

TRIBULATION and
Escape

Carl Facciponte

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James version of the Bible.

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Dedications

This book is dedicated to my wife, Ellen, who lived the life of a widow while I barricaded myself in my study, writing. I appreciate your patience, understanding, and not doing funny things to my tea. Writing this book also kept me from having to go out to my wood shop in the garage and “whacking together” that table you always wanted me to make. I’m out of excuses now.

I also dedicate this book to Pastor David Siriano, Sr., who fired my love for End Times prophecies and who was gracious enough to review that six-foot-long graphical layout chart of this book. In every good sense of the word, Pastor Dave has probably forgotten more than I will ever know about Bible topics and End Times

Love and gratitude to my granddaughter, Alyssa, who persisted in asking me if I had finished my flowchart for the book yet. You kept me moving on this project.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Have you ever noticed most significant projects in life start off innocently enough? Creating this book was no exception to the rule. I would have never suspected it would turn into this giant snowball careening downhill.

My wife and I were enjoying a quiet dinner with friends when the conversation turned to biblical topics, in particular the question of the Rapture. For people whom may not be familiar with the term ‘Rapture’, it is a Christian belief stating Christians who are alive on Earth at Christ’s call will be transformed instantly from mortal bodies into resurrected bodies, and caught up into the air to meet Jesus at or before his return to Earth.

This concept has spurred many passionate conversations over when this event will happen, or if it is an allegory to illustrate a point, and will never happen at all.

This book attempts to analytically identify if, and when, this event will take place.

Please Note: From time-to-time I’ve given credit to various historical figures as the originators of an idea or process. Sometimes, I’ve selected the most commonly known figure. For example: if a teacher asks a grade school student, “Who discovered America?” the returned answer will almost always be “Christopher Columbus.” Was he the first person to discover America? Of course not, but he gets the popular vote. In a similar manner, I’ve given credit for some accomplishments to some people who may not have originated a concept, but like Columbus, they have the popular vote. This has upset people who are studying for, or achieved, an advanced degree requiring exacting research on the topic. My apologies in advance if I

offend anyone.

Before continuing, it is essential we cover the three most accepted views of Rapture timing related to the events which will take place during the Tribulation. The Tribulation period, according to the Bible, is the final, violent seven years of Earth's history.

These three views are:

Pre-Tribulation – the pre-Tribulation view of the Rapture holds the saints (born-again members of the church) are Raptured (snatched up by Christ) before the Tribulation begins, and therefore avoids the wrath of God on the earth. This concept was promoted by John Nelson Darby and was championed by C.I. Scofield who authored the Scofield Bible¹. The pre-Tribulation Rapture is a popular theory. You must admit, there is great appeal in being Raptured, or leaving Earth, before the start of the horrific destruction which takes place during the Tribulation period.

Mid-Tribulation – the mid-Tribulation holds that the Lamb of God will return after the Tribulation begins, but before the start of the Great Tribulation. A supporting piece of Scripture is Revelation 6:16–17, which contains the first instance of the word 'wrath' being used by God in the Book of Revelation. It says

“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.”

This aligns with Romans 5:9, which states that we are justified and saved from wrath; *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”*

¹ Tim LaHaye, "Target Number One," *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, September 2002, pages 1-3.

The word ‘wrath’ occurs in Revelation after the sixth seal is opened, suggesting it could be a mid-Tribulation Scripture. This wording says God will save us from wrath. The assumption is the Rapture will occur just before the point in the Tribulation where God releases his anger upon the earth.

Post-Tribulation – the post-Tribulation theory holds the church and the tribulation saints will go through most, if not all, of the tribulation. This concept is the historical view and the belief of the early church fathers.

It is based on Matthew 24:21–31 *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”* and Matthew 24:29–31, where the elect are gathered up. *“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:*

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

It sounds as if we have to go through the bulk of these cataclysmic events taking place in the last seven years of world history. Although this is my least favorite view, I have attempted to eliminate every personal preference and prejudice from this analysis.

But first, what are the primary verses that show there will even be a Rapture? I include a very tiny sampling of Bible verses below.

- *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and*

with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

- *1 Corinthians 15:20-23, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming."*

- *1 Corinthians 15:51-52, "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."*

While these Scriptures show there will be a Rapture, they shed little light on when on the time line of human history, the Rapture will occur.

And now back to our dinner conversation. My friend said that he was a mid-Tribulation Rapture fan, while I was a pre-Tribulation Rapture supporter. It was when he got a little twinkle in his eye during our conversation I knew he was up to something and things were about to get sticky for me. He said, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says *"the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds."*

He maintained this Scripture is clearly a mid-Tribulation Scripture, and asked me for the Scriptures I used to support my pre-Tribulation Rapture views. I gave him Luke 21:36, which says that we will *"escape all things that will come to pass,"* and Romans 5:9 that says we are justified and saved from wrath. It was my opinion that Scripture shows the Rapture will occur

before the Tribulation wrath starts. He said that was fine, but they directly linked none of my argument to the particular time of the Rapture.

He asked if I could show him an actual Scripture that demonstrated a pre-Tribulation “catching-up,” or Rapture. It stumped me. I tried combining Christ saving us from the wrath with grace and justification, but he insisted I was stringing together concepts, and it was not concrete proof of Rapture timing. It’s always a thought-provoking exercise to debate with an attorney who follows the exact letter of the law.

We spent several hours fussing back and forth over Scriptures while thoroughly enjoying ourselves in the debate. We hugged good night after some hours passed, and I left with a plan of reading through my Bible once again, picking out Scriptures which were Rapture-related, and getting back to him with hard and fast proof I was right and he was wrong. This would be done gently and lovingly, of course, but it still had to be done. It all seemed so simple then.

It turns out Scripture is so wonderfully and divinely inspired and written it would prove to be a more daunting task than it seemed on the surface. I guess most of life is like that. Life starts off easy with someone cuddling you as a baby and feeding you a warm bottle. Growth continues with the pleasant challenge of walking and putting everything into your mouth to discover how it tastes. It seems but a short time after when life straps you into a rocket-sled, and you are off and flying down the track of life at breathtaking speed. Yup, this book was like that, too.

What follows is a discussion of the research path I took, and of the findings my research led me to. We must understand anything stated in this book which goes against either your personal belief or the stated opinion of any pastor or preacher which you hold in high esteem is not to be considered a declaration of war of any kind against your viewpoints. It is just stringing together thoughts, findings, and conclusions. I want to unequivocally state

this book is not to be considered the definitive answer. I feel people with the ‘final biblical answer’ should be avoided.

God created us to think and act differently from each other, much as each organ in our body performs separately from one another. And, just as the organs in our body support each other, we should all support one another and work toward the benefit of all. I encourage you to take whatever concepts or thoughts you find useful in this book and to use them to help build your own research and come to your personal conclusions.

My Bible applauds a group of people called the Bereans, who, after hearing Paul preach, gladly accepted the word and then went to their own homes to search the Scripture themselves to see if what Paul said was true. I like that process. Receive the word joyfully, but then check it out for accuracy yourself. Nothing causes more problems than just taking one person’s word for something and not doing your research to validate their conclusions.

Anyone who has ever done research concerning when the Rapture might occur will agree some things are challenging to pin down. First Thessalonians 5:2 states, *“the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”*

Matthew 24:36 says, *“the day or the hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.”* (Actually, we do know the hour! It will happen in the two o’clock hour! The trick is figuring out which time zone! Sure, it’s an old poor joke, but the temptation to put it in here was irresistible).

I don’t know about you, but when Jesus Himself says He doesn’t know the day or the hour, but only the Father knows, I’m pretty impressed. If Jesus doesn’t know, what chance do we have of figuring out the timing? When you think about it, this takes stress out of the equation, and you can, therefore, go about your task of enjoying reading the Scriptures and being amazed at the complexity and interplay the Holy Spirit has built into the Word. If we disagree about Rapture timing at this moment, it’s okay.

When it happens, we will all know about it. We will all be so happy I doubt any of us will say “I told you so.” With this in mind, just have fun reading and ensure you search out the Word of God for yourself to verify what you read here.

Just one more quick disclaimer: It is possible the Bible speaks of more than one Rapture, so please keep your mind open. In fact, there are already four instances in the Bible of events which fit the definition of Rapture being translated from Earth to heaven or from place to place. These include:

1. Genesis 5:24 *And Enoch walked with God: and he [was] not; for God took him.*

2. 2 Kings 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, [there appeared] a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

3. Revelation 11:11-12 *And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

4. Acts 8:39 *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

Perhaps Acts 8:39 isn't strictly a Rapture event since Philip was not caught up into heaven, but still and all, he was supernaturally transported from one place to another when his assignment was completed. It is no harder for God to move a person from one location to another on the planet than to translate them to Heaven.

Yes, these are four small-scale events involving only individuals and not global populations. However, the small size of these events does not disqualify them from being instances of living

people walking in close relationship with God being physically snatched off the earth while still alive and healthy (okay, minus the three witnesses who were killed first, but they were made healthy and then caught up). If God has already done it in the past, who are we to say He can't continue on with this pattern of multiple Rapture events into the Tribulation period?

I've found when the puzzle pieces don't fit the picture on our puzzle box top, we may have parts from another box mixed in with our pile.

Our thinking the Rapture MUST happen in a certain way represents our personal box of puzzle pieces. As we read through our Bible, we see some conflicting parts turning up. This could be a sign other puzzles also speak of the Rapture.

Have you ever wondered how so many brilliant Bible scholars in the past have come to such diverse conclusions on the same topic? This is something to think about as we examine Scripture. God always makes sense. Please, when we speak of end times, let's not dig in our theological heels and say our argument is the only trustworthy one and no other point of view has any merit. Let's analyze all aspects of every reasonable proposal and, like sorting out jumbled pieces of several puzzles, let's see if we can come up with a finished picture; perhaps even one which incorporates all the pieces from the other puzzles into a more complete image.

