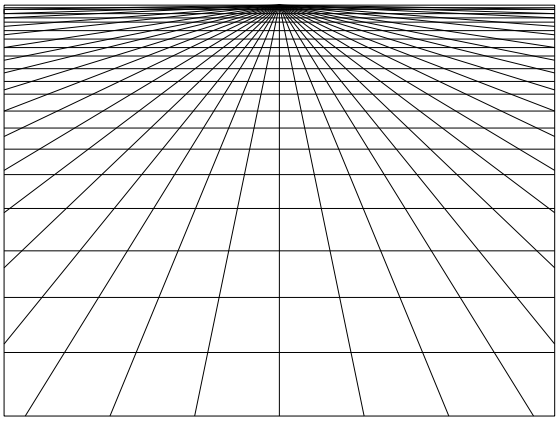
THE DOCTRINE OF THE END TIMES

(Eschatology)



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ESCHATOLOGY

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THE END TIMES

(Eschatology)

I. GOD PREDICTS THE FUTURE -- An Introduction

The word "eschatology" is the theological term used to describe the Bible's prophetic doctrine about the Last Days ("*eschatos*" = last [end]; "*logos*" = word or teaching). Hence, "eschatology" is teaching about the last days of this age and about the glorious eternity to follow.

"The study of Bible prophecy is fascinating and profitable. God has seen fit to draw aside the curtain of the future and to reveal enough of His heavenly plan to inspire His children with confidence and hope. Let us approach our study with joyous expectation" -- Charles Woodbridge

A. The Importance of Studying Eschatology

What is the purpose for studying prophecy?

1. To teach us what God's plans are

   A knowledge of Bible prophecy "provides the believer with an optimistic philosophy if history" (Alva McClain)

2. To inspire us about the greatness of God (Is. 46:9-11)

   (He is omniscient [He knows all] and He is sovereign [He controls all])

3. To assure us of the unity and reliability of Scripture

   A vast portion of the Bible is given to predictive prophecy. It is said that 333 distinct prophecies were literally and exactly fulfilled at the first coming of Christ (the chances of this happening by accident have been computed as 1 in 87,000--plus 90 more zeros).

   For every verse speaking of Jesus' first coming in Scripture, there are eight which speak of His second coming.

4. To encourage us to be faithful to God and His Word

   God's future program is a source of:

   a. Comfort to the sorrowing Christian (I Thess. 4:13-14; John 14:1-4)

   b. Strength to the Christian enduring testing (II Cor. 4:14-18; Rom. 8)

   c. Warning to the lazy, unfaithful Christian (II Cor. 5:9, 10)

   d. Correction to the Christian who places too much value on this life (II Peter 3:10-12)

   e. Reproof to the Christian who becomes doctrinally careless (II Thess. 2:5; II Pet. 1:19)

   f. Cleansing for the Christian who keeps his eyes on Christ and His future glory (I Jn. 3:2-3)
   (cp. W.E. Blackstone, Jesus is Coming, p. 180)

5. To wake us up to realize the extreme urgency of the hour in which we live (Rom. 13:11-12). God's longsuffering is so that others might be saved (II Pet. 3:8-9, 15)

6. To prepare us for the most dreadful time of persecution in human history -- the 70th week of Daniel (commonly called "The Tribulation Period") (Rev. 14:12)

7. To bless us with God's revelation about the future (Rev. 1:3)

B. The Method of Studying Bible Prophecy

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you His Word

2. Allow the Bible to formulate your system of beliefs (your theology), rather than forcing your pre-supposed beliefs into the Bible (SEE: Appendix: "A Biblicist's View Toward the Bible")

3. Interpret the Bible literally

   (Take God's Word for what it says, rather than allegorizing the Bible and dreaming up a deeper, hidden meaning that cannot be proven by the context, grammar, or by an accurate comparison with other Scripture)

4. Remember that God has not necessarily revealed all the details of His plan yet (Rev. 10:4)

5. Understand the unique features of Bible prophecy

   a. Not all prophetic passages are chronological (cp. Rev. 11 with 12:1-5)

   b. Often there are time gaps in prophecy (that were not discernable to the prophet himself) (Is. 9:6-7, 61:1-2; cp. Lk. 4:18-20; Dan. 9:24-27)

   c. Often, future events are recorded as if they had already occurred (EX: Is. 9:6, 5:13, 53:12). Why?

      1) To express the certainty of fulfillment (Is. 46:10)

      2) To express the viewpoint of the prophet who was seeing the vision of the future (EX: Rev. 20:15)

C. The Amazing Accuracy of Bible Prophecy

Only God can predict the future!

1. The Omniscience of God has foretold His plan (Is. 14:24; 44:28-45:1, 13; 46:9-10)

2. The Soveriegnty of God will accomplish His plan (Is. 46:10b-11)

3. The Inspiration of the Holy Spirit has recorded His plan (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:20-21)

DANIEL CHAPTER 2

An understanding of the book of Daniel is the key to understanding the book of Revelation.
The theme of Daniel is: "God is in Control of the course of history."

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image was given by God to show the consecutive Gentile world powers (and their "splendor" from man's perspective) until Christ comes to destroy these powers and set up His eternal kingdom.

Observations:

1) The phrase "latter days" (2:28) shows the prophetic (eschatalogical) significance of this dream.

2) Basic observations from verses 32 and 33:

   a) The image depicts 4 distinct empires (evident by the 4 metals)

   b) The fourth empire (the "iron" one) has 2 aspects [2 time frames]
   Proof: Legs = iron; feet = iron/clay

   c) Each empire is inferior in worldly quality to its preceding empires
   Proof: The decreasing value of each metal; lower level of each part of the image

   *Each kingdom deteriorates not in size, scope, or longevity; but in magnificence.

   d) Each kingdom is militarily stronger (the metals are progressively stronger, possibly picturing increased military might)

Specific Interpretation:

1) The head of gold = Babylon (v. 37-38)

2) The chest and arms of silver = Medo-Persia (v. 39a; cp. 8:20)

3) The stomach and thighs of brass = Greece (v. 39b; cp. 8:21)

4) The legs of iron = Rome (v. 40)

5) The feet of iron mixed with clay = Revived Rome (v. 41-43)

   The ten "Toes" (v. 42) are called "10 kings" (v. 44) (cp. Dan. 7:24 with Rev. 17:12, 16; 19:19)

   --Strong nations and weak nations will combine to form a "one-world kingdom" (v. 42).

   --This final "New World Order" will be a mixing ("mingle themselves") but not a genuine unity ("they shall not cleave one to another" - v. 43)

6) The "Stone cut out without hands" = Jesus Christ (v. 45)

7) The "Kingdom" (v. 44) = the Millennial kingdom - Is. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4; Rev. 20:1-10

8) "The iron, brass, clay, silver, gold" = Man's final kingdom will be a composite or conglomeration of all the kingdoms, since it will have absorbed the worldly elements of the previous kingdoms (cp. Rev. 13:1-2 with Dan. 7:4-7)

DANIEL CHAPTER 7

The beasts in Daniel 7 parallel the image in chapter 2.
The 4 beasts (in 7:1-4) represent the rulers of the four world empires previously described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Chapter 2	Daniel's Vision Chapter 7	Interpretation
Head of Gold	Lion	Babylon
Chest and Arms of Silver	Bear	Medo-Persia
Belly and Thighs of Brass	Leopard	Greece
Legs of Iron	Beast with iron teeth	Rome
10 Toes of Iron/Clay	10 horns	End Time League of 10 Nations

Specific Interpretations:

"The fourth Beast" (v. 7) = Rome

The **"10 horns"** = a confederacy of 10 kings (v. 24; cp. Rev. 17:12, 16; 19:19)

The **"Little horn with the big mouth"** (v. 8-11) = The future Anti-christ

--**"Eyes. . . mouth"** (v. 8) - identifies the "little horn" as a person, a human being.

--**"Little"** - speaks only of his beginnings; he starts off small, but through diplomacy he will during the first 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation exalt himself (with Satan's power) globally.

--**"The thrones were cast down"** (v. 9) - the Gentile thrones (kings and kingdoms) are destroyed ("cast down") (cp. 2:44)

--**"The voice of great words"** - Antichrist's blasphemy (v. 11) (Rev. 13:5, 6)

--**"The Beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame"** (v. 11) - Antichrist will be thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10)

--**"The rest of the beasts"** (v. 12) - the previously mentioned 3 beasts (v. 4-6) had their kingdoms and power taken away successively; yet their worldly philosophies, systems, culture, and practices were absorbed (assimilated) by the kingdoms that took them over, and in this sense "their lives were prolonged."

Characteristics of the Antichrist

He will be:

1. **A fearsome leader** (v. 20). "More stout" = more imposing or fearsome. Antichrist will impress the godless world by his clout, power, personality, and boastful mouth.

2. **A cruel persecutor** (v. 21) - He will war against the saints (Jew & Christian) during the second half the Tribulation (cp. v. 25; Rev. 13:7, 12:11-13)

3. **An arrogant blasphemer** (v. 25 - He will talk about God with contempt and set himself up as God) - See Daniel 11:36

4. **A powerful despot** (v. 25 - He will attempt to change that which only God has the right to change).

He will rule globally for 3-1/2 years.

