12:11**, and then in the Gospels (**Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20**).

This singular event is critical to our study for three reasons: 1) it is described in great natural detail, 2) it begins a three and one half year clock ticking, and 3) it kicks off "the Great Tribulation."

The Details

- **And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.** Daniel 9:27 NAS

The Antichrist will break his peace treaty with Israel.

- **Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation [that astonishes and horrifies].** Daniel 11:31 NAS

He will use military might to occupy Jerusalem and take the Temple.

- **From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation [that astonishes and horrifies] is set up, there will be 1,290 days [3.5 years].** Daniel 12:11 NAS

He will command an end to the regular Jewish Temple worship, declare himself to be God, and possibly erect an idol in the Holy of Holies. This will begin the last 3.5 years known as the Great Tribulation (**Matthew 24:21**).

- **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)** Matthew 24:15
- **But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth**

**understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:
Mark 13:14**

This act will begin the final great persecution of the Jews. God commands them to flee to the mountains.

4) The Great Tribulation

This period of 3.5 years is covered in great detail in the Revelation. This is the period of time when the last of the judgments of God (the 7 Bowl Judgments, see Lesson 10) are poured out. The Gospels summarize it as a time of tribulation, affliction, vengeance, great distress, and wrath.

- **For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** **Matthew 24:21**
- **For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.** **Mark 13:19**
- **For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.** **Luke 21:22,23**

i) Antichrist military conquest and opposition

The Antichrist will work to expand his empire in these 3.5 years, but he will be met with opposition. Enemies from the North, South, and East will rise up to oppose him (**Daniel 11:40,44,45 NIV**).

ii) Marriage Supper of the Lamb occurs right before we return with the Lord.

Not much is known about this event (**Rev. 19:9**). The saints are next seen on their white horses coming with the Lord (**v.14**).

6) The Last Day of the Tribulation

- a) The two witnesses are raptured (**Rev. 11:3-12**).**
- b) The Lord returns to Bozrah and Edom (**Isa. 63:1-6**).**
- c) The Lord moves on to Jerusalem to deliver the city (**Zech. 14:2-4, 12-14; Rev. 14:19,20**).**
- d) He completes the day of His vengeance at Armageddon (**Rev. 16:16**).**
- e) The Antichrist and False Prophet are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (**Rev. 19:20**).**
- f) Satan is bound in chains by an angel and cast into the abyss for a thousand years (**Rev. 20:1-3**).**

7) The Lord Judges the nations and establishes His Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:32-34).

The Lord's Kingdom will be ruled from Jerusalem with His faithful saints promoted to positions of leadership. Mankind will continue having children and advancing life. Rebellion will be impossible due to the Lord's rod of Iron.

8) Satan is released from his prison

Satan is released to give everyone born during the Millennial Kingdom an opportunity to choose life or death. A company as innumerable as the sand of the sea will choose to rebel against God. This final battle takes place again at Jerusalem (**Rev. 20:9,10**). Satan is thrown into the lake of fire, defeated forever.

9) The Great White Throne of Judgment

The final judgment of all the wicked dead. Satan, the wicked, death, and hell are all thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death (**Rev. 20:10-15**).

10) The New Heaven, the New Earth, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)

This is where we spend eternity with God, enjoying His goodness for the ages to come (**Eph. 2:7**). Amen!!

My Studies on the Revelation included:

Finis Dake, *Commentary and Footnotes from the Dake Study Bible*

Finis Dake, *The Book of Revelation Simplified*

Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled*

Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy, edited by Tim LaHaye

Dr. Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*

Dr. Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*

Rick Renner, *A Light in the Darkness*

Dr. Hilton Sutton, *The Book of Revelation Revealed*

Dr. Hilton Sutton, *The ABC's of Bible Prophecy*

Dr. Bob Yandian, *The End Times*