An overview of the process used

Before I became a Christian, I was put out by all of those 'Jesus freaks' trying to preach to me and convince me of the beauty and validity of their religion. Although I understood they were well-intentioned people, they just never seemed as if they knew their subject very well. Even worse, most were just parroting words somebody else had spoken. This process was unacceptable to me, so I put them all off as a bunch of religious nuts. In fact, I quite enjoyed using logic and science to twist them around in their own words when they tried to preach to me. I've since repented.

The atheists and agnostics on the other side of the fence seemed no better. It was difficult for me to buy into the ‘Cambrian Explosion’² concepts of tremendous animal diversification during the Cambrian Period of evolutionary history. The Cambrian period was millions of years where there were only elementary forms of life on Earth, and then (in geologic time), we see a sudden “appearance of the lineages of almost all animals living today.”³ There are only the most speculative reasons for this enormous biodiversity event. The argument would almost always get back to the ‘millions and millions’ of years crutch with little supporting data to explain WHY those changes took place during those millions of years. Why not before, or why not after that period? Implying time alone was a sufficient factor in causing or allowing such biodiverse change never sat well with me. It seemed like many arguments relied on circular reasoning, and you will remember they never allowed you to use circular reasoning in your high school geometry class to prove a theorem. It drove me crazy. Atheists were no better than those crazy Christians!

Only slightly more scientific was examining the decay of various radioisotopes to show how old the universe was. It was better, but it based most of the arguments on the radioactive decay rate being constant from day-one (whenever that was) to today. According to some sections of science, you could examine a radioactive isotope, such as your favorite isotope of uranium (U-235 or U-238). Then you determine how much of uranium in the sample had turned to lead. And, because the current decay rate is a constant, you could calculate how old a piece of uranium happens to be based on its percentage of lead (okay, it’s a gross oversimplification, I know it, but you get the idea).

However, if I interpret the writings of some scholars, such as Stephen Hawking, correctly, research shows tremendous atomic

² <http://evolution.berkeley.edu/evosiy/evo101/VIIB1cCambrian.shtml>

³ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/03/4/1_034_02.html

change took place in the ‘early universe’ right after the singularity (singularity: In the beginning was nothing, and then it exploded. I’m still confused and working on the concept in my head). Atoms combined and broke up at a frantic rate. This strongly implies there was a nonlinearity component in radioactive decay curve introduced immediately after the singularity, and we are merely in a flat area of the potentially exponential radioactive decay curve. The question then becomes, “was the piece of uranium created shortly after the singularity, or was it formed later in one of the many supernovae?⁴” It is possible the uranium found on Earth may have originated from different, more modern supernovae? Was it created during the singularity itself? The lead content of each sample might be different, giving us wide age dating results. It’s just something to consider when we talk about setting the age of something.

Speaking of the ‘singularity’ in which the entire universe exploded from nothing, I guess I don’t have enough faith to believe that. I have tremendous respect for the laws of physics. Our universe is too ordered and holds to too many complex mathematical equations to have been created out of an enormous explosion. It’s more logical for me to believe Lord Jesus, who the Bible says created everything which exists, just said those famous words in Genesis 1 “*Let there be...*” and breathed the universe into being with all the laws of physics intact.

With the laws of physics in place, the entire created universe could now go along its merry way of expanding and creating new stars and whatever else the universe does. We see the same pattern when God created Adam and Eve. Quick question: Was Adam an embryo when God created him or was he a fully functioning adult? The answer is obvious. He was a fully functioning adult. The same goes for Eve. She was a full-grown woman when created. Once created, Adam and Eve continued living, changing, aging, having children, and just getting on with

⁴ World Nuclear Association

the business of being people.

Similarly, God made the universe as a ‘full-grown’ creation which can now get on with its business. There do not seem to have been any new laws of physics created once God established the existing physical laws. I’ve come to where I see math and physics as the fingerprints of God on His creation. The creation may change somewhat through the aging process, but the initial fingerprints of God remain.

Because of listening to all these people, who I thought were quite crazy, I decided to read the Bible myself with an open mind (I was not a believer at the time) and throw out all arguments from every side, including my own preconceived notions. It’s challenging and quite suspect to pronounce oneself sane, rational, and fair, but I knew I had to start some place. At least I had half a chance of being consistent in my findings.

As I read through the Bible, I tried picking out some of the science that was alluded to and looked at it through two frames. One frame consisted of looking at the facts as seen and explained by a pastoral non-scientific community. If I lived back then, how would I describe what I saw in end-time revelations? The second frame comprised looking at what the Bible stated through current scientific eyes, and trying to determine a set of reasonable conditions which would make both the Biblical and scientific observations valid. If I could do such a thing, then I would know both science and the Bible are talking about the same things, but with different terminology.

Without getting into detail, the upshot of the whole fact-finding thing was I had to force myself (somewhat against my will at the time) to pronounce the Bible as being scientifically bulletproof in my mind. I was not emotionally prepared for such a conclusion. To quote a line from a movie comedy, “If I woke up tomorrow with my head sewn to the carpet, I wouldn’t be more surprised.”⁵

⁵ Chevy Chase as Clark Griswold in the movie “Christmas Vacation”, 1989

I was flabbergasted and had a new respect for the Bible. I was learning.

Although many years ago, I found reading what the actual words in the Bible say was an excellent way to avoid getting entangled in meaningless disputes with non believers or with other believers. It also prevented me from getting too far off track in my theology. While attending a men's breakfast one Saturday morning, I heard our speaker, Chuck Missler, say he reads the Bible like a military directive: just read the plain words written there, and act on what you learn. That's good advice. Too often, we try to make the Bible read in a way suiting our preconceived notions or philosophies, rather than just reading what the word has to say. Far too frequently, people try to make anything they don't understand an allegory instead of reading the words as fact. I entered this research with such a fact-finding frame of mind. Just read what it says. The old KISS formula works pretty well here: "Keep it Simple, Sammy."

You can surf the Web and pull up hundreds of web sites which address the relative time of the Rapture. Some do an outstanding job of documenting their perspective, while some are logically very flawed. I decided my best approach would be to mimic my previous process of doing my thing, open my concordance, thesaurus, and Hebrew and Greek translations, and just dig in, mapping out whatever I found. Is it wise to disregard the enormous body of work already created by so many intelligent and sincere people? No, it's not a smart thing to do at all, but for the sake of consistency and clarity in my mind, I decided I would take that approach. It's not the first time, nor will it be the last time, I decide to adopt a more convoluted road to get to my destination.

There are some starting scriptures I used to begin my research. These scriptures include Acts 1:9-11, *Christ will return as He ascended*, Matthew 24:27-30, *He comes in power and glory, He comes with a loud trumpet blast*, 1 Corinthians 15:52, *both dead and living believers are given new bodies*, and 1 Thessalonians

4:16–17, *we are caught up with him in the air.*

In the following sections, I will attempt to build a case for each of the three Rapture scenarios simply and clearly. We will look at the three basic Rapture concepts and discuss supporting evidence for each one.

Some pages will contain concept maps of my thoughts to illustrate the relationships between particular ideas.

All Biblical references and verses are from the online version of the Blue Letter Bible (BLB), King James Version (KJV) from the web site www.blueletterbible.org unless otherwise stated.

[1](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/03/4/1_034_02.html) https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/03/4/1_034_02.html
[2](#) Movie: Christmas Vacation 1989

Chapter 2: Why do we even care about Rapture timing?

A very valid question to ask is, “why do we even care when the Rapture happens?” If there were no real consequences because of the answer, we could just have a theological discussion over a nice cup of tea, and that would be the end of it. However, there’s a good deal of interest in when the Rapture may occur because of the horrific events which take place during the Tribulation, and what it could mean to you if you miss being raptured.

Our job is to be spiritually ready for the return of Jesus at ANY time. If we understand what events will take place on Earth during the End Times and when Jesus will return for His church, we will be encouraged to be ready. If we only plod along through life and don’t do our homework to see time is running out on us, we may not have the incentive to straighten out our lives and may get left behind when Jesus comes. Being left behind is NOT what you want to have happened to you, as we will see.

The Bible predicts there will be a very violent and cataclysmic last seven years of Earth’s history. This period is called the Tribulation period, with the final 3 ½ years of the seven years called the Great Tribulation. During the last seven years of world history there will be wars and famines and natural disasters of a magnitude which will eclipse any similar events which have happened throughout all recorded history (Matthew 24:21 *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*).

In fact, the Bible says if Jesus did not come back when He does, all human life from the Earth would be extinguished (Matthew 24:22 and Mark 13:20). This is a horror beyond any Hollywood apocalyptic movie. In a movie, at least a few people usually live

through every disaster to repopulate the Earth, according to the script. In the real case, no one would make it through.

Although we will get deeper into the events of the Tribulation as our discussion progresses, here is a very cryptic summary of what will occur during the seven years. Cataclysmic events on Earth will be triggered first by opening seven seals on a scroll in Heaven, followed by seven distinct trumpet blasts, and finally by the pouring out of the contents of seven vials onto the Earth.

The Seal Judgments:

Seal 1 Rev 6:2 A rider on a white horse carrying a bow and crown conquers nations. This is possibly a world leader or diplomat, forging peace treaties between nations.

Seal 2 Rev 6:3 A rider on a red horse takes away world peace and kills with a great sword. War breaks out across the nations with widespread casualties.

Seal 3 Rev 6:5 A rider on a black horse balances inflation and scarcity.

Because of the war, food and commodity prices experience hyperinflation.

Seal 4 Rev 6:8 A pale horse goes out, and the rider is death, and hell followed with him. One-quarter of the earth's population dies.

Seal 5 Rev 6:9 Martyrs under the throne of God in white robes are told to rest until they also kill their brethren. The martyrs for the faith are petitioning God to avenge their death and bring an end to injustice.

Seal 6 Rev 6:12 Earthquakes, darkened sun, and red moon. This is the first seal with God directly causing it. God seals the saints.

Seal 7 Rev 8:1 There is silence in Heaven for a half hour, followed by the seven trumpets being handed to the angels. This heralds in the seven trumpet judgments.

The Trumpet Judgments:

Trumpet 1 Rev 8:7 Global hail, fire and blood, one-third of the trees burn up, all green grass burns up.