5. **A military-obsessed idolater** (Dan. 11:37-38)

6. **A Satanic deceiver** (II Thes. 2:9; Rev. 13:3, 4)

7. **A man of lawlessness** (II Th. 2:3)

DANIEL CHAPTER 8

1. **"Ram with 2 horns"** (v. 3) = Medo-Persia (v. 20)

2. The **"Goat"** (v. 5) = Greece (v. 21)

   The **"notable horn"** (v. 5, 8, 21b) = Alexander the Great
   The **"four horns"** (v. 8, 22) = Greece's divided kingdom
   Note: the 4 horns parallel the 4 heads on the leopard - 7:6

3. The **"little horn"** (v. 9-14, 23) = Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.)

Antiochus Epiphanes: invades Israel (v. 9)
torments Israel (v. 10)
exalts himself against God (v. 11)
desecrates the Temple (v. 11-14)

Antiochus in many ways is a <u>type</u>, <u>pre-figuring</u> or foreshadowing of the future Antichrist.
Proofs:

1) Both are depicted as <u>little horns</u>"
(Antichrist - 7:8; Antiochus - 8:8)

2) Both are depicted as "<u>great</u>" (powerful) leaders
(Antichrist - 7:8, 11, 25; Antiochus - 8:9)

3) Both seek a throne at <u>Jerusalem</u>
(Antichrist - II Th. 2:4; Antiochus - 8:9 - "the pleasant land")

4) Both <u>oppose Israel</u>
(Antichrist - 7:21, 25; Antiochus - 8:10, 24)

5) Both <u>desecrate</u> the Jewish Temple
(Antichrist - 9:27; Mt. 24:15; Antiochus - 8:11, 12)

6) Both are characterized by a <u>fierce</u> (fearsome) <u>countenance</u>
(Antichrist - 7:20; Antiochus - 8:23)

7) Both get their <u>power</u> from another
(Antichrist - 13:2, 4; Antiochus - 8:24)

8) Both "<u>prosper</u>" for a while
(Antichrist - 7:24-25; Antiochus - 8:24)

9) Both are effective at practicing <u>deception</u>
(Antichrist - II Th. 2:9-10; Antiochus - 8:25)

10) Both are lifted up in <u>pride against God</u>
(Antichrist - 7:11, 25; Antiochus - 8:25)

11) Both are <u>destroyed</u> without the hand of man involved
(Antichrist - 7:11; II Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:20; Antiochus - 8:25

DANIEL CHAPTER 9

Daniel 9 gives the answer to the question: When will Israel stop being oppressed and under Gentile domination? When will their promised kingdom come?

Daniel 9:20-27 answers 3 important questions:

1) How long until Utopia? (i.e. the Messianic Kingdom)

Answer: 70 sevens (490 years) of judgment are decreed against Daniel's people (Israel) and Daniel's city (Jerusalem) (v. 24)

"Seventy weeks" = lit. seventy sevens

70 x 7 = 490 years

2) How long until Messiah?

Answer: 69 sevens (483 years) would pass before Messiah was to come (v. 25-26)

Verse 26 -
- "Messiah" = Jesus Christ
- "Cut off" = His death
- "The people of the Prince" = Rome
- "The people of the Prince that shall come" = Antichrist
- "Desolations" = Israel was desolate of her people from 70 A.D. until 1948.
  - Israel will again be desolate in the future Tribulation for 42 months (Mt. 24:15; Rev. 11:2)

3) How long until the End?

Answer: 1 seven (7 years) under the tyranny of Antichrist will still to come (v. 27)

A time gap exists between the 69th week and the 70th week. So far, that gap has been almost 2,000 years.

Verse 27 -
- "He" = the Prince that shall come (Antichrist)
- "Shall confirm the covenant" - Antichrist will ratify a peace treaty
- "With many" - The Jews, the Arab nations, the world at large
- "For one week" - one period of 7 years

***Very important note:** This signing of a 7-year covenant (binding promise of peace) marks the beginning of what is known as the "Tribulation period". From the day this covenant is signed, exactly 2,520 days will remain for Antichrist's rise to power & reign.

"In the midst of the week" - at the mid-point of the 7 years, after the 3-1/2 years

*The mid-point of the 70th week marks the time of:

1. Antichrist's recovery from a deadly wound (See: Rev. 13:3-8)
2. The desecration of the Holy Place (Mt. 24:15)
3. The exaltation of Antichrist as "God" (II Thes. 2:4)
4. The issuing of the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18)
5. The hottest anti-Jewish, anti-Christian persecution to ever be experienced (Rev. 12:12-17)

III. Characteristics of the Last Days

The Bible describes the type of world people will live in during the Last Days. Certain marks will characterizes the type of people, culture, and society that will be in existence prior to the End of this Age.

What are the marks of the Last Days?

A. The Marks of the End Time <u>Humanity</u>
(II Timothy 3:1-4)

1. A <u>Troubled</u> Society (v. 1)

"Perilous times" = grievous times

2. <u>Selfishness</u> (v. 2)

a. *"Lovers of their own selves"* = self-lovers; humanism

b. *"Covetous"* = money lovers

3. <u>Arrogance</u> (v. 2)

a. *"Boasters"* - to brag about self-superiority

b. *"Proud"* - haughty; to look down on others

4. <u>Blasphemy</u> (v. 2)

Abusive speech toward Jesus Christ (Ex: rebels, liberal theologians, and cults)

5. <u>Disregard for Authority</u> (v. 2)

a. *"Disobedient to parents"* - unpersuaded of their need to submit to and obey parental authority

b. *"Unthankful"* - no appreciation for what their parents gave to them and ultimately what God gave them (evolution gives rise to unthankfulness - Rom. 1:21)

c. *"Unholy"* - no reverence for that which is sacred

6. **<u>Without Natural Affection</u>** (astorgoi)

Modern examples:

--No family loyalty
--Divorce
--Abortion

7. **<u>Liars</u>**

a. *"Trucebreakers* - refuse to be bound by agreements

b. *"False accusers"* - devilish slander

8. **<u>Wild, Rowdy, and Lawless</u>**

a. *"Incontinent"* = uncontrolled; unrestrained; no power over their emotions, words, actions, etc.

b. *"Fierce"* = savage, untamed, brutal

c. *"Despisers of those who are good"* - lit. to have no love for good (cp. Is. 5:20; Rom. 1:32)

9. **<u>Inconsiderate</u>**

a. *"Traitors"* = to betray someone to ruin them

b. *"Heady"* - headstrong; reckless and rash; to rush forward in pursuit of getting their own way without concern for those they crush along the way

10. **<u>Egocentric</u>**

a. *"High-minded"* - conceited; to "be so inflated with a sense of their own knowledge and importance, that they envelop themselves in a cloud of smoke (root comes from "tuphos" - smoke, mist, cloud) and are unable to recognize the truth" (H. Kent).

b. *"Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God"* - pleasure lovers rather than God lovers

Contemporary preoccupations: entertainment, recreation, sports, leisure, food, comfort, and convenience

B. The Marks of the End Time Religion
(II Timothy 3:5, 4:3-4, 4:1-2)

1. Religious Formality (II Tim. 3:5)

People will be satisfied with having the external shell of godliness but will have no internal reality. They pacify themselves, "It's nice to have religion, but really there is nothing real and life-changing about it." (cp. Titus 1:16).

Religious quacks will increase and will easily lead astray the naive who need an answer to their guilt of sin (II Tim. 3:6-9).

2. Doctrinal Intolerance (II Tim. 4:3-4)

People will become disgusted with straight-forward, sound expositional preaching, and will be inclined to justify their wicked lifestyles by listening to preachers who will tell them what they want to hear (Is. 30:10). (Modern examples: church tramps and TV church)

3. Spiritual Apostasy (I Tim. 4:1-2)

(Cp. II Thes. 2:3 - "A falling away" is coming before Jesus returns)

The "New Age" philosophy is spreading across the world.

4. False Asceticism

A religion of works whereby one denies their normal appetites--this will be the religion of the Last Days.

A disregard for marriage and vegetarianism will be on the increase.

Examples of ascetics: Judaizers, Gnostics, Catholics (Fridays, Lent), Seventh Day Adventists

C. The Marks of the End Time Church

Revelation 2 and 3 describes seven actual, literal local churches which existed in Asia Minor in the Apostle John's day and had certain characteristics or qualities which will characterize the spiritual situation of local churches in the Last Days before the Rapture.

Proofs that these churches will characterize churches that are in existence at the end of this Age:

1) These churches (1:4; 2-3) are described in an eschatological book - Revelation. What purpose would these churches serve if they have no bearing on End Time events?

2) The Holy Spirit did not merely have a message for each church (singular), but is speaking to the churches (plural) (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

3) These churches all have warnings of the trials and troubles to face the Church in the Last Days.

   The following phrases evidence the eschatological significance of these churches:

   a) "*I will come unto thee quickly*" (2:5)
   b) *"Thou shalt suffer. . . ye shall have tribulation"* (2:10)
   c) *"I will come unto thee quickly"* (2:16)
   d) *"Great tribulation"* (2:22)
   e) *"Hold fast till I come"* (2:25)
   f) *"I will come on thee as a thief"* (3:3)
   g) *"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation. . ."* (3:10)
   h) *"Behold, I come quickly"* (3:11)
   i) *"He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end"* (2:26)

What kind of churches will exist in the Last Days prior to the Rapture?

1. Unloving churches (like Ephesus - 2:1-7)

Note: This church describes a working (v. 2), discerning (v. 2), enduring (v. 3), and separated (v. 6) church; yet one who had "left her first love" (for Christ) (v. 4)

2. **Suffering (persecuted) churches** (like Smyrna - 2:8-11)

3. **Compromising churches** (like Pergamum - 2:14-15 and Thyatira - 2:20)

4. **Worldly churches** (like Thyatira - 2:20)

   This church was a worldly church yet a busy church (2:19)

5. **Dead churches** (like Sardis - 3:1)

6. **Faithful churches** (like Philadelphia - 3:8, 10)

7. **Complacent ("lukewarm") churches** (like Laodicea - 3:15-16)

8. **Self-sufficient (arrogant) churches** (like Laodicea - 3:17-18)

9. **Empty churches** (see Hebrews 10:24-25)

   There will be a tendency for Christians to forsake the Assembly.

   The phrase *"and so much the more as ye see the day approaching"* (v. 25) points to the intensified need in the Last Days for Christians to exhort each other to not forsake the assembling of themselves together.