Trumpet 2 Rev 8:8–9 Mountains of fire are cast into the sea, the sea becomes blood, one-third of sea creatures die, one-third of ships are destroyed.

Trumpet 3 Rev 8:10–11 A great star named Wormwood falls burning from Heaven and falls on one-third of the rivers and water sources.

Trumpet 4 Rev 8:12 The sun loses half of its brilliance; one-third of the moon is darkened, one-third of the stars are darkened.

Trumpet 5 Rev 9:1-11 A star (Satan) falls from Heaven and is given the keys to the pit, smoke billows out, the sun is darkened, and locusts with the power of scorpions are released.

Trumpet 6 Rev 9:13-19 Four demonic angels are loosened to slay one-third of the remaining population and help to assemble an army of 200 million people.

Trumpet 7 Rev 11:15-19 Huge earthquakes and great hail and lightning with thundering introduce the vial judgments.

Vial (or Bowl) Judgments:

Vial 1 Rev 16:2 People who have taken the mark of the beast receive grievous sores on their body.

Vial 2 Rev 16:3 The sea becomes like dead man's blood, causing living animals in the sea to die.

Vial 3 Rev 16:4 Rivers and underground water sources become like blood.

Vial 4 Rev 16:8 The sun is poured out on the Earth, scorching people with its heat.

Vial 5 Rev 16:10 Vial 5 is poured out on the seat of the beast, resulting in a darkness which is physically painful.

Vial 6 Rev 16:12 The Euphrates River dries up so the kings of the East can attack.

Vial 7 Rev 16:17 Vial 7 is poured out on the air, resulting in the world's largest earthquakes such that islands disappear, mountains are gone, and hail falls on the people. A great voice comes out of the temple in Heaven saying "*it is done*," heralding the return of Jesus.

As you can see, the last seven years of Earth's history are not what anyone would call a party. According to scripture, most of the Earth's population dies during this time. Reading about these events clarifies the question of why people are so interested in exactly when the Rapture will occur. Even those who are post-Tribulation Rapture believers cannot say they are looking forward to being around for all this. Let's get right with God, so whenever Jesus comes to gather us, we can be ready.

Chapter 3: The Seal Judgments

Before we get into the analysis and details of when the Rapture may occur, let's review what happens during the seals, the trumpets, and the vials in more depth to set the stage and pick up clues for our Rapture-timing analysis.

Seal 1 - Revelation 6:2 - *"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."* (KJV)

The color of the horse is crucial. In Revelation 19:11 we see the heavens open, and a white horse with Jesus himself as the rider come forth. The Scripture says, *"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 makes war."* This is a sign of Jesus coming in power and glory.

Although the horse in Revelation 6:2 is also white, it should not be confused with the white horse of Revelation 19:11. The only commonality between the two Scriptures is the color of the horse. The rider in Revelation 6:2 is bringing injustice. The rider in Revelation 19:11 is bringing Godly justice.

Traditionally, a conquering king or general rode a large white stallion into a city during the triumphant entry parade. It was a sign of his strength, power, and victory over his opponents. A white horse symbolized the rider was the ultimate ruler and authority, and was to be taken seriously.

The rider in Revelation 6:2 may very well be the spirit of the Antichrist coming into power. The fact he comes with a bow and crown, and conquering, is significant. A bow is an offensive weapon. Throughout history, many nations have signed peace treaties with one another. These peace treaties may represent countries which are geographically some distance away from

each other. This rider will bring opposing groups and nations from around the globe to the peace table. He will do it not to achieve peace in the world, but to ultimately position himself as the world leader or dictator. He is on the offense. The bow is a symbol more suited for warfare than for peace.

The goal of the Antichrist is world-domination. To do this, he has to rise to power. Three of the fundamental methods of rising to power are the person being seen as:

- 1) world peacemaker, or
- 2) global military dictator, or
- 3) a wealthy industrialist who can control world commerce

Unless one has the enormous military resources to take over the world through violence, the most likely way for an individual to rise to world power is to be seen as an outstanding negotiator and peacemaker.

Being a great industrialist and having enough money would not suffice by itself to gain world acceptance as a leader, since there are many multi-billionaires today, and most are focused on their financial conquests rather than military conquests. We can't rule out this route to dominance, but it is not as likely as being a world peacemaker.

Our entire planet, and in particular the Middle East, has seen continual warfare between nations' ideological groups almost since the beginning of time. Many people have tried to negotiate peace in the Middle East, but to date, no one has been successful for more than very brief periods of time. Anyone who can broker peace in modern times would be accepted globally as a great leader. Many people may also regard him as the long-awaited Messiah who has finally come to bring peace on the Earth.

It is reasonable to believe the Antichrist will be a very outgoing, friendly, and charismatic person. At least this will be the persona portrayed to the world. He will blend into cultures and will relate

ideologically with all peoples and all groups. It is unlikely someone would get worldwide support if they gave the impression they were absolutely evil.

It is these characteristics which allow him to rise to world power and domination. Human nature being what it is, it's very easy to understand if a person can bring peace across the globe, especially when your own national leaders could not do it despite their best efforts, you would gravitate towards this fantastic person as being the real leader of your country, of your continent, and of your world. He will display the interpersonal skills which will raise his popularity and esteem level far above the level of any individual country leader. This will allow him not only to go out conquering nations via peace treaties but will also enable him to go out capturing the hearts of the people of the world. People will place the crown of leadership on the head of the rider of the white horse mentioned in Revelation 6:2, and will accept him as the ultimate ruling leader of the globe.

If this seems to stretch the realm of possibility too far, I would only ask you to look at popular music bands and how people idolize them in nearly every nation on the globe. At rock concerts, you may see thousands, and sometimes tens of thousands, of people screaming out their adoration and even worshiping the band or artist just for playing music. How much more so will an individual be adored if he can bring peace and calm to war-torn countries?

The question then becomes "how will this rider, who goes out to conquer, rise to iconic and even divine status by making peace treaties?" A person just doesn't start off their career by bringing peace to the Middle East.

It is most probable someone will come upon the world stage forging small agreements and more minor treaties between opposing groups. The groups may even be warring factions of one overall ethnic or religious group.

He may even come to leadership through existing global groups,

similar to the World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, G20, the United Nations, and many others. Please understand I am not implying ANY of these organizations will lead to the leadership of the antichrist, I am only using them to suggest similar organizations with world outreach programs would be a logical choice. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries heeded the recommendations of the WHO. The world isolated and wore masks. I know of no other event which has united the entire globe. Country leaders ordered their people to fall into lock-step with the suggestions of a few. a few people were seen as global leaders in the fight against the virus, and rose to international prominence. How difficult would it be for a charismatic leader to rise to leadership by championing one or several groups at the same time?

Organizations and political parties are not stable, ideological monoliths. Organizations are made up of peoples who have different viewpoints but maintain one overarching philosophy which supports their identity as a people or group. An example could be different sects of a religion. We see clashes, and even wars, between religious factions in places such as Africa, the Middle East, India, and Pakistan. All one needs to do is search the news concerning conflicts between Shia Islam and Sunni Islam, as only one example, to verify this is fertile ground for a future Antichrist to plow. It seems as if there is a lack of peace in even peaceful religions. This would be a perfect entry point for the coming Antichrist to implement small peace treaties within warring sects of one theology, and leverage success to bring peace to others, moving to global status by bringing peace to nations.

Without a stable economic system, there is little likelihood of engineering world peace agreements. It is also possible this remarkable 'peacemaker' may work his magic by negotiating equitable trade and financial arrangements, and ending hostilities. Trade agreements could not only include consumer goods but could also be expanded to include financial aid and implementing

a variety of globally funded relief aid efforts to Third World countries. This could relieve the political and economic strain on the home country and reduce the level of immigration exiting a country as people seek to find stability and better lives elsewhere.

In recent years, tens of thousands of people from North Africa have sailed to Europe, and especially to Italy, to get away from combat and terrorist actions in their home countries.¹ The needs of the refugees are putting a significant financial strain on the governments of the host countries. They will see anyone who can successfully address this issue as much more than a hero.

His greatest accomplishment from the perspective of world and End-Times history will be to make a peace treaty with Israel and her enemies, which would allow Temple reconstruction to take place. This feat of negotiation has so far been impossible for mere politicians to do. The Dome of the Rock sits on the temple ground. This is the second most holy place in Islam. It is doubtful anyone could negotiate the tearing down of this revered structure to build a temple.

A hint of how building a temple might be accomplished is found in Revelation 11:1-2, where an angel is telling John the Apostle how to perform some measurements of the site. The angel gives directions and says to “*measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles*”.

According to Dr. Dan Bahat in Jerusalem – A variety of plans of historic structures and sites, 1980 P. 42 and on the web site www.templemount.org, there is room on the temple site to accommodate both the Dome of the Rock and the new Temple. According to studies of the original rock faces, they built the original Holy of Holies to the south of the Dome of the Rock.

¹ The New York Times, Oct. 22, 2014 “How Italy Became the Refugees’ Gateway to Europe”

The issue is, a temple could not be constructed at the current time in that location without triggering an all-out war between Israel and the Islamic world. It would have to be an exceptionally talented negotiator and statesman to craft an agreement with Islam to allow the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies of the Temple to be built next to the Dome of the Rock. Since they will build the third Temple, the Antichrist will somehow negotiate the deal. Many people will see him as their messiah, who is bringing peace to the earth as prophesied. He may be a messiah, but he will not be **the** Messiah.

Whatever the level of peaceful accomplishment, and in whatever arena they see the benefits, this world peacemaker will still have global domination firmly set in his mind, and will resolutely march towards his vision. At the outset of his rise to leadership, it is possible he may not even know he is the Antichrist. He could very well believe he is only a great politician who can solve the world's problems and has a 'gift' of convincing people to follow his plans for peace.

Many people today feel they are good Christians and believe they would never fall for the subterfuge played out by the Antichrist. An unbelieving world might see such a peacemaker as their messiah, but good Christians would never feel that way because of their Biblical-based beliefs, right? Maybe not so right.