   The phrase *"the day"* (v. 25) refers to the return of Christ (the Rapture) (cp. Heb. 10:37; Rom. 13:11-12). This phrase, when used without an antecedent, is a technical phrase which points to "the Day of Christ" (which means "The Rapture" - see: II Th. 2:2; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16).

   The need for spiritual fellowship, accountability, and encouragement will increase as the end of this Age draws nearer; Satan is already fighting with great vigor to try to keep people from being faithful to the local church assembly.

IV. THE FINAL 7 YEARS OF THIS AGE

The Disciples asked the Lord Jesus Christ:

"What shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world (age)?" (Matthew 24:33)

Overview & Comparison of the SIGNS of the end of the age			
MATTHEW 24	**REVELATION 6**	**LUKE 17**	**LUKE 21**
False Messiahs (v.4-5)	Antichrist's rise to power (v.2)		False Messiahs (v.8)
Wars & Rumors of Wars (v.6-7a)	Wars & Bloodshed (v.3-4)		Wars & Commotions (v.9-10)
Famine, disease, scattered earthquakes (v.7b-8)	Famine, Death (v.5-8)		Earthquakes, famines, pestilences (v.11)
Persecution of God's people & Deception (v.9-28) God's people - hated (v.9) God's people - betrayed (even by family) (v.10) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.15) Sever persecution (v.16-22) False signs & wonders to deceive (v.24)	Martyrdom of God's people	Trouble that will cause God's people to long for Christ's Return & Deception (v.22-23)	Persecution of God's people (v.12-24) God's people betrayed by family & friends (v.16) God's people hated (v.17) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.20)
Cosmic Disturbances (v.29-30)	Cosmic Disturbances (v.12-14)		Cosmic Disturbances (v.25-26)
The Second Coming of Christ (v.31-44) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Wrath	The Wrath of the Lamb (v.15-17)	The Second Coming of Christ (v.24-37) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Immediate Wrath	The Second Coming of Christ (v.27-36)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

- Trumpet Judgements (Rev. 8-9, 11:15-19)
- Bowl Judgements (Rev. 15-16)

THE FALSE PROPHET

THE ANTICHRIST

SATAN

Antichrist signs a 7 Year peace treaty ("covenant") (Dan.9:27; cp.Rev.6:2)

The "Harlot" (a false Romanist church-state religious system) will ride the Antichrist (the "Beast"). She uses him to gain global power (Rev.17:3)

Antichrist engages in battle & receives a fatal wound (Dan.11:44-45; Rev.13:3)

Antichrist's deadly wound is healed (He apparently is resurrected) (Rev.11:7; 13:3,12,14; 17:8)

Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel (Dan.9:27)

Antichrist desecrates the Holy Place(the Temple) (Dan.9:27; Mt.24:15)

- -By setting Himself up as "God" (II Th.2:4)
- -By erecting an Image in His honor in the Temple (Rev.13:14-15)

Antichrist is worshipped (Rev.13:4,12)

Antichrist performs false miracles (II Th.2:9)

Antichrist enforces his mark (666) on all people (13:16-18)

Antichrist persecutes the Jews & saints (Rev.13:7; Dan.7:25)

The 10 Kings who will give global authority to Antichrist will destroy the "Harlot" and turn all world power over to him. (Rev.17:11-18)

The Antichrist will continue for 42 months (Rev.13:5-6) or "a time (1), times (2), and dividing of time (1/2)" (Dan.7:25) = **3 1/2 years**

The false prophet - a religious demonic man promotes Antichrist (Rev.13:12,14)

He does false wonders & miracles (Rev.13:13)

He persuades the world to build an image to the Beast (Rev.13:14)

He miraculously gives life to the image (Rev.13:15)

He enforces the mark of the Beast (Rev.13:16)

He with Satan & Antichrist persuade the worlds armies to gather for Armageddon (Rev.16:13-16)

The False Prophet is destroyed & thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev.19:20)

Antichrist will attempt to fight against Christ at Armageddon.(Rev.19:19)

Antichrist is destroyed & thrown alive into the Lake of Fire (II Th.2:8; Rev.19:20)

Satan wars against Michael in Heaven (Rev. 12:7; Dan. 12:1).

Satan is banished from Heaven never to appear before God's presence again (Rev. 12:8-12).

Satan severely persecutes the Jews ("the woman" - Rev. 12:13-16; Jer. 30:7) and believers (Rev. 12:17).

Satan empowers (gives authority) to the beast system (Rev. 13:2) and the beast person (Antichrist - Rev. 13:3).

Performs false miracles through Antichrist (II Thes. 2:9).

Receives worship by the world along with Antichrist (Rev. 13:4).

Satan is thrown into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3)

Basic Events Related to the Nation of ISRAEL in the final 7 years

"The Beginning of Sorrows" (Birth Pangs) (Mt.24:4-8)

3 □

God's 2 Witnesses prophesy of doom

"The Great Tribulation" (Mt.24:21)

3 □ **

2 witnesses are killed.
3 □ days later they arise!

Time of Jacob's Trouble
(Jer.30:7; Mt.24:9-13; Rev.12:13-17)

The Abomination of Israel's Holy Place (Mt.24:15; II Th.2:4)

Israel flees from Jerusalem (Mt.24:16-21) and finds a place of refuge in the "wilderness" for 3 □ years (Rev.12:13-16)

"The Day of the LORD" (I Th.5)

144,000 Jews are sealed (for protection) after the Rapture but before the Trumpet Judgements (Rev.7:1-8)

A remnant in Israel Mourns & Repents and turns to Christ (Zech.12:10-14)

__ **Antichrist's rise to power** (Rev.6:2)

__ **Wars & Bloodshed** (Rev.6:3-4)

__ **Famine** (Rev.6:5-6)

__ **Natural Death** (Rev.6:7-8)

__ **Martyrdom** (Rev.6:9-11)

* __ **Cosmic Disturbances** (Rev.6:12-17) **THE DAY OF THE LORD BEGINS!** (v.17; Joel 2:31)

__ □ **hour Silence of suspense in Heaven** anticipating the Trumpet Judgements

- __ □ **Trees & grass burned up** (Rev.8:7)
- __ □ **Sea becomes Blood** (Rev.8:8-9)
- __ □ **Fresh water becomes Blood** (Rev.8:10-11)
- __ □ **Illuminaries Darkened** (Rev.8:12)
- __ **Demonic locust like creatures torment men for 5 months** (Rev.9:1-12)
- __ □ **of Men killed by a 200,000 Demon possessed army** (Rev.9:13-21)
- __ **Final Announcements of God's Triumph** (Rev.11:15-19)
  - __ **Ugly & Painful Sores** (Rev.16:1-2)
  - __ **All Oceans Seas become Blood** (Rev.16:3)
  - __ **All Fresh Water becomes Blood** (Rev.16:4-7)
  - __ **The Sun Scorches Men** (Rev.16:8-9)
  - __ **The Antichrist's Kingdom is Darkened** (Rev.16:10-11)
  - __ **The World's Armies Gathered for Armageddon** (Rev.16:12-16)
  - __ **Greatest Earthquake & Hail Storm ever!** (Rev.17:17-21)

A Chronology of Events Regarding ISRAEL in the Final 3 1/2 Years of the Last Days According to the O.T. PROPHETS

1. The Lord will allow **SEVERE TROUBLE** to come upon Israel to bring her to repentance (Jer. 30:5-8, 11)

2. The Lord will **PLEAD** with Israel in the wilderness (Jer. 31:1-2; cp. Rev. 12:6, 14; Ez. 20:35-36)

3. The Lord will **PROTECT** a remnant of Israel from destruction (Is. 43:1-4; cp. Rev. 7:7ff; Zech. 12:8-9, 13:8-9)

4. The Lord will **REGENERATE** a remnant of Israel when they **REPENT** (Is. 59:9-15; Jer. 30:24-31:1; Ezek. 36:15-29; Zech. 12:10-14)

5. The Lord will **FIGHT** for Israel when He returns (Is. 59:19-20; Jer. 30:11, 16; Zech. 2:5, 12:8-9)

6. The Lord will **RE-GATHER** Israel to enjoy her promised Messianic Kingdom (Is. 11:11-14, 43:5-7; Jer. 30:3, 10; Ezek. 20:33-34, 34:13-17, 36:24ff)

ARMAGEDDON

This battle will be:

1. **GLOBAL** (The armies of the whole world will gather)
(Is. 13:3-5, 29:5, 34:2; Joel 3:2, 14; Rev. 9:16)

2. **SUPERNATURAL** (This battle is not some nuclear war, etc., but will be fought and won by Jesus Christ Himself)
(Is. 31:4, 42:13-14, 63:1-6; Zech. 14:2-5; Rev. 19:11-21)

3. **CATASTROPHIC** (The world's Babylon will come crashing down)
(Is. 13:1-22, *v. 19; Rev. 17-18; Is. 29:6, 30:25)

4. **QUICK** (This battle will take only one day!)
(Is. 29:5; Zech. 3:9; 14:7; Rev. 18:10, 17, 19)

5. **HOT** (People's bodies will melt because of the intense heat)
(Is. 30:26, 66:15-16; Micah 1:3-5; Zech. 14:12; Rev. 16:9)

6. **DARK** (The sun and moon will be darkened)
(Is. 5:30, 13:10; Joel 3:15; Zech. 14:6; Rev. 16:10)

7. **BLOODY** (The blood will flow for 200 miles to the depth of 4 1/2 feet))
(Is. 34:3, 5; Jer. 7:311-34; Joel 3:13; Rev. 15:19-20)

V. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

A. WHAT is the Rapture?

The word "rapture" is a derivative of the Latin word "rapere" (meaning rapid). This word occurs in the Latin translation of I Thess. 4:7 which translates the Greek expression "caught up."

Although the Bible contains many references to the Rapture, there are four key passages which describe this momentous event.

Note the main emphases of the passages below:

1) **Matthew 24:22, 31, 40-42** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **REMOVE** His Elect saints
(The Rapture = Deliverance from divine wrath)

2) **John 14:1-3** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **RECEIVE** His Elect saints
(The Rapture = Reception into Christ's arms)

3) **I Corinthians 15:50-58** - The Rapture is a time when Christ will **RENEW** (resurrect) His elect saints
(The Rapture = **Transformation** from corruptible mortality)

4) **I Thessalonians 4:13-18** - The rapture is a time when Christ will **REUNITE** His Elect saints
(The Rapture = Reunion with the dead in Christ)

Scripture teaches that believers are to:

1. Watch for His coming
(Mt. 24:42, 25:10; Lk. 12:39-40)

2. Wait for His coming
(I Cor. 1:7)

3. Look for His coming
(Titus 2:13)

4. Hope for His coming
(I Pet. 1:13; cp. 4:13)

5. Love His coming
(II Tim. 4:8)

6. Be faithful until His coming
(I Tim. 6:14; I Pet. 1:7)

7. Remain patient until His coming
(James 5:7-8)

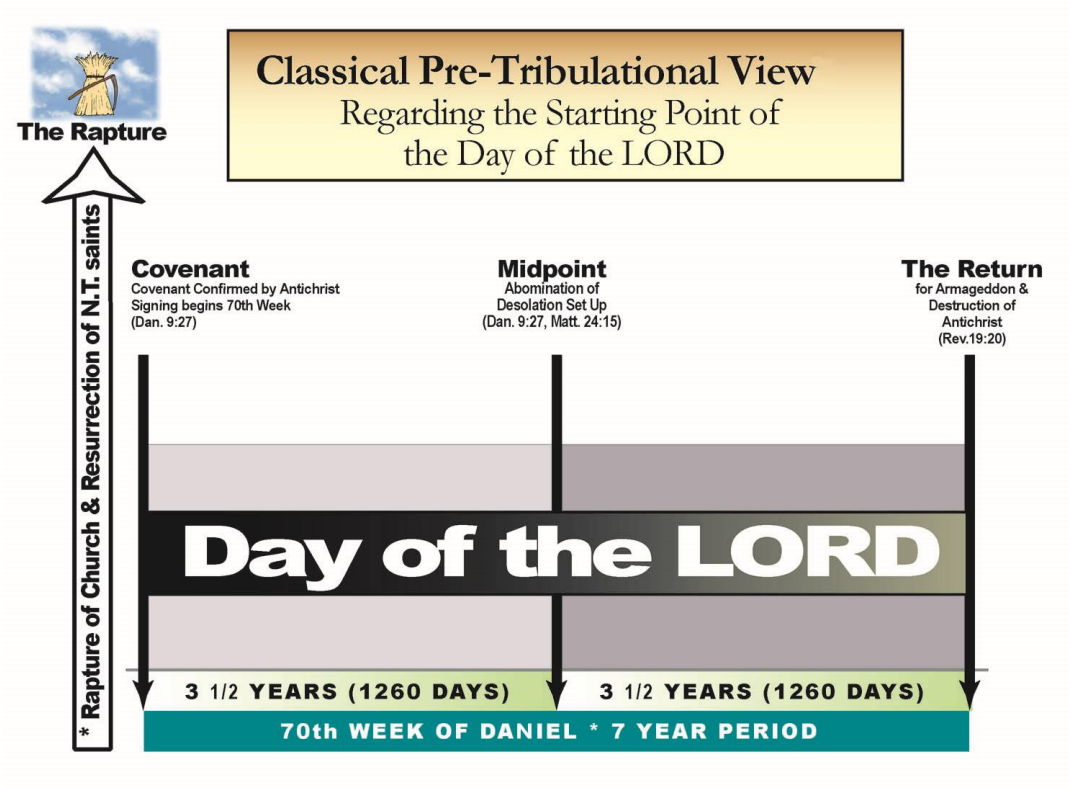
B. WHEN is the Rapture?

The fact of the Rapture taking place is not a debated issue among conservative Bible believers (all fundamental and evangelical Christians believe that the Rapture will take place). However, the timing of that great event is debated among believers. When will that "blessed hope" take place?

*The various views about the timing of the Rapture:

1. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture View

a. The Position:



b. The Proponents:
This view was --

--originated by the writer of J. N. Darby (1830)

--popularized by the footnotes in the Scofield Bible

--systematized by the faculty of Dallas Seminary (Charles C. Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost)

c. The Proofs:

1) Believers are exempt from God's wrath (i.e. The Day of the Lord), and His wrath will be poured out at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel

a) Believers are exempt from God's wrath

--I Thess. 1:10 - *"delivered from the wrath to come"*
--I Thess. 5:9 - *"not appointed unto wrath. . . but salvation"*
--Rev. 3:10 - *"I will keep you from the hour of trial"*
(Note: the Greek phrase in John 17:15; the word *"keep"* = guard)

b) God's wrath will begin at the beginning of the 70th week

--The phrase *"beginning of sorrows"* (Mt. 24:8) is synonymous with the phrase *"travail upon a woman with child"* (I Th. 5:3)
(Note: the word *"sorrows"* (Mt. 24:8) is plural; whereas the word "*travail"* is singular and has the definite article, referring to the pain of delivery in childbirth)

--All of the seals (Rev. 6) describe the outpouring of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord.
(Note: Would God pour out His wrath on His saints? [Rev. 6:9-11]? The wrath of God is said to <u>begin</u> in Rev. 6:17).

2) In Revelation chapters 4 - 18, no reference is made to the word "church" indicating that the church must have been removed from the earth prior (Note: An argument from <u>silence</u> is not argument)

3) The Bible teaches the doctrine of <u>imminency</u>
(Imminent = the Rapture can occur at any moment with no forewarning or signs)

Proof: Passages that call upon believers to *"watch"* (Rom. 13:11-12; I Thes. 5:6-8; Lk. 12:35-40) and *"look"* (Titus 2:13) prove imminency.

Note: Does the Bible teach imminency or expectancy? It is clear that the Apostles believed that the Rapture could occur during their lifetime, but an any-moment Rapture without any signs is not a valid doctrine in Scripture

Did the Apostles expect an imminent Rapture?

--The Rapture could not be imminent for Peter because he was told that he would die before the Rapture (John 21:18-19)

--The Rapture could not be imminent for Paul because he was informed that he had a great ministry ahead in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11)

4) The *"come up hither"* of Rev. 4:1 symbolizes the Rapture, and the "*24 elders"* of Rev. 4 & 5 represents the Church in Heaven before the Tribulation begins (6:1)

Note: Such interpretations are allegorizations of Scripture - a hermeneutic that must be rejected by a literalist interpreter)

5) The *"falling away"* in II Thess. 2:3 refers to a "catching away" or "departure" by Rapture.

Note: The Greek term *apostacia* can only mean moral or doctrinal <u>apostasy</u>

6) The *"Restrainer"* is the Holy Spirit (who lives in believers). He will be removed prior to the Tribulation (II Thess. 2:6-7). (Note: Nothing in context conclusively proves that the Restrainer is the Holy Spirit)

Question: If it is the Spirit, is He removed or is his <u>restraint</u> removed?

7) The Distinction between <u>Israel</u> & the <u>Church</u> (the theological reasoning of Dispensationalism)

a) The church was not in the first 69 weeks; how could she be in the 70th week? (Dan. 9:27)

b) The nature of the Tribulation describes God's dealings with Israel, not the church

Note: It is wrong to assume that God is going to revert back to His old Covenant as He deals with Israel in the Tribulation. Since He will not, there is no compelling dispensational reason to break the Church Age off from the 70th week. The Tribulation is not a new dispensation, but a transition from this age to the golden age of the Millennium. Beware of letting a theological system (like Dispensationalism) formulate your interpretation of Scripture.

2. The <u>Mid-Tribulation</u> Rapture View

a. The <u>Position</u>:

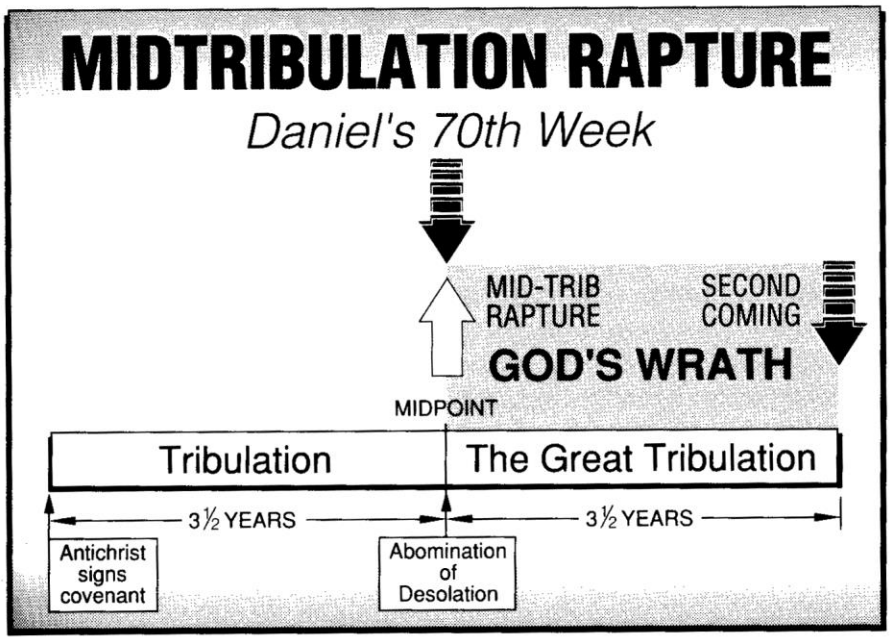


Chart by Marvin Rosenthal - "The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church"

b. The <u>Proponents</u>: J. Oliver Buswell Jr.
(*<u>A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion"</u>*)
Gleason L. Archer

c. The <u>Proofs</u>:

1) God's wrath begins at the <u>mid-point</u>; hence, the Church must be raptured prior

2) The 7th trumpet of Rev. 10:7 is sounded at the mid-point. This trumpet is the same as the *"last trumpet"* of I Corinthians 15:52.