All one needs to do is look at some of the non-Biblical government programs and policies being implemented at every level, and ask if every Bible-believing Christian is standing firm against such laws, and voicing their opinions at the voting poll. It doesn't look like it, does it? Not to stir up a fire storm, but if we look at the single issue of women's rights and abortion, we will find professing Christians on both sides of the issue. Some are pro-life, while others are pro-choice. One might ask, "how can that be?" The answer is, logically, it cannot, and should not be, if Biblical teachings are believed and adhered to. The issue is, it is difficult to adhere to Biblical principles due to social pressures and the out and out constant brainwashing from the news media,

printed media, movies, television, the Internet, and other forms of social communication. People unwittingly buy the lie.

Jesus Himself tells us people will fall away from following Him. Both individuals and politicians will want to say and do things to please the crowd instead of saying and doing things to please the King of Kings. In John 5:43 Jesus said, *“I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me; If another should come in his own name, him you will receive.”* Here Jesus is speaking of a vast apostasy in which many members of God’s church will embrace the teachings of non-Biblical leaders. For example, I have some friends who see no religious conflict between the Bible and the so-called morning-after pill, which causes the fetus to abort in an unwanted pregnancy. I must admit their reasoning boggles my brain a bit. With inconsistencies in mind, it is even easier to see how people without strong foundational teaching and beliefs can be deceived into following a charismatic world leader who seems to come with such peace and caring for one and all.

The real tragedy is many people believe if they feel they are good people, socially relevant, and open-minded, they can plead their case at the last judgment for being let into heaven. Jesus looks past our activities and into the actual motivation of our hearts and responds in Matthew 7:22, saying, *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*

These are church people He is talking about. These poor souls have attended church and worked in ministries in their church. We see them as righteous people in the eyes of the world. However, they have made church activities more important than developing a personal relationship with the Savior. A personal relationship with Jesus is the most important thing we can have in this life. Many churchgoers may one day hear those terrible words, *“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* What awful words to

hear, ringing in your ears for all of eternity.

Seal 2 – Revelation 6:4 *“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 horse in Seal 2 is red. Symbolically, the color stands for blood. Here, it stands for a great deal of bloodshed.

The Greek word ‘kill’ in the New Testament is the word ‘sphazo,’ meaning ‘to slay, slaughter, butcher, to put to death by violence’ (BLB).

Hold on, what happened here? I thought the great leader just brought peace to the entire world. What happened between seal one and seal two?

We get a clue from Daniel 7:24: *“And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.”*

Many great books have thoroughly covered the 10 kings of the 10-nation federation, which will be in place. The Antichrist will rise from among them, make his peace treaties, and for a while, there will be peace under his treaties. This peace, however, will be short-lived. We have only to look at both ancient and modern history, particularly recent history in the Middle East and parts of Africa, to understand peace and peace treaties are fleeting things. Peace and order remain only as long as the parties involved want to maintain a peace, and decide it is in their own best interest to support it. Once one or both sides feel their political and social agendas have been compromised by the treaty, they will rebel against it and against the authority which set up the agreement. They may even go to war with one another.

In Daniel 7:24, we see this sequence happening. The Bible does

not specify what three countries are represented by the three kings who seek to overthrow the newly established treaties, but it implies three countries will band together to throw off what they feel are the shackles of the peace treaties imposed upon them by the Antichrist.

If we think back to when we were in school, the teachers always encouraged us to ask questions in class because if we had a problem, it was likely some other students in the class would have the same issue about the topic at hand. We see the same thought carried out, not only in schools, but also in business and politics. If you have a question about a statement or action made by one of our leading politicians, it is a certainty many others will have that same question in their minds. If you are angry about a political position which was taken at any level of our government, it is also a certainty many others will feel the same way.

Therefore, if we apply the same concept to Daniel 7:24, we can surmise if three kings were bold enough to rise in rebellion against the treaties and laws imposed upon them by the Antichrist, and based on our argument, we could say the probability is high there were other country leaders who shared their feelings.

This is an excellent place to reintroduce some educated guesses about the personality of this person we call the Antichrist.

Just picture in your mind, for a moment, the personality traits required to enable someone to not only envision their own personal world domination, but to put into practice a series of activities allowing them to be seen as the world's messiah. This would not be the psychological profile of someone who is going to 'go along with the group,' or who will seek group consensus and approval. This is the profile of a person who has sweet words of honey dripping from their lips as long as things are going their way, but would be utterly intolerant of any opposition and criticism. You may have seen small representations of this

attitude in the business or political world. I have known people in industry who, without hesitation, would make every attempt to crush someone's career if that someone ever dared to speak up and oppose one of their pet projects, or especially if that person said something that was derogatory against their management style or decisions. We see this currently in social media, news services, and politics in general. Speak up against the approved social script, and you will be maligned and banned by social media. Some people have spent time in jail because of their non-approved beliefs.

How much more violently would someone be if they have actual global power to destroy those who dared raise opposition to him? These statements are supported by Daniel 8:25: *"And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many..."*

The word 'craft' does not refer to the Antichrist as being a great plumber or bricklayer. The word used in the Greek is 'mirmah' (Strong's H4820). It speaks of deceit and treachery. Since he is opposed to whatever God stands for, deceit and treachery will be his standard mode of operation towards all, and especially towards Christians who oppose him. He will open the door to all forms of alternative powers and spirituality, and even to outright satanism. This is an easy sell under the guise of 'inclusiveness' and being open-minded to all people, except Christians, naturally. There is even a house two doors down from where we have a street-ministry which is actually proudly flying a flag of Satan on their front porch. We will see an increase in the anti-hate laws with stricter penalties for any transgression, or for even implying any other group is wrong in what they do or believe in. Recently, a teacher in a public school was fired because they referred to a student by their birth sex rather than by the sex the student felt they were on a particular day. Laws will focus on Christians who voice the teachings of the Bible because it is Satan who is standing behind the laws and some law-makers. In the recent

past, the mayor of Houston, Texas attempting to censor what pastors say from the pulpit. The mayor initially demanded transcripts of sermons be reviewed for hate speech.²

The Antichrist will set up policies within his treaties to prosper countries, all of which cause him to magnify himself in his own heart as one of the most exceptional people to have ever walked the face of the Earth. He will also bring about a temporary peace, and, because of opposition to some national and country restrictions in the peace treaties, he will set the wheels in motion to destroy many.

Revelation 6:4 says, *“power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth.”* The power was given to the rider, but it was the rider who set into motion the actions whereby people come to kill one another by choice. The killing takes place, not because a person or spirit has power, but because the person has free will to exercise their power for killing. We all have some amount of energy to use for destruction or to use to help our neighbor. It is not the power to destroy which causes one to kill, but it is the power of free-will to decide to kill, which is the issue. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden had the power of choice to decide to rebel against or to follow God’s command. Our lives, our governments, and our world display the results of having power and the free will choice of how we implement our freedom. We can either build or destroy. It’s always our choice.

The insurrection by, and the subsequent destruction of, the three leaders labeled as kings will trigger a global conflict. This is not the Armageddon battle, but will result in not only a massive loss of life, but the disruption of trade and commerce. We shall look at this disruption as we discuss Seal 3.

One of the real tragedies of the Seal 2 scenario is it comes about by the desire and drive for ultimate power. There is little thought

² City of Houston demands pastors turn over sermons, Todd Starnes, FOX News, 10/14/14

about using such remarkable power for social improvement or the betterment of mankind. Consider for a moment the potential for doing well for your fellow man if you had the authority and resources resulting from being seen as the most famous world leader in history. This remarkable power could be used for good instead of for self-centered ego gratification. This scenario will have to wait until the return of Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and the Prince of Peace.

Seal 3 – Revelation 6:5–6 *“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 beasts 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.’”*

Opening the third seal unleashes an awful horse and rider. Traditionally, black stands for death and mourning, and death and mourning it is with Seal 3.

Seal 2 unleashed wars and violent death. The Bible does not give us the number of people killed, but we will assume the warfare involves a huge number of people. In modern times, we have seen all too many examples, particularly in Africa, where internal war and persecution have brought about the disruption of farming and commerce, leading to scarcity and starvation. These events are happening in the third seal because of the events taking place during the second seal. Normal mechanisms for getting food to people seem to have been disrupted, and we are seeing shortages of food and resources, most likely in cities where the population depends on food grown by farmers in outlying areas to feed its people. Warfare from Seal 2 not only disrupts the supply of food, but may even lead to a scorched-earth policy where it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to plant and harvest food crops. Civil wars and drought in Somalia have reduced the sorghum crop to a

mere fraction of what it was³. Famine in Somalia is attributed to severe drought, which is true, but the situation is exacerbated by the difficulty in getting relief aid to those most impacted by famine because of warring groups and political enemies at odds.

Unrest has wracked Zimbabwe and this onetime ‘breadbasket of Africa’ has been stricken with shortages and hyperinflation. Polly Cleveland, a writer for the blog Econamici, writes in her article “Death and Hyperinflation in Zimbabwe” that one native-born Zimbabwe resident stated gasoline prices rose from 2,900 zim (ZWD) dollars per liter on Monday to 3,400 zim dollars per liter on Friday. At the time of this writing, 1.00 ZWD = \$0.0027 USD. Cleveland tells us about a woman whose husband had died in a hospital. It would “cost a whole month’s pension for the new widow to have her late husband’s body moved the few kilometers to the funeral home.” The widow wanted her husband cremated, but it would cost five years of the woman’s pension. Gasoline-price increases increase the cost of transporting food and manufactured goods, which raises the cost of all goods sold while decreasing the buying power of any savings one may have. “We cannot afford to live or to die here,” the widow stated.