3) Matthew 24:27 - describes Rapture which occurs during a time of "peace" like Noah's day (v. 36-39). This peace corresponds to the first 3 1/2 years

4) The resurrection and rapture of the 2 witnesses pictures the resurrection and rapture of the church (Rev. 11:11-120

d. The <u>Problems</u>:

1) This view contradicts Jesus statement that no man can know the exact <u>day</u> and <u>hour</u> of His coming (Mt. 24:42; 25:13)
2) This view falsely assumes that the trumpets occur during the first 3 1/2 years

2. The Post-Tribulation Rapture View

a. The Position:

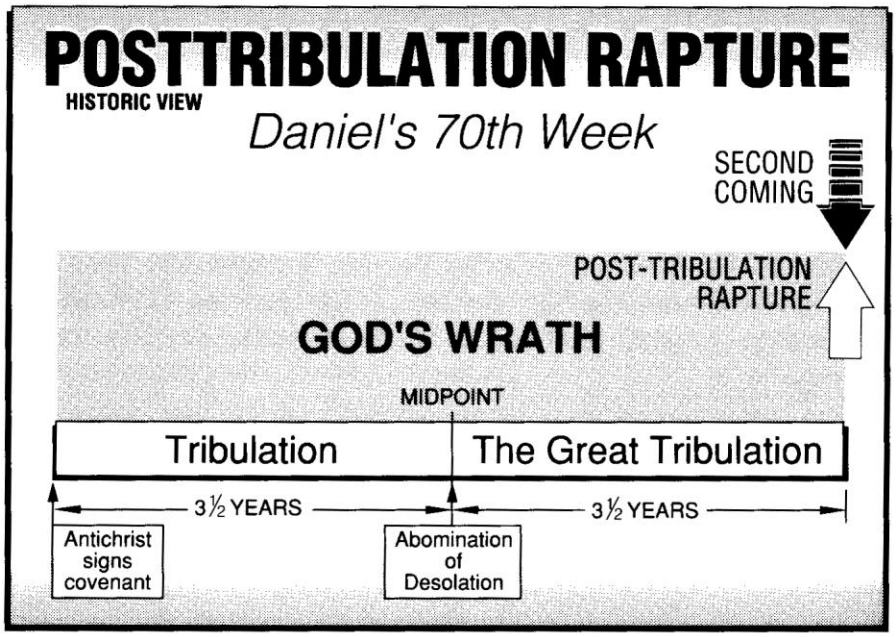


Chart by Marvin Rosenthal - "The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church"

b. The Proponents:
*Dr. Robert Gundry
--W.E. Blackstone *"Jesus Is Coming"*
--George E. Ladd
--Alexander Reese

c. The Proofs:

1) The Rapture and Second Coming are not distinguished in Scripture (the words "parousia" [coming or presence - I Th. 4:15; Mt. 24:27] and "apokalupsis" [revealing - I Cor. 1:7; I Pet. 1:7, 4:13] -- both are used to describe the same event.

2) Revelation 4 - 18 describes God's "saints" as living on earth, not in Heaven.

3) The connection between the Rapture (I Thes. 4) and the Day of the Lord (I Thes. 5) shows a Post-Tribulation Rapture.

d. The Problems:

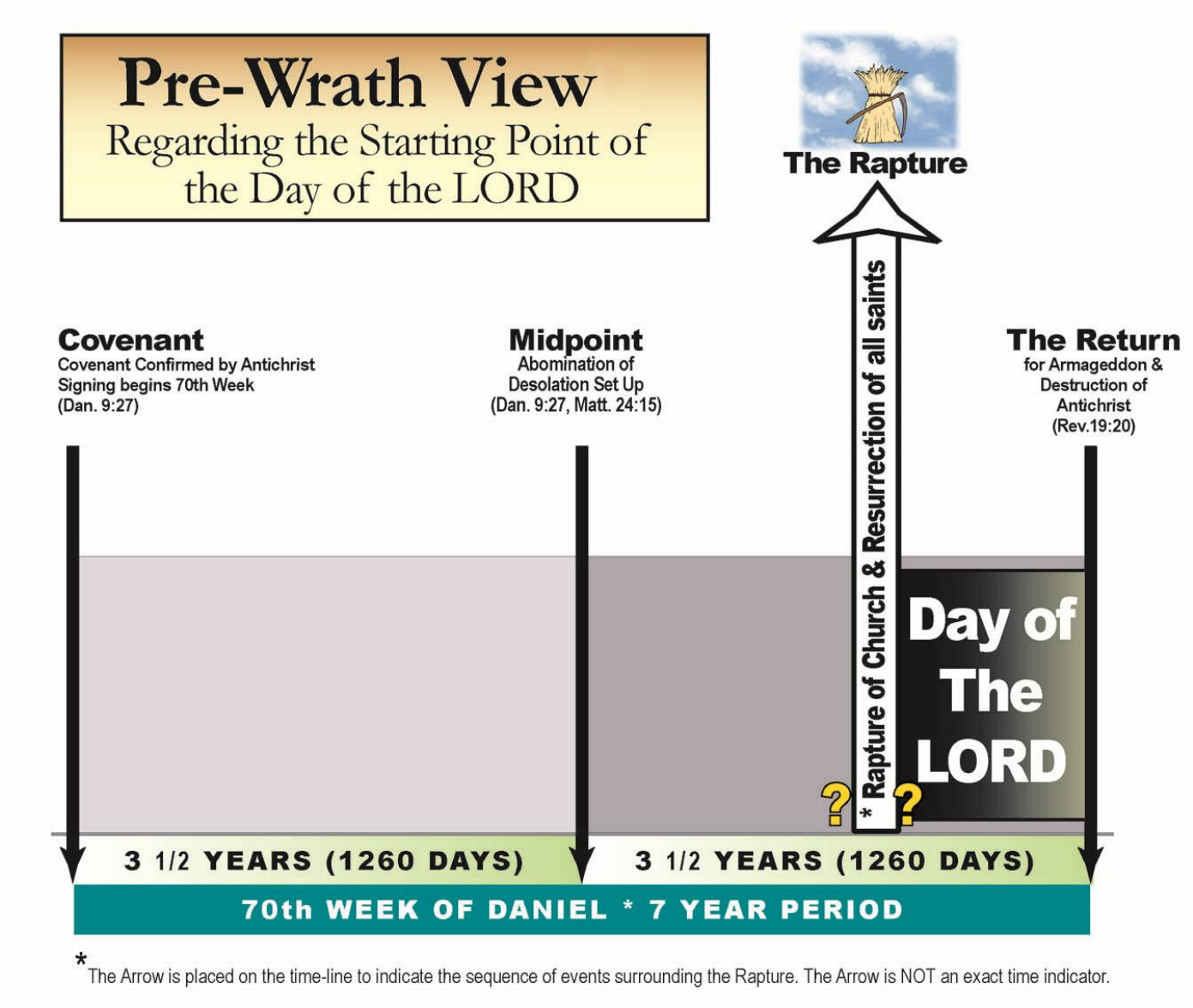
1) This view would contradict Jesus' statement that no man can know the exact day and hour (Mt. 24:42, 25:13).

2) If the Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation, who will populate the Millennial Kingdom?

3) This view does not allow for the days of the Tribulation to be "cut short" for the Elect as Jesus stated in Matthew 24.

4. The <u>Pre-Wrath</u> (Pre-Day of the LORD) Rapture View

a. The <u>Position</u>:



b. The <u>Proponents</u>

Although some minor details of this view were not spelled out, the basic arguments for the fact that the church would have to face the Antichrist in the Tribulation and the fact that the Rapture would take place before the Wrath of God was poured out was held by such men as: J.C. Ryle

C.H. Spurgeon

(A continuation of Spurgeon's viewpoints are being published by Banner Ministries Box 23, Belpur, Derbys DE561QR UK recently published an article titled: "A Fearless Look at the Rapture Debate" and held to the Pre-wrath view)

This view has been largely systematized by Marvin J. Rosenthal (Author of the Book - "The Pre-wrath Rapture of the Church" Nelson Pub.)
Other contemporary proponents of this view include:
Robert VanKampen
Pastor Vincent Sawyer

c. The Proofs

A Brief Synopsis of the Pre-wrath Rapture View

Six Scriptural indications that the Rapture will occur during the Tribulation, but before "The Day of the LORD":

I. The TIMING of "The Day of the LORD"

II. The CHRONOLOGY of Matthew 24

III. The SHORTENING of "The Great Tribulation" for the Elect (Mt. 24:22)

IV. The CONDITIONS that precede "The Day of Christ" (II Thes. 2:1-3)

V. The HARVEST of the Righteous before the Winepress of God's Wrath (Rev. 14:14-20)

VI. The PEOPLE included in "The First Resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6)

INTRODUCTION: (I Thes. 4:13-18)

The Rapture is a:
1) Cheerful Hope (v. 13)
2) Certain Hope (v. 14)
3) Common Hope (v. 15-17)
4) Comforting Hope (v. 18)

Chapter 5 is a continuation of the flow of thought in chapter 4, hence tying the Rapture to the Day of the Lord. Unfortunately, the chapter division between I Thessalonians 4 & 5 has led many to not see the vital connection between these two chapters.

5:1- "But of" (peri de) is used here to introduce a new emphasis of that which was previously stated (cp. this construction in Mt. 22:31, 24:36).

The phrase "the times and seasons"(5:1) is stated without an object, hence it is referring back in context to the Rapture in 4:17 (the antecedent to this phrase is the catching up and meeting the Lord in the air described in 4:17).



The Day of the Lord (I Thes. 4:1-11) will come during a time when:

1) The world will not expect it (v. 1-3a)
2) The world will not escape it (v. 3b)
3) True believers will expect it (v. 4-7)
4) True believers will escape it (v. 8-11)

Note contrast:

Unbelievers - "They...them...they" (v. 3 - unsaved world to be judged in the Day of the Lord).