Universal laws of supply and demand say when resources are scarce, the price goes up. Scripture states a measure of wheat will sell for a penny, and three measures of barley will sell for a penny. While this seems to be bargain-basement prices today, it was not during the time they wrote the Scriptures. A penny was often a day’s wages for a laborer. Some Bibles use the term ‘a day’s wages’ instead of the term ‘a penny.’ The Greeks used a word whose transliteration is ‘choenix’ (Strong’s G5518) and states it is a dry measure less than one quart or liter and is about as much as would support a man of a moderate appetite for a day (BLB). So, during this inflationary time, we see it takes an entire day to make enough money to buy food for one person for one

³ “Somalia Drought Is ‘Worst Humanitarian Crisis’:U.N.”, July 10, 2011, www.huffingtonpost.com.

day. You can also buy three measures of the less expensive grain, barley, for the same day's wages. You could only buy enough food to support three adults or possibly two adults and a small family of children for a full day's work.

Seal 3 does not explicitly address death by starvation, although it is reasonable to assume there are numerous people who will starve to death during this seal, much as people do today in war-torn countries where humanitarian aid does not always reach its intended beneficiaries. This seal seems to address hyperinflation, which is always a savings draining mechanism while raising the overall violence and stress levels wherever it occurs.

Seal 4 - Revelation 6:8- *“And I looked, and behold a pale 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.”*

It is said a person, or a nation, is the sum result of all the decisions they have made throughout their life. We see this in Seal 4. We have witnessed ruthless rulers come into power, they take peace from the earth in warfare, and hyperinflation will drive peoples and nations to despair. Seal 4 illustrates the consequences of seals 1 through 3. The implications of the former actions bring widespread death, and the earth loses one-quarter of its total population through continued warfare and through starvation.

Scripture also tells us the beasts of the earth contribute to the death toll. Some have hypothesized this would be wild animals killing people. It's possible, but unlikely. How many beasts killing people would it take to put a dent in the world's population? A much more likely scenario is many animals will become carriers of disease brought about by a massive increase in carrion. During the Middle Ages, rats were responsible for carrying bubonic plague through Europe. In modern times, fruit

bats carried the deadly Ebola⁴ virus in West Africa⁵.

“And hell followed with him” is an appropriate phrase. I can not imagine the chaos, hardship, desperation, and, yes, the smell of having one-fourth of the earth’s population die. Where do you bury all those people? How do you dispose of the bodies? Add decaying bodies in the cities to food shortages and transportation shortages, and you do have a situation where *“hell followed.”*

Seal 5 - Revelation 6:9-11 *“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 fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

Luke 21:12-19 *“But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren and kinfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your*

⁴ PubMed Health, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia “Plague”

⁵ “Where Did Ebola come From?”, Rachael Rettner, Senior Writer livescience, www.livescience.com, Sept. 22, 2014

souls.”

When we combine the words of Revelation 6:9–11 with Luke 21:12–19, we see a picture of extreme violence and prejudice, coupled with reassurance from our God, things will be okay for us, even if we are killed.

Unlike the first four seals, seal number five has no horses or riders which impact the Earth, but is a sober observation of what John was seeing. A vast multitude of people are killed for their faith, people who would stand fast in their belief, no matter the consequences. Combined with the verses in Luke, we see Christians give the proper response when brought before the authorities, and many are still put to death because of who they are, and for Christ’s namesake. How could this happen? Aren’t Christians the peace-lovers of the world? Don’t we profess the ‘hate the sin but love the sinner’ philosophy? Shouldn’t that make people love us instead of hating us?

Those arguments bring logic and reason into the equation. However, it is easy to see from world history, logic and reason have little to do with people’s opinions and prejudices. We live in a time where the popular impression is more important than hard data and the real-life observation of facts and actions. A few words on social media and news reports can bring a willingly lead people to unthinking violence.

The time during which people are allowed to speak their mind on a subject is very short. To illustrate, consider the pendulum on an old grandfather clock. The pendulum swings from right to left and from left to right. There is a brief fragment of time in the pendulum’s travels where it is at dead center at the bottom of its swing. Let’s assume the area to the right of the swing represents your views, arguments, and your right to express them. Let’s also assume the area to the left of the bottom of the swing is the other person’s opinions, arguments, and their right to express them. We see for a brief moment in time, at the bottom of the pendulum swing, both parties have equal rights to express their views and

be accepted in society.

However, it's but a short moment when the equilibrium between opposing groups is reached, allowing all people to freely express their viewpoints. Mounting public opinion on either will act as a momentum which pushes the pendulum to either the right or the left, depending on what forces come into play. It is the various forms of news media, television programming, television and movie actors, and social media which drive the direction of the pendulum.

In the United States, we are in the pendulum's swing moving towards the left, or the politically more liberal, part of the swing. In a changing power structure, those who hold opposing views from the majority are vilified by those who hold power. It's the classic case of 'us' versus 'them,' with the 'us' (whoever that is) always being the good guys and the 'them' always being the bad guys.

Today, it is conservative Christians who are considered to be the 'them' by those who disagree with traditional biblical views. It is an interesting irony that the ones who are attempting to spread God's love and peace are called 'haters.' They are reviled and hated by those people who have opposing views, without those opposing individuals recognizing they are, in fact, the haters by virtue of their attitude towards Christians. It seems as if only the 'other side' can be the haters, and people will always see themselves as the 'good guys' fighting off the 'haters.' Human psychological processes are bizarre, but deadly, that way.

So how does all of this tie into the verses related to seal number five? When the 'other side' is painted with a broad brush under one general title, such as 'Christians,' they lose their individual faces and become one amorphous, dehumanized blob or entity. Once dehumanized, is easy to hate everything and everyone belonging to the target group. If one side has sufficient power in a society, they will drive the laws of the land in such a way as to make the activities and expressions of the other group either

illegal or, at the very least, against prevailing social mores. They will see the maligned group as a people who prevent freedom from reaching its full potential for all people, and as a hindrance to the advancement of society in general. It's an easy step from there to believe the community and country would be so much better off without them in the mix. They should be disposed of. Adolf Hitler did this in Germany when it had difficult times, because of sanctions imposed on them after WWI⁶. They blamed their economic state on the Jews. The upshot was they eliminated over six million innocent people as problem people.

Is it hard to believe such a thing would happen today in our 'enlightened' world? Not really. All one has to do is look around the globe and see where similar thoughts are already reaching their logical conclusions and execution in the form of genocide. Genocide has its roots in the view a particular society or nation would be far better off if the 'other' group did not exist. Below is a very brief list taken from news articles of some of the countries in the world which have implemented genocide. If we were to read world news and list all the countries where internal strife and fighting is causing the deaths of innocent, targeted civilians, we would come up with a much, much longer list than what is represented below.

- The Republic of Somalia – two decades of drought. All the main parties committing atrocities against the civilian population, especially Al-Shabaab.
- Central African Republic – Christians and Muslim. Religious identity targets victims. Shortage of food, water, and shelter.
- Nigeria – Boko Haram has stated they will destroy every Christian school in Nigeria. Terrorist attacks on the Nigerian government and officials. Nigerian military assaults in counter-insurgency strikes.
- South Sudan – civilians, women, children by Dinka army, Nuer

⁶ "The Seeds of Evil: The Rise of Hitler", www.schoolhistory.org.uk, June 4, 2004

rebels.

- Sudan – Darfurese, Abyei, Nuba by Sudan army, Arab militias.
- Burma/Myanmar – various ethnic groups by the Burmese Army
- Afghanistan and Pakistan – government supporters by Taliban and Al Qaida.
- North Korea – government opponents by the Korean Army.
- Ethiopia – government opponents by the Tigeyan Army

If we were to dig into the list, we would see many peoples, Christians in particular, are losing their lives today because of who they are, not for what they've done. It estimated estimated a minimum of 100,000 Christians every year lose their lives because they are Christian⁷. While Christians around the world are struggling for their very lives, and dying because they will not renounce their faith, most of the world news media prefers to focus on the latest Hollywood scandals and tell us about where the rich and famous go on their vacations, or which celebrities have the best beach bodies.

The first five seals are terrifying because they are man-made. Yes, the horsemen of the seals are riding out, but they are just enabling men to turn upon one another. The bulk of the tragedy is man's utter inhumanity to man. Wars begin because people determine it is the appropriate thing to do. Disaster relief does not always reach its intended recipients because of greed and corruption. Genocide occurs because a segment of the population has been dehumanized and decreed to be undesirable.

Does Satan have a hand in influencing world events? Yes, absolutely, but individual men and women have an ultimate say what they will allow their hand to do! In the 1970s, there was a

⁷ "Some 100,000 Christians killed per year over faith, Vatican says", FoxNews.com, Christina Corbin, June 2, 2013.

TV comic famous for his phrase “the devil made me do it.”⁸ The country laughed at the humor, but the sad fact is we are ultimately in control of what we speak and what we allow our bodies to do. The devil can only influence you to do something if you want to do it. This is the terrifying part of the first five seals; people want to kill and spread destruction. Unless you are actually possessed, no entity can make you carry out an act. The time is coming when people will want Christians to be gone. Consciences will be seared. Persecution and death to Christians will begin in the United States, much like consciences are seared to abortions being murder, resulting in over one million two hundred thousand babies being killed in the U.S. each year⁹. Christians will become the next form of unwanted fetuses.

Seal 6 – Revelation 6:12-15 *“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.”*

Seal 6 is the first seal where God is causing things to happen on the Earth. In the proceeding seals, He only lifted His hand of restraint and let people do what they are predisposed to do because of their sin nature. Seal 6 is the first seal in which we see God’s wrath being played out on the Earth in addition to man’s own depravity.

Earthquakes have been a part of life at least since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. It is hard for us in the United States to

⁸ Flip Wilson as Geraldine Jones. The Flip Wilson Show. 1970-1974 NBC

⁹ “Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States”, Guttmacher Institute, August 2014.

appreciate the magnitude of destruction earthquakes have caused. The Prince William Sound, Alaska, earthquake of 1964¹⁰ registered as a 9.2 magnitude and caused 131 fatalities. A resulting tsunami measured 67 meters at Valdez Inlet and killed an additional 15 people.

The Landers, California earthquake in 1992 was a magnitude 7.3 quake and resulted in three deaths, one due to the earthquake itself and two due to heart attacks.