Believers - "Ye...you (v. 4) . . . ye (v. 5) . . . us (v. 6). . . us (v. 8). . . us (v. 9). . . we (v. 10) (believers to be delivered [raptured] from the Day of the Lord).

"Salvation" (v. 8, 10) = Delivered; rescued ("raptured")

If the timing of the Rapture is so linked up with the timing of the Day of the Lord, as Paul reveals in I Thes. 4:13-5:11, the question that naturally follows is: ***When will the Day of the Lord take place?" To find the answer to that question is to find the answer to the timing of the Rapture.***

SEE: Isaiah 2:10-12, 17-21; 13:6-13; Amos 5:18-20.

Every reference to the Day of the Lord describes unparalleled terror and judgment, not congruous with a major portion of the early states of the 7-year Tribulation.

The Day of the Lord will be:

1) A day when only the Lord will be exalted (not the Antichrist) (Is. 2:17)
2) A day of desperation (Is. 2:19)
3) A day when God shakes the earth (Is. 2:21)
4) A day of fainting hands and melting hearts (Is. 13:7)
5) A day of shocking pain (Is. 13:8)
6) A day of signs in the sky (Is. 13:10)
7) A day of no deliverance (Ezek. 7:19)
8) A day of destruction (Joel 1:15)
9) A day of torment (Joel 2:1-6)
10) A day of no escape (Amos 5:18-19)
11) A day of darkness (Amos 5:20)
12) A day of judgment on the heathen (Gentiles) (Obad. 15)
13) A day of wrath (Zeph. 1:15)
14) A day of no hope (Zeph. 1:17)
15) A day of cosmic disturbances (Zech. 14:6-7)

*Believers will not face the wrath of God in "The Day of the LORD." (I Thes. 5:9, 1:10)

Six Scriptural indications that the Rapture will occur during the Tribulation, but before "The Day of the LORD":

1) The TIMING of "The Day of the LORD"

a) Every Bible reference to "The Day of the LORD" points to a time period occurring in the latter half of the seven-year Tribulation

[Is. 2:12, 13:6, 9; Ezek. 13:5, 30:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Zech. 14:1; Jer. 46:10; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20; II Pet. 3:10; cp.Zeph. 1:18, 2:2, 3]

2) The Bible teaches that Elijah (or someone like him) must appear before "The Day of the LORD" (Mal. 4:5)

3) The Bible teaches that signs in the sky will occur just before (prior to) the beginning of "The Day of the LORD" (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:17)

4) The Bible identifies the beginning signs of "The Day of the LORD" with the opening of the sixth seal
(Rev 6:12-17)

Question: Does not the Day of God's wrath include the first five seals also?

Evidently not. Proof:

(1) While Christ is sovereign over the events of the first five seals (since He opens each one), the nature of the evens that transpire indicate the results of man's sin and wrath, not God's.

(2) During the five seals, God uses natural (earthly) causes to accomplish His purpose; whereas beginning with the sixth seal and continuing through the trumpet and bowl judgments, God uses supernatural causes to judge.

* (3) The fifth seal could not be God's wrath since it describes the martyrdom of God's faithful saints.

(4) The word "wrath" is not used in the first five seals.

* (5) The question asked by the martyred "souls under the altar" (Rev. 6:10) indicates that God's judicial wrath on His enemies had not yet begun (God answers their prayer in 8:3).

(6) The sign of God's wrath is said to begin in Rev. 6:17, and the outpouring of God's wrath begins in 8:7.

Question: Does not the phrase "is come" ("elthen" - aorist indicative of "erchomai") indicate that the day of God's wrath began <u>before</u> the sixth seal?

No. In this dramatic context, God is using a **ingressive** aorist which speaks of an action about to occur.

Note: the use of "elthen" in this sense in -

(1) Rev. 19:7 - speaking of the Church's <u>impending</u> (about to begin) <u>marriage</u>

(2) Mk. 14:41 - speaking of Christ's <u>impending</u> (about to begin) <u>crucifixion</u>

e) The Bible identifies the signs in the sky with Christ's <u>coming</u> and the <u>in-gathering</u> (Rapture) of His elect (Matthew 24:29-31)

2) The <u>CHRONOLOGY</u> of Matthew 24

a) The first half of the seven-year Tribulation is described in verses 4 - 14.

NOTE: Matthew 24:4-31 runs strikingly parallel with the six seals of Revelation 6.

Mt. 24:4-5 -	Corresponds with the <u>first</u> seal
Mt. 24:6-7a -	Corresponds with the <u>second</u> seal
Mt. 24:7b -	Corresponds with the <u>third</u> seal
Mt. 24:7-8 -	Corresponds with the <u>fourth</u> seal
Mt. 24:9-22 -	Corresponds with the <u>fifth</u> seal
Mt. 24:29-31 -	Corresponds with the <u>sixth</u> seal

b) From the mid-point of the Tribulation up to the Rapture is described in verses 15-51.

V. 30

"They shall <u>see</u> the Son of man coming in the clouds" -

Pretribulational Rapturism generally believes that the Rapture will be in "secret" and that Christ will not be visible to the world at that time.

However, the words that are continually employed in describing the Rapture show that Christ will be visible both at the Rapture and at His return to earth.

Four words describe Christ's second coming at the Rapture and His return:

(1) Parousia - Emphasizing Christ's presence
(2) Erchomai - Emphasizing Christ's coming
* (3) Apokalypsis - Emphasizing Christ's self-disclosure (His visible revelation of Himself)
* (4) Epiphaneia - Emphasizing Christ's appearing (His visible manifestation)

Greek Terms	**RAPTURE**	**RETURN**
Parousia	I Thess. 4:15	II Thess. 2:8
Erchomai	John 14:3	Jude 14
Apokalypsis	I Cor. 1:7 I Pet. 1:7, 13; 4:13 Luke 17:30	II Thess. 1:7
Epiphaneia	II Tim. 4:8 Titus 2:13 I Tim. 6:14	II Thess. 2:8 II Tim. 4:1

Proofs that the "coming of Christ" described in v. 31-42 is the Rapture:

(1) The trumpet sounds (v. 31; cp. I Cor. 15:52; I Thes. 4:16)

(2) The elect are gathered (v. 31; cp. v. 22)

(3) The day and hour is unknown (v. 36, 42, 44)
(if the timing of those taken away referred to the end of the Tribulation [as pre-tribulationists suggest], the timing would be known)

(4) Certain individuals are seized away (v. 40-41)
("taken" = para/lambano - to receive unto oneself, to take along with - John 14:3)

(5) Those gathered are taken to the wedding (25:10;
cp. Rev. 19:79)

* (6) The "peaceful" conditions on the earth (v. 36-39) experienced by the unsaved prior to the "coming of the Son of man" unquestionably point to the Rapture.

Many pre-tribulationalists in a desperate attempt to make verses 40 & 41 not refer to the Rapture explain it thus:

> Those taken in verses 40 & 41 are not saints but sinners who are removed from the earth at the end of the Tribulation."

This view has a major problem explaining how the previous context (v. 36-37) relates to those seized away (i.e. v. 40-41).

Every pre-tribulationist knows that the end of the Tribulation will involve the most severe, terrifying judgments (bowls - Rev. 15-16) ever to fall on earth.

The world's conditions at the end of the Tribulation will not allow the relaxed, uninhibited, normal "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" scenario described in vv. 36-39.

Verses 40 and 41 and verse 31 must be describing the same event - The Rapture of the saints!

Note the phrases that link this context together, joining it to verses 30-31:

V. 33 -"It is near" (referring to the Lord's coming in v. 30-31)

V. 36 -"That day" (referring to the Lord's coming in v. 30-31)

V. 40 -"Then shall (referring immediately to the days like Noah's day [v. 36-39] and ultimately to the Lord's coming [v. 30-31])

3) The SHORTENING of "The Great Tribulation" for the Elect
(Mt. 24:22)

Jesus is not teaching that the Great Tribulation will be shortened (it will last the full second half of the Tribulation). What He is teaching us is that it will be shortened (lit. "cut short" or "limited") for the elect.

Why is this time period limited only for the elect's sake? Is it because they are raptured previous to the very end?

Such a view does fit the context since verses 31, 40, 41 do describe a "catching away" of God's "elect" (v. 31).

4) The CONDITIONS that precede "The Day of Christ"
(II Thes. 2:1-3)

The phrase "The Day of Christ" refers to the Rapture every time it is used (Ex: Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; I Cor. 1:8).

a) Condition # 1 - The Apostasy

"Falling away" = apostasia - this word never (in Biblical or secular literature) refers to a "catching away" as some have suggested, but rather to an apostasy, rebellion, spiritual abandonment, or forsaking of one's "faith" (Acts 21:21). [SEE: Arndt & Gingrich Lexicon, p. 98]

Such apostasy is clearly said to occur in the "Last days" (I Tim. 4:1; Mt. 24:10-13).

b) Condition # 2 - The revealing of the Antichrist

Question: Is the "revealing" referring to the Antichrist's manifestation of his true person and character to discerning believers in the beginning of the Tribulation or to Israel at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Mt. 24:15)?

In either case, His revealing must occur before the Day of Christ."

5) The HARVEST of the Righteous before the Winepress of God's Wrath (Rev. 14:14-20)

Verses 14-20 describe two distinct ingatherings
[NOTE: Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament IV, p. 690, holds that verses 14-16 describe the harvest of the saints, while verses 17-20, the harvest of the wicked].

a) The Son of man reaps a harvest (v. 14-16)
(A harvest of the righteous)

Evidences of "Rapture":

(1) "White cloud" - corresponds to the Rapture
(Mt. 24:30; I Th. 4:17)

NOTE: The Rapture of the saints pictures Christ's coming in white clouds. The return for judgment pictures Christ's coming on a white horse (Rev. 19:11).

(2) "Son of man" = Jesus Christ (cp. Rev. 1:13)

[NOTE: The phrase "Son of man" is a frequently used phrase in reference to the second coming and the resurrection of the dead (Jn. 5:26-28; Mt. 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44]

(3) "A golden crown" (Greek "stephanon" - singular)

When Christ returns for Armageddon, He is pictured as having "many crowns" (Greek "diademata" - plural) (Rev. 19;12)

(4) "Angel...loud voice" = Evidently the "shout...the voice of the archangel" of the Rapture (I Th. 4:16)

b) The angel reaps a harvest (v. 17-20)
(A harvest of the wicked)

(1) This gathering is not describing a removal of people from the earth.

(2) Rather, this gathering is describing a gathering of the world's armies to Israel for the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 14:1ff; Joel 3:1-3, 13; Is. 63:1-6; Rev. 19:11-16).

*God always removes His people immediately prior to His wrath (Ex: Noah & Lot - Luke 17:27-30).

6) The PEOPLE included in "The First Resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6)

a) The Resurrection of the Just (v. 4, 6)
The saints included in the "first" resurrection had to endure opposition during the Tribulation(v. 4).

b) The Resurrection of the Unjust (v. 5a)
(1) "The rest of the dead" - Evidently refers to the unbelieving dead who will be resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11) and be condemned to a "second death" (20:6, 14).
(2) Hence, the blessing is only on those involved in the "first resurrection" (v. 6).

c) Concluding observation:

Fact #1 - The Bible clearly teaches two distinguishable, major, general resurrections (Jn. 5:29; Dan. 12:2; Lk. 14:14; Acts 24:15).

Fact #2 - The resurrection and the Rapture occur precisely at the same time period ("give or take a few seconds") (I Cor. 15:51-54; I Th. 4:15-17).

Fact #3 - The resurrection described in Rev. 20:4 involves those people who had to take a stand against the Antichrist, his mark, and his image.

***Assertion - Therefore, if the "first resurrection" is indeed "first" and if this resurrection will include Tribulation martyrs (v. 4), then the Rapture cannot be pre-tribulational.**

At this point, the pre-tribulationist reply could be: "But the 'first' resurrection will occur in stages - The first stage being the pre-tribulational Rapture, the second stage being before the Millennium."

Question: Can the idea that two general resurrections of the just (one before the Tribulation and one after the Tribulation) be honestly proven exegetically from Scripture?

*It is true that the first Resurrection will occur in stages. But these stages ("order" of resurrections) are specifically outlined by Paul in I Cor. 15:22-24.

Stage # 1 - "Christ, the first fruits"
Stage # 2 - "Afterward ("epeita") they that are Christ's at His coming"
[The Rapture]
Stage # 3 - "Then ("eita") . . . the end ("telos")
[The final Resurrection of the just at the end of the Millennium. This resurrection will evidently involve those who died between the Rapture and return of Christ, and those who died during the Millennium.

Ryrie's observation is correct: "The order of resurrections is as follows: first, Christ's; then that of believers at His coming (I Thes. 4:13-18); and finally, the resurrection at the end of the Millennial kingdom." ((Ryrie's KJV Study Bible, p. 1641).

*To force the Scripture to allow for any other general "resurrection of the just" is to go beyond the clearly stated and detailed text of Paul. I Corinthians 15 would have been the most convenient and obvious place to state two Resurrections prior to the beginning of the Millennium, if indeed such two did exist.

Comments on Marvin Rosenthal's book -

The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church

(Thomas Nelson publishers)

Though the basic, overall point of the book "The Pre-wrath Rapture of the Church" is (in the mind of this author) a position worthy of serious consideration by all Bible believers, here are some incidental points of disagreement:

1) Brother Rosenthal states that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 minister during the last half or second 3 1/2 years of the 70th week (p. 157)

Not a correct view for two basic reasons:

a) At Christ's return at the end of the 7-year Tribulation, it is unthinkable to assume that He would allow His prophets to be so shamefully treated while He was on earth. After they ministered for 1,260 days (3 1/2 years; Rev. 11:3), they are said to be killed by the Antichrist. Their bodies then lie in the streets for an extra 3 1/2 days (Rev. 11:11). This 3 1/2 days would extend beyond the limits of the 7-year Tribulation.

b) There will be no "party time" as described in Rev. 11:10 during the Day of the Lord" at the end of the Tribulation.

*A better view is that they minister during the first 3 1/2 years.

2) Marv Rosenthal says that the 30 extra days of Daniel 12:11 is the time period for the bowl judgments to transpire (p. 146).

Incorrect:

a) The Antichrist is alive during the bowl judgments (Rev. 16:10, 13); yet the Bible says He will only continue for forty-two months (3 1/2 years), hence, making the bowl judgments fit into the 42-month period of time.

b) An extension of 30 days for the Antichrist to exist on earth does not correspond to his stated destruction (II Thes. 2:8) and doom to the lake of fire, which happens at Christ's second coming to the earth for Armageddon (II Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:20).

[*Note: In all of my reviews of the books & periodicals that attempt to refute the book "the Pre-wrath Rapture" by Rosenthal, I have observed that it is some of the fine points that have been refuted and not the main pillars of this view.]

VI. THE BEMA SEAT & MARRIAGE SUPPER

A. THE BEMA SEAT

(The Judgment Seat of Christ)

Romans 14:10;
II Corinthians 5:10;
I Corinthians 3:9-15

1. The **Meaning** of the Judgment Seat:

   --The Greek word "bema" speaks of an elevated chair at the ancient athletic games, upon which the "president or umpire of the arena" sat. From here, he observed the games and rewarded the winners. It was never used of a judicial bench.

2. The **Time** of the Judgment Seat: Apparently immediately after the Rapture/Resurrection (Lk. 21:36; II Tim. 4:1; Rev. 22:12)

3. The **Judge** of the Judgment Seat: Jesus Christ
   (II Cor. 5:10; Jn. 5:22; Rom. 14:10; Rom. 2:16; Rev. 22:12)

4. The **Subjects** of the Judgment Seat: All believers (of all time)
   (Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12)

5. The **Purpose** of the Judgment Seat: It is not to determine eternal destiny, but eternal rewards

   --It is not a judgment of sins and wickedness (Heb. 10:17)

   --It is a time to determine the quality and acceptability of service done by believers (cp. Rev. 19:8)

   I Cor. 3:13-14 (*"Every man's work shall be made manifest . . . he shall receive a reward"*)

   II Cor. 5:10 (*". . . the things done . . . whether good or bad"* - lit. foul or worthless)

   I Cor. 9:27 (*"castaway"* = disqualified [for a prize])

   Christ will evaluate our works based on motive (why we did it) and method (how we ran the race)

6. The **Rewards** of the Judgment Seat:

a. Rewards **forfeited** (I Cor. 3:15; Rev. 3:11)

b. Rewards **received**

The New Testament describes various "crowns" ("stephanos" - victor's wreaths, awarded for the runners of a race, etc.)

5 areas worthy of the "stephanos":

1) **Incorruptible** crown (I Cor. 9:25)

Awarded for mastery over the flesh (the old man)

2) Crown of **rejoicing** (I Thes. 2:19)

Awarded for leading others to Christ

3) Crown of **life** (James 1:12)

Awarded for overcoming trials

4) Crown of **righteousness** (II Tim. 4:8)

Awarded for loving Christ's appearing (Rapture)

5) Crown of **glory** (I Pet. 5:4)

Awarded for feeding the flock of God

B. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

(The wedding dinner of the Lamb and His Bride)



Basic Bible Teachings about the Metaphor -

"The Bride of Christ"

1) **Election**: The Father chose a Bride for His Son (Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65).

2) **Engagement**: The down payment of the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers with a promise of Christ's return to receive His purchased possession (Eph. 1:13-14).

3) **Rapture**: The Son is coming back to receive only His Bride unto Himself (Mt. 25:1-13).

4) **Wedding**: The Beginning of Eternity with Christ (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9).

1. The **Time** of the Marriage:
   After Christ receives His Bride (immediately after the Rapture - Mt. 25:10) but before Christ returns to earth (before the Return - Rev. 19:7, 8).

2. The **Place** of the Marriage:
   In Heaven (Rev. 19:7 & 14)

3. The **Participants** of the Marriage:
   Those who belong to Christ throughout all ages - Old Testament & New Testament saints (Lk. 13:28-29; Lk. 14:15-24; Mt. 25:10)

VII. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

A. The time period <u>after</u> the 70th week but <u>before</u> the initiation of the Millennial Kingdom.

After the 1,260 days of the second half of the 70th week, Daniel 12:11-12 describes two additional blocks of time.

1,260 days 30 45
1,290 days
1,335 days

1. The additional <u>30</u> days apparently involve:

   a. The **<u>REGATHERING</u>** of Israel to Jerusalem (Is. 11:11-12, 15-16; Ezek. 20:37-38)
   Note: All nations (Gentiles) will also be gathered (Mt. 25:32; Joel 3:1-2)

   b. A time of **<u>JUDGMENT</u>** for those still living (but not raptured) after the Tribulation [Note the chronology of Mt. 25:1-13 [Rapture] and Mt. 25:14-46 [Judgment]) (Is. 11:3-4)

      1) The **<u>Nature</u>** of this Judgment

         This judgment involves the separation of the sheep (God's people redeemed after the Rapture) from the goats (the unsaved) (Mt. 25:31-46)

      2) The **<u>Purpose</u>** of this Judgment

         To determine which of the living (Jews and Gentiles) will enter the Millennial kingdom

      3) The **<u>Basis</u>** of this Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46)

         Man's actions (during the Tribulation) will give evidence of his spiritual state (Mal. 3:2-3, 5). How one treated God's people will manifest the nature of their hearts and how they are rewarded (Mt. 25:35-46).