To put these in some perspective, listed below are some of the earthquakes which have caused a loss of life of a magnitude unknown in the United States: (data from the U.S.G.S. and NBCNews.com)

- Haiti – 2010 – 316,000 fatalities.
- Sumatra – 2004 – resulted in a tsunami in Indonesia. 227,000 fatalities
- Ardabil, Iran – 1977, 150,000 fatalities
- Tangshan, China 1976 – 655,000 fatalities
- Valdivia earthquake in Chile – 1960, 9.5 magnitude. Tsunami 82' high in southern Chile and tsunamis in Hawaii, Japan, the Philippines, eastern New Zealand, Australia, and Aleutian Islands. Devastated Hilo, Hawaii. Triggered a volcano in a remote section of Chili.
- Ashgabat, Turkmenistan – 1948 – 110,000 fatalities
- Hokkaido, Japan – 1930--137,000 fatalities
- Kanto, Japan, 1923 – 142,000 deaths + 38,000 casualties from resulting fire storm
- Haiyuan, China, 1920 -- 200,000 fatalities.
- Shaanxi, China – 1556 – 820,000 deaths. Valleys and hills are

¹⁰ "The Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964", Alaska Earthquake Center, Geophysical Institute, UAF.

formed. Rivers changed course.

- Aleppo, Syria – 1138 – 230,000 fatalities
- Damghan, Iran, 856 – 200,000 fatalities

At the time of this writing, there have been 124 earthquakes worldwide which registered a magnitude of 2.9 or above. Scripture talks about every mountain and island being moved out of their places. How on earth could this be? This is larger than any recorded quake in world history. Earthquakes are caused by the Earth's tectonic plates moving against each other. To trigger such a massive global quake would require some of the bigger plates to slip. The largest of the plates are the African Plate, Indo-Australian Plate, Eurasian Plate, and the Pacific Plate.¹¹ A significant shift in any of these could theoretically destabilize the rest of the plates and cause enormous global plate readjustments; in other words, massive, linked earthquakes.

Although plates move, there is no record of them shifting enough to cause global destabilization, other than one obtuse reference in the Bible (*Gen 10:25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one [was] Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided;*)

How would destabilization occur? Consider this possibility: NASA created the JPL Sentry System at the California Institute of Technology to track asteroids in space which might come near the earth.¹² The system monitors the orbits of thousands of asteroids. As they discover new asteroids in a near-Earth orbit, JPL adds them to the list to be monitored. As orbits change and the asteroid has no more potential to impact Earth, they remove it from the list. I love the concept of this supervised early warning impact system.

Space is a really huge area. Given this, plus the phrase, “*the stars of heaven fell unto the earth*” it can be imagined there are

¹¹ “Tectonic Plates”, WorldAtlas.com

¹² <http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/risk/>

asteroids which are hidden by another heavenly body, or too far out right now to show up on the list, could pose a significant threat to the Earth. It may not be the Leonids or Geminids meteor showers which will hold the asteroids big enough to look like stars falling from the sky, but to be sure, the Word of God is accurate and a shower of asteroids is the most likely tool God may use to fulfill His purposes. The Leonid meteor shower happens on November 17-18 every year as the Earth passes through the debris of comet Tempel-Tuttle.¹³ These showers can be significant. On November 17, 1966, it was reported approximately 150,000 meteors were entering our atmosphere every hour. This works out to be about 40 meteors per second. Temple-Tuttle is scheduled to return in 2031.

As we learned in high school science class, there is a vast asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The asteroids range in size from dust particles to a small planet. Astronomers tell us the collisions between asteroids in the system are common. It doesn't take much imagination to envision a scenario where gravitational perturbations from the planet Jupiter cause the right combination of asteroid collisions to occur, sending several asteroids tumbling towards the Earth. More on this when we cover trumpet judgment #2.

It would take only a few large asteroids impacting the Earth, with hits on the right areas where tectonic plates join, to cause enough tectonic movement to result in the change and readjustment of the plates. Some scientists believe a giant asteroid struck near the coast of the Yucatan peninsula about 65 million years ago. They estimate a 10-kilometer-wide (6.2 miles) asteroid created the 150-kilometer-wide (93.2 miles) Chicxulub crater.¹⁴ The theory is a dense cloud of dust thrown up by the impact sufficed to block the sun's rays, causing darkening and cooling of the Earth. A dust

¹³ "55P/Tempel-Tuttle: Overview", National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

¹⁴ "The survivors" New Theories About the Chicxulub Asteroid Impact 65 Million Years Ago", www.dailygalaxy.com, July 24, 2013

cloud like this would cause much of the vegetation to die off, with the dinosaurs and many other animals following.

The journal *Science* has an interesting prophetic observation in their July 25, 2014 issue.¹⁵ It deals with the potential of a mass extinction being triggered on Earth. This time caused by man instead of asteroids. The mechanism they point to includes defaunation (reduction of animal species) because of “overexploitation, habitat destruction, and impacts from invasive species.” They also point out the potential threat from human-induced climate changes, coupled with introducing new pathogens. To me, it sounds as if some of the seals are ready to be opened on command.

“And the sun became darkened ”—on May 19, 1780, the sun over New England and New Jersey became darkened for 10 hours to where eyewitnesses wrote you could not read a paper right in front of your face.¹⁶ The phenomenon was not an eclipse by any means, since it was localized to the New England/New Jersey area. Very severe wildfires in Ontario, Canada, put tons of soot into the air. A thick cloud cover over the northeast combined with the smoke from the fire sufficiently to block the sun’s light for a day.

With the destruction caused by the first four seals, it is easy to see how the sun can become darkened and how the moon can appear red through the ash and haze.

If nuclear weapons are discharged during military conflicts, which require no stretch of the imagination to envision, we may even see a ‘nuclear winter’ effect. Sufficient dust and soot may be thrown into the upper atmosphere to partially block the sun’s light. It is estimated this could cool the Earth down to temperatures not seen since the last major ice age, disrupting

¹⁵ “Defaunation in the Anthropocene” Rodolfo Dirzo, et.al., 25 July 2014, p401

¹⁶ “When May 19 became the day of darkness”, www.cnn.com, bob Greene, May 19, 2013

global food production. While the surface of the Earth is cooling down, the upper atmosphere above the global dust cloud is heating up, destroying the Earth's protective ozone layer.¹⁷

Between seals 6 – 7: There is more activity occurring on Earth between seals 6 and 7. In Revelation 7:3–4, we read about the sealing of the 144,000 Jews which God is marking for His service as evangelists. *“And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”*

I've heard people propose the theory there will be no salvations during the Tribulation. This doesn't make a great deal of sense. If this were true, why would God create 144,000 evangelists? What would be the purpose of the exercise? If there were no conversions, this group would be very poor evangelists indeed. You can also say, a little tongue-in-cheek, they could have the Noah evangelical anointing, where after preaching to his neighbors for 100 years as he was building the ark, there were no conversions except for his immediate family.

I don't believe God wastes His time doing things are not profitable to the Kingdom. This group of 144,000 Holy Spirit filled evangelists will go out among the people with a flaming passion for winning converts to Christ while there is still time. If this theory of no further salvations were correct, we would have to revisit Seal 5 to explain all the martyrs in white robes under the throne until the rest of their brethren have been killed. While many of these could be pre-Tribulation Saints killed for their faith, we must realize many of the brethren killed died for their faith during the first four seals. There is no time in which Christ will not accept converts. Turning away from sincere seekers is definitely not in His nature.

¹⁷ O. Toon, A. Robock, and R. Turco, “The Environmental Consequences of Nuclear War”, *Physics Today*, vol. 61, No. 12, 2008, p. 37-42.

Revelation 7:9 says, *“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”* John the Apostle asked who these people were in Revelation 7:14 and was told by the angel, *“And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* Apparently, people are coming to faith during the Tribulation and being killed for their faith.

Why 144,000 from the tribes of Israel? The answer is straightforward. In the 2000 years since Jesus walked the Earth, there has been a smaller percentage of the Jewish population accepting Christ as Messiah than might be expected. “So what of it,” you may ask. It must be kept in mind the Tribulation and the events of the End Times are for the Jew. These are the last actions of the Father to prompt His people to turn to his Son as the Messiah. The Jewish people will more readily accept the preaching of their own on-fire evangelists than they will receive the teaching of non-Jews. This is also true of the two witnesses we will discuss later. They too will be Jews.

For readers shocked by these statements, you have only to remember Jesus was born a Jew, lived as a Jew, and died a Jew. It was the expulsion of Christ-believing Jews from the temple and alienation from Jewish society, which split Christianity off as a separate religion. Jesus did not come to start a new religion. There are many kingdom benefits which have resulted from the split, but we are not here to discuss kingdom building. Suffice it to say, those who believe God is finished with the Jews have missed the point and need to open their hearts and examine Scripture as the Bereans did. The belief God is finished with Israel holds the seeds of anti-Semitism and blinds the eyes of many to correctly interpret the Scriptures.

One might also say the 144,000 people from the tribes of Israel were sealed because the Christians are conspicuously missing

from the Earth, and it is now up to the Jews to evangelize the remaining global population. Has the Rapture happened by this time? What a provocative question.

Seal 7 -Revelation 8:1-5 - *“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightning, and an earthquake.”*

Here we see the first instance of silence in heaven mentioned. Until now, we have witnessed praise and worship and singing and the saints under the altar, petitioning God for justice. Now everything falls silent. We can only imagine John’s awe of the situation he was witnessing. All in Heaven know there is a shift in the judgments on the world, and from this point on, things will get even more severe. I can’t help but feel there is a somberness and sadness in Heaven which, for all the death and destruction people on the Earth have seen, they are still reluctant to turn to God for help and, in fact, continue to run from His offer of salvation. The human heart can become so hard. This somber atmosphere is punctuated by the voices, thundering, lightning, and the earthquake as the angel takes the censer filled with God’s holy fire from the Holy Altar and casts it to the Earth.

Seal 7 is a transition seal to the seven trumpet judgments, as seven trumpets are handed to seven angels in Rev 8:2. Things will get significantly worse on planet Earth.

Chapter 4: The Trumpet Judgments

The trumpet judgments denote a time where God will increase the pressure to call upon His Son for help and redemption. These are so horrific many people feel they are allegories or symbolic, but the Bible is so specific on what is transpiring on Earth, although the events are genuinely beyond imagination, they still represent actual events which will occur.

In the seal judgments, people were encouraged to repent and were given ample time to do so, but yet rejected God and asked the mountains to fall upon them to protect them from the wrath of God. In the trumpet judgments, we see one event quickly follows another in rapid succession. The first four trumpet judgments are against the Earth, while the final three judgments deal with actions of and against demons.

Trumpet 1-Revelation 8:7 - *“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.”*

In Job 38:22–23 the Lord is chastising Job and says, *“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?”*

In Joshua 10:11, the Bible says, *“As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.”*

In Exodus, the Lord destroys the crops of the Egyptians with hail. Psalms 78, 105, 147, and 148 talk about hail as either a punishment for unrighteousness or as an example of God’s

power. In Revelation 16:21, we see God causing 100-pound hailstones to fall on people. It should not surprise us whenever God uses hail to chastise the inhabitants of the Earth for their blasphemies and hardness of heart. Large hail falling to the Earth as punishment for sin parallels Leviticus 24:16 and speaks of the penalty for blasphemy against God, *“And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him...”* It is God Himself doing the stoning, in this case. It seems from Job 38:22-23 God has a storehouse of hail in the heavens He reserves for this express purpose.

In this case, the hail is also mingled with blood. This is the first instance where hail and blood are used together. Although it's possible, the passage may refer to the hail mixing with the blood of the victims which it falls upon, it is much more likely the blood mentioned might be something related to the blood of the martyrs who chose to die for their faith rather than renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. It may also be possible we see the fulfillment of the self-proclaimed curse in Matthew 27:25 where, after Pilate sentenced Jesus to death and washed his hands of Jesus's innocent blood, *“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”* This could very well be the physical manifestation of a self-proclaimed curse.

Additional food shortages, along with increased starvation, are resulting from this Trumpet, as a third of the trees (including food-producing trees), and all green grass is burned up. Cattle and livestock around the world depend on vegetation to survive. This may be a hint the remaining Trumpet Judgments and Vials come in quick succession since the global food supply has been significantly impacted.

Trumpet 2 – Revelation 8:8 – *“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."

This is an interesting passage in that the Scripture very carefully states that, *"as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea."* The Greek word for comparing objects, concepts, or similar ideas is 'hos' (BLB). Let's briefly look at several other Scriptures which use the same word to get a better feel for how this term is used to compare two objects or concepts. Matthew 6:10 says, *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as (hos) it is in heaven."* Matthew 6:12 says, *"...and forgive us our debts, as (hos) we forgive our debtors."* Mark 3:5, *"... and his hand was restored whole as (hos) the other."* One thing is compared to another similar thing.

This is clearly not a terrestrial mountain falling from the sky, based on the comparison word 'hos,' nor do I believe it is purely symbolic or allegorical. People have said the burning mountain is everything from the sins of mankind falling back on us from Heaven to an old reference to Genghis Khan or Emperor Nero. The problem is, once you start down a path like that, there is no turning around. You are doomed to travel a twisted bunny-trail through the weeds and are forced to say it is allegorical or pertained only to an event in the distant past to cover up being hopelessly tangled in your own thought train. There are a lot of symbolic or allegorical instances in Revelation, but this is not one of them. Keeping to what the words are saying leads us to a simple, yet terrifying, line of thought. There is something big coming.

This mountain may very well be another large asteroid falling to Earth. In Revelation 6:13, the *"...stars of heaven fell unto the earth"* uses 'aster' for the word 'stars'. Aster is not the word used in Revelation 8:8 for the mountain falling into the sea. The term used in Revelation 8:8 is 'oros,' meaning mountain, or large hill. Whatever is hurtling towards Earth to rendezvous with our planet at its appointed time is large, very frightening, and unstoppable.

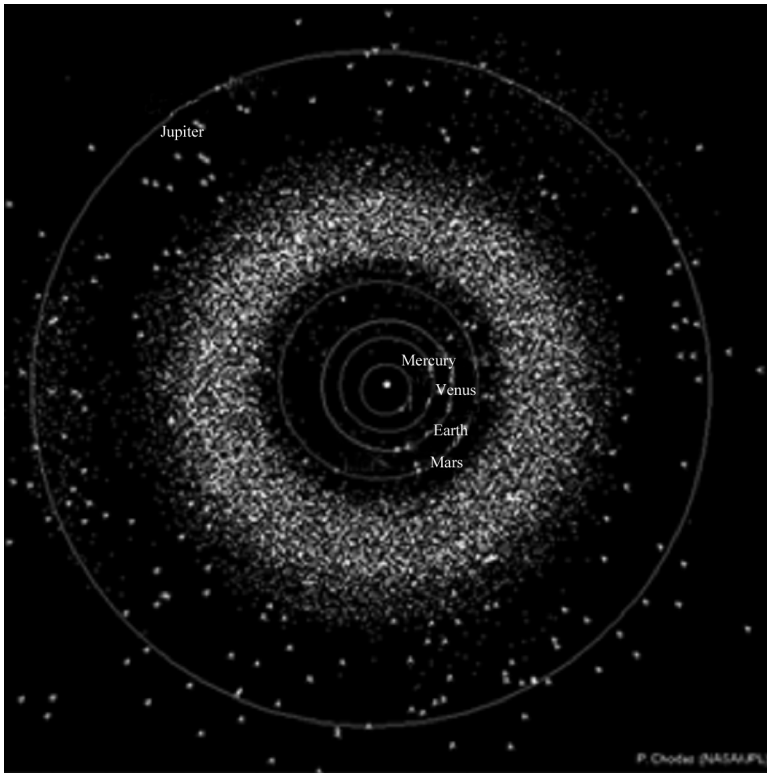
On 9/7/2014, asteroid 2014RC skimmed past Earth over New Zealand at a distance of only one-tenth the distance from the Earth to the moon.¹ The asteroid was only 60 feet (18m) in diameter. The exciting thing is, although by NASA account, over 11,000 near-Earth asteroids are tracked, this one was discovered just two weeks before its close encounter with Earth. NASA also said it would return in the future as it travels its orbit. Although it missed, to me it is like a bullet skimming through your hair without actually hitting your head and someone proclaiming it's no big deal because it missed!

On 4/14/2018, asteroid 2018GE3 was classified as a 'near miss.' It came halfway between the earth and the moon orbits. It was almost four hundred feet in diameter, about the size of a city block. It was discovered only 24 hours before it skimmed past!

About April 13, 2029, asteroid 99942 Apophis is scheduled to pass between the earth and many of our man-made satellites orbit. Think about that one for a few seconds. That's pretty close!!

The diagram below is from the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab (http://ssd.jpl.nasa.gov/?ss_inner) and shows asteroids which are tracked in our inner solar system between the Sun and the planet Jupiter. The cloud of round dots represents all tracked asteroids. You can see the majority of them are located between Mars and Jupiter and form a donut shape around the inner solar system. Scattered throughout the illustration are triangular-shaped objects. These are tracked comets which have a portion of their orbit within the inner solar system. These comets will swing by the sun at some point in time.

¹ "An Asteroid Discovered Just Days Ago Is Zipping By The Earth This Weekend – Here's How to Watch" Business Insider Malaysia, Sep 6, 2014.



While the vast majority of these asteroids have orbits which will keep them far from Earth, my way of thinking tells me it would only take a small bump from a fellow asteroid to nudge one of these chunks of rock out of its orbit and put it on a collision path with Earth to fulfill prophecy. Asteroids in the belt frequently bump into each other. Consider it to be celestial billiards, if you will.

Asteroid 2002NT7 is a 1.2-mile-wide (2 km) rock which was initially expected to result in a near miss in 2019. It had the potential to hit Earth with enough force to “wipe out a continent and cause global climate changes,” according to a news article from the BBC on 24 July 2002, entitled “Space rock on collision course.” Over the ensuing years, its orbit has been more accurately calculated, and it has been removed from the near

miss list.

We can imagine a trail of fire by an asteroid the size of 2002NT7 as its rock heats up and begins to burn in our atmosphere. It’s also easy to see by the Scripture when it reaches the ocean, it is still a gigantic object, and gives the impression of being a falling mountain. It takes very little extra understanding to conclude such an object hitting an ocean would cause a tremendous tsunami, destroying the third part of all ships which are in the targeted ocean.

The following comparative table gives estimated tsunami heights for a 10 km and a 1 km diameter asteroid hitting an ocean.²

Distance from impact	Diameter of Asteroid	
	10 km (6.2 miles)	1 km (0.62 mile)
Resulting Tsunami Height		
300 km (186 miles)	1.3 km (4,265 ft.)	42 m (137 ft.)
1000 km (621 miles)	540 m (1,771 ft.)	18 m (59 ft.)
3,000 km (1,864 miles)	250 m (820 ft.)	8 m (26 ft.)
10,000 km (6,213 miles)	100 m (328 ft.)	3 m (9+ ft.)

It is clear from the chart, an asteroid of either size will cause more death and destruction than we have seen to date from any tsunami. I can’t even picture a wall of water almost a mile high bearing down on me. This is the stuff of science fiction movies and nightmares! Besides the tsunami, an asteroid of this size will send out a shock and heat pulse which would destroy anything the water did not pulverize. It’s no wonder the dinosaurs didn’t make it through the Yucatan strike.

From the passage, we can’t quite understand whether it is the enormous amount of heat introduced into the ocean by the

² “Effects of an Asteroid Impact on Earth”, www.astronomynotes.com, Nick Strobel, 1998

‘falling mountain’ or if it is chemical contamination which causes one-third of sea life to die, but a case can be made for either, or both, of the scenarios. Most sea life can only survive in a relatively narrow band of temperatures. Get your aquarium a little too cold or too hot and see what happens with your fish. Sea life has a broader range of temperature-range acceptance, but you get the concept. Rapid temperature changes will shock and kill most fish.