      4) The **<u>consequences</u>** of this Judgment

         a) The <u>saved</u> are accepted into the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 25:31-40)
         b) The <u>unsaved</u> are rejected, and are slain, to await resurrection unto damnation (Ezek. 20;37; Mt. 25:41-46)

         No unsaved person will enter the Millennial Kingdom.

2. The additional 45 days (which transpire before the Millennium) apparently involve:
   a. The **leveling** of Palestine's **topography** (Is. 35; Is. 40:4-5; Zech. 14:10; Is. 26:15)

   b. The **building** of the Millennial **Temple** in Jerusalem (Ezek. 40-48)

   c. The **purifying** of the earth and **preparing** for the Kingdom
      1) Weapons will be beaten into farming tools (Is. 2:4)
      2) Jerusalem will become a source for fresh (good, drinkable) water from the Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea (Zech. 14:8)

   d. The **binding** of Satan will conclude these time period just prior to the 1,000 year Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-3; Ezek. 28:13-19; Is. 14:4-17).

      During the Millennium, "all outward sources of temptation must be removed so that man will demonstrate what he (really) is apart from Satanic influence" (Pentecost, p. 477)

      The depravity of mortal man will be evident, as his only source of temptation will be *"the flesh"* (not the world system or the devil)

B. The time period of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-7)

The word "millennium" is the Latin derivative from the Greek word "chilia" which means 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-7)

3 views of the Millennium:

1. **Post-Millennialism** - (social gospel view) Man through social effort will usher in a utopian period of peace on earth, after which time Christ will return

2. **A-Millennialism** - (covenant theology view) There is no 1,000 year kingdom. The 1,000 years of Rev. 20:1-7 are only figurative. They symbolize the time period from the cross until the imminent return of Christ (According to this view, there is no literal 7 year Tribulation either). At the cross Jesus defeated Satan and he has been bound ever since.

* 3. **Pre-Millennialism** - (dispensational view) Christ will literally return for judgment and then will establish he promised, long-awaited Messianic Kingdom.

Proofs for the literal establishment of the Millennial Kingdom:
a. The Scriptures **teach** it (Rev. 20:1-7)
b. God **detailed** it (Is. 11, etc.)
c. Christ **promised** it (Mt. 26:29)
d. The Apostles **expected** it (Acts 1:6-7)
e. Creation **awaits** it (Rom. 8:19-22)
f. We are expected to **pray** for it to come (implying that it hasn't come yet- Mt. 6:10) **[Important Note: The Millennium (1,000 year Kingdom) will be the first phase of Christ's eternal kingdom - Dan. 2:44; Ezek. 37:24-28.]**

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM

(in general)

The 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Christ's sovereign reign** (Rev. 20:4-7; Zech. 14:9; Haggai 2:7; Is. 9:6-7, 11:1-5, 10)

2. **Believers reigning with Christ** (Rev. 20:4-7; Obad. 21)

3. **Holiness & righteousness** (Zech. 8:3, 14:20; Is. 32:1-5)

4. **Justice & peace** (Is. 2:1-4, 9:6-7; Micah 4:1-5)

5. **Longevity of mortal life** (Zech. 8:4)

6. **Worship via a new temple** (Haggai 2:7-8; Ezek. 40)
   (sacrifices will be memorials of Christ's finished work)

7. **Peace, spirituality, & prosperity** (Micah 4:4-8; Is. 60:17-20; Joel 2:18-27)

8. **Rejuvenated water** (Ezek. 47:1-12)

9. **Storms & rain** (Is. 4:6; Zech. 14:18-19)

10. **No external temptation or deception** (Rev. 20:1-3)

11. **No violence or destruction** (Is. 11:6-10)

12. **Spiritual blessing** (Is. 32:15-19)

13. **Renovated land and desert** (Is. 40:3,4; Is. 35:1-8)

14. **Gentile & Jewish inhabitance** (Is. 60:14-16)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIUM

(specifically related to Israel)

For Israel, the 1,000 year Kingdom will be a time of:

1. **Unity** (among the tribes of Israel) (Is. 11:13; Ezek. 37:15-22; Jer. 3:19)

2. **Comfort & joy** (Is. 12:1-6; 40:1ff)

3. **Rest** (Is. 14:3, 7-8)

4. **Respect** (by other nations) (Zech. 8:23; Is. 60:14-16)

5. **Much land** (Obad. 19-20)

Events to follow the Millennium:

1. **Final Rebellion** (Rev. 20:7-9; Ezek. 38-39 *38:8-16)

   The off-spring (children) of those living who originally entered the Kingdom will have to accept Christ; those who do not will follow Satan in his final, vain attempt to overthrow Christ.

2. **Dissolution of Heavens and earth** (II Peter 3:12-13; Rev. 20:11)

3. **Resurrection of the wicked** (the "second Resurrection") (rev. 20:5, 6; 20:13)

4. **The Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev. 20:11-15)

VIII. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

I. The <u>JUDGE</u> on the Great White Throne
Points to a <u>HOLY</u> Judgment (v. 11)
("From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away . . .")

The Judge will be none other than Jesus Christ (<u>Jn.5:22</u>, 27; Acts 10:42; Rom 2:16; II Tim.4:1; James 5:9; I Pet.4:5)

II. The <u>SUBJECTS</u> before the Great White Throne
Point to an <u>IMPARTIAL</u> Judgment (v. 12a; v. 13a)
("the dead, small and great")

III. The <u>EVIDENCE</u> of the Great White Throne
Points to an <u>HONEST</u> Judgment (v. 12b)
("The books were opened")

At least 3 Books will be opened on Judgment Day:

1. The Bible (Jn.5:45; Jn. 12:48; Rom.2:16)
2. The Book about your life (a record of works - v.12b-13)
3. The Book of Life (v.15, cp. Rev.13:8)

IV. The <u>VERDICT</u> from the Great White Throne
Points to a <u>FAIR</u> Judgment (v. 12c; v. 13b)
(Guilty - "according to their works")

Note: The Great White Throne Judgment is <u>not</u> to determine who is to be lost or saved (John 3:18); but to:

1. <u>Demonstrate</u> the <u>justice</u> of the condemnation of all who appear.
"Every mouth will be stopped" (Rom. 3:19)

2. <u>Determine</u> the <u>degree</u> of torment to be suffered for eternity.
(Luke 12:47-48; 20:47; Matt.11:22,23; II Pet.2:21)

V. The <u>SENTENCING</u> by the Great White Throne
Points to a <u>FINAL</u> Judgment (v. 14-15)
(<u>Hell</u>...cast into the <u>Lake of Fire</u>"

Important Theological Note:
"Hell is <u>not</u> the "Lake of Fire," but is the preliminary penalty leading to the "Lake of Fire." They are two different places.
<u>Hell</u> is like a local jail (temporary judgment) to await trial.
<u>The Lake of Fire</u> is like the State Penitentiary (permanent judgment) after being sentenced

IX. THE ETERNAL STATE

A. The Eternity for the Unsaved:

1. Eternal **fire** (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:15, 21:8)
2. Eternal **darkness** (Mt. 8:11, 12)
3. Eternal **destruction** (Mt. 7:13; II Th. 1:9)
4. Eternal **punishment** (Mt. 25:46)
5. Eternal **separation** (from the Lord) (II Th. 1:9)
6. Eternal **torment** (Rev. 14:10-11)

B. The Eternity for the Saved:

Believers will enjoy an:

1. Eternal bliss (Rom. 8:18; Rev. 21-22)
2. Eternal fellowship (with Christ) (I Cor. 13:12; I Jn. 3:2; Rev. 22:4)
3. Eternal city
   This new Jerusalem will be:
   a. A new city (Rev. 21:1, 2, 5)
   b. A holy city (Rev. 21:2a)
   c. A beautiful city (Rev. 21:2b)
   d. A God-indwelt city (Rev. 21:3)
   e. A joy-filled city (Rev. 21:4-5)
   f. A restricted city (Rev. 21:6-8)
   g. A heavenly city (Rev. 21:10)
   h. A glorious city (Rev. 21:11-14)
   i. An enormous city (Rev. 21:15-21)

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

AND THEIR PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Leviticus 23

HISTORY (These Events have been fulfilled by Christ)				**PROPHECY** (These events are yet to be fulfilled)		
PASSOVER (v.4-5; cp. Ex.12:1-13)	**UNLEAVENED BREAD** (v.6-8)	**FIRSTFRUITS** (v.9-14)	**PENTECOST** (v.15-22)	**TRUMPETS** (v.23-25)	**DAY OF ATONEMENT** (v.26-32)	**TABERNACLE** (v.33-44)
REDEMPTION	INCORRUPTION	RESURRECTION	ORIGINATION	RECEPTION	REPENTANCE	REST&PROVISION
Typifies the **death** of Christ (Jn.1:29; Mt.26:17-29; I Cor.5:7)	Typifies the **Burial** of Christ (Acts 2:27)	Typifies the **Resurrection** of Christ (I Cor.15:20)	Typifies the beginning of the **Church** of Christ (Acts 2:1-f)	Typifies the **Rapture** by Christ (I Cor.15:52; I Th.4:13)	Typifies **Israel's Atonement** by Christ when they repent (Rom.11:25-26; Zech.12:13,14)	Typifies the **Millennial Rest** & **Eternal kingdom** when Christ "tabernacles" among us (Zech.14:16-19; Rev.20:4-6; 21:3)
Christ our Passover (Lamb) is sacrificed for us (I Cor.5:7)	Christ experienced No Corruption (Symbolized by leaven) (Acts 2:27)	Christ is the Firstfruits from the dead (I Cor.15:20)	Christ began His Ingathering of His great Harvest Field on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)	Christ will summon His bride to himself & will then send judment on the Earth. In the O.T. trumpets were blown on 2 occassions: 1) When God wanted to summon His people to His presence. 2) Whenever God was to go to war on behalf of Israel.	Yom Kippur is a Nationally celebrated time. Israel as a Nation will repent at the end of the 70th. Week.	God will tabernacle (dwell) among His people again!