The sea becoming blood may also be due to the heating of the water which, in turn, supports massive red algae blooms in the sea. Some red algae blooms have significantly reduced the oxygen levels in the water, and have produced sufficient natural toxins, resulting in the death of marine life. Past red algae blooms are very localized events causing dieoffs in small areas. One has only to search the Internet for photos of red algae blooms in oceans to see many, many examples of the phenomena. Scripture here is talking about a magnitude of blooming which has been unknown in human history. It results in the death of sea life on a scale which is hard to imagine.

Much like the hail raining down and destroying one-third of the trees and all the grass, with the probable result of mass starvation, the death of sea life in even one ocean may have an equally destructive effect on the human population. For many peoples around the globe, fish is the primary source of food and starvation will result if a food source is impacted in any way.

Trumpet 3 *Revelation 8:10 – 11 “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.”*

Trumpet 3 is a difficult one to interpret. The best guesses are it is

yet another heavenly body falling to earth, causing a chemical reaction with either the atmosphere or the water. It is possible the impurities of either an asteroid or a comet cause a significant increase in nitric acid, or they contain cyanogen. Cyanogen is an extremely toxic compound not only made here on Earth for industrial purposes, but was also found in the tails of some comets.

There was a tremendous amount of speculation the passage could refer to a significant future nuclear reactor disaster after the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident which left the city of Pripyat in Ukraine a ghost town. Although coincidental, it seems as if any connection with Trumpet 3 and a nuclear disaster is highly speculative.

Trumpet 4 *Revelation 8:12 “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.”*

We have covered the effects of a large meteor or asteroid strike on the Earth in previous sections. Using the same thought process, we can see how there could be so much dust and debris in the air around the globe the lights from the heavens are obscured. This sounds very much like a signal to begin a global winter such as the 1816 “Year without a summer.” According to an online article by Lee Foster, a meteorologist with NOAA: “Another possible cause (for the 1816 year without a summer) was the eruption of the Tambour volcano on the island of Soembawa in Indonesia on April 15th, 1815. The eruption lasted one week and rumbled for three months. The mountain elevation dropped from 14,000 feet to 9000 feet, killed close to 10,000 people on the island, and another 80,000 people would eventually die from starvation and diseases related to the eruption. Tambour was one of the largest recorded eruptions with estimates of 1.7

million tons of dust put into the air equaling six million atomic bombs. The theory is the dust reached the Northern Hemisphere during 1816, reducing solar output.³

Does this sound like anything we have read in Revelation? Sure does, doesn't it! And this was only ONE volcano.

The point here is although God can use any miraculous power to get the job done, He has already created most of the instruments He will use to get man's attention to turn toward Him for forgiveness and salvation. We don't have to look for entirely supernatural events, thus far, in our brief study. We have only to see what the Creator has created in our existing universe. However, we shall soon see Trumpet 5 is a game-changer, and moves us into the realm of the supernatural.

Between Trumpet 4 and Trumpet 5:

Revelation 8:13 "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!'"

This statement stuns me! Think about it! Summarizing so far: we see nations destroyed, governments have fallen, a good share of the Earth's population dead, land masses rocking and being shaken like the proverbial "drunken sailor," shipping destroyed, a significant part of sea life killed, food crops burned up, grass burned off, and NOW an angel says we are getting into real woe!! As the psalmist said, "Selah." Take a few minutes to think about and digest this. My natural mind can't think of how anything on Earth could get any worse, but yet here is God's messenger telling us the lighter stuff is over and it's going to get serious from this point on. The situation getting worse is almost

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/17/world/tambora-eruption-year-without-summer-scen>

inconceivable!

We will return to revisit these “woes” in more detail shortly.

Trumpet 5 *Revelation 9:1 “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.”*

The word used for ‘star’ in the Greek is ‘aster.’ In almost every instance, its usage refers to a genuine star, in alignment with what we know a star to be. On some occasions, it refers to an intelligent being, frequently a demon or Satan. Jude 1:13 says, *“Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”* Jude is comparing some undesirable people to raging waves and wandering stars, using the comparative word ‘hos’ we discussed previously. He is saying these stars (aster) will be sent to a place of complete darkness. He is referring to the White Throne Judgment and banishment into outer darkness thereafter.

Jesus called Himself a star when he said in *Revelation 22:16*, *“I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”*(aster)

In Revelation 9:1 we see Satan himself, the ‘aster’ in this case, being thrown out of Heaven and falling to Earth. He is given the keys to the bottomless pit (abyssos, pronounced “a-bus-sos”) (BLB) where he promptly releases a hoard of his demons. The remainder of Revelation 9 is extremely tempting to get into, but it is slightly off-track from our primary objective of discussing things related to Rapture timing. This would be an excellent time to take a break from your reading, and review chapter 9 in Revelation yourself. Demons which look like locusts, going around stinging anyone who does not have God’s seal, and the unfortunate people who are getting stung wanting to die, but being unable to, is in itself the content of many other books.

The concept of a bottomless pit fascinates many people. It seems like such an improbable idea, especially when it is being described as being on planet Earth. How can this be? Simple, really. Recall the Earth is a ball floating in space. Now let's say we found a way to drill a shaft completely through the center of the Earth to the other side (okay, let's forget about any magma problems we encounter once we get through the crust). How far can you travel down this incredible shaft before you start your journey back out of it? Yes, correct. You can only go half-way. Once you pass the midpoint, you are on the road back out of the shaft and traveling towards the surface on the other side of the Earth. When did you hit the bottom? Obviously you didn't, hence a bottomless pit. The real point of the exercise is there really IS a bottomless pit in the Earth, and the Bible tells us the demons are housed there until it is time for their release to attack the remaining Earth's population during the Great Tribulation.

This is the first of the great woes. We will use this point later in our analysis.

Trumpet 6 *Revelation 9:14-16 -- "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. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."*

The fact four angels are bound in the Euphrates River begs the question, "why were they bound there?" Sadly, there seems to be no concrete evidence answering the question. Genesis 15:18 may give a clue since, "*In the same day the LORD made a covenant*

with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:”

The river Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the Promised Land. In most instances where the river is mentioned, activities and battles take place on the western side of it. The river seems to be a ‘hard stop’ for Israel, one which sets a hard boundary for their activity. Was it the demonic forces in the river which kept the east side separated from the west side in Scripture? The answer may never be known this side of eternity.

It may be the release of the demons from this river removes the hard boundary and allows an invasion of a 200-million-man army from the east to invade Israel.

A very long time ago, a friend of mine sent me a copy of Mao Tse Tung’s Little Red Book (I never really did find out why he actually sent it to me. It seemed a rather odd thing to do). The only thing I actually remember from it was it said China, at the time, could field an army of 200 million men. I thought it was an interesting statement. Do we believe it is China fielding the 200-million-man army in Revelation 9:16? Probably not entirely. They may contribute to the number and gather additional troops from countries along the way in their march from the east to west, toward Israel.

The four demons which are released from the river are genuinely ruthless and use their spiritual influence to further flame the passions of man to the point where resulting warfare causes the death of one-third of the remaining Earth’s population. Could it be they release not only a human army but also a technological army as well?

Joel 2:2-10 “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither

shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them, a flame burneth: the land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them, a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses, and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march everyone on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.”

From the description, it seems possible Joel saw an entirely mechanized army in action, and was trying to describe it the only way he knew how in ancient warfare technology terms.

In fact, since no one breaks ranks and everything in this military has an appointed path to take, the impression is Joel is talking about a robotic army with quite a bit of firepower. Joel states the land before them is like the Garden of Eden, but the land behind them is a burnt-out wasteland. We have seen the same description of the land earlier.

These statements fit nicely into current military robotic warfare development. The June 10, 2013 issue of The Times of India science section contains an article titled “India developing robotic soldiers to replace humans in warfare,” which explains India has plans to manufacture and use robotic soldiers in combat as human replacements. The project is being run by the Ministry of Defense R&D Organization (DRDO). The DRDO chief stated, “unmanned warfare in land and air is the future of warfare.” He goes on to say, “in the initial phase of the project, the robotic

soldier would be required to be told by the human soldier to identify an enemy or a combatant but slowly in due course of time, the robotic soldier would be at the front end, and the human soldier would be assisting him.” The article also states five or six countries are actively working on such technology.

A New York Times article dated November 27, 2010 said, “Fifty-six nations are now developing robotic weapons.” The article quotes Dr. Arquilla of the Information Operations Center at the Naval Postgraduate School, who says, “I will stand my artificial intelligence against your human any day of the week and tell you that my A.I. will pay more attention to the rules of engagement and create fewer ethical lapses than a human force.” Dr. Arquilla argues a weapons system controlled by software will not act out of anger and malice and, in particular cases, can already make better decisions on the battlefield than humans.

On March 3, 2013, the BBC reported on robot warriors⁴. It reports, “in a laboratory at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Prof. Henrik Christiansen’s robots are hunting for insurgents. They look like cake stands on wheels as they scuttle about.

Christiansen and his team at Georgia Tech are working on a project funded by the defense company BAE Systems.

Their aim is to create unmanned vehicles programmed to map an enemy hideout, allowing human soldiers to get vital information about a building from a safe distance.

“These robots will basically spread out,” says Christiansen, “go through the environment and map out what it looks like, so that by the time you have humans entering the building you have a lot of intelligence about what’s happening in there.” The emphasis in this project is on reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. But the scientific literature has raised the possibility of armed robots, program to behave like locusts or other insects which will swarm

⁴ [Robot warriors: Lethal machines coming of age - BBC News](#)

together in clouds as enemy targets appear on the battlefield. Each member of the robotic swarm could carry a small warhead or use kinetic energy to attack a target.”

‘Interesting Engineering,’ 12/30/2020 reports, “Autonomous military robots are robots—or remote-controlled mobile robots designed for military applications such as transport to search and rescue, and attack. Some autonomous military robot systems, some of which are also called killer robots, are currently in use, and many others are under development.

The U.S. Army plans on deploying Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) by 2028, which require machine learning components designed to give the robots or killer robots autonomy and decision-making in the battlefield.”

An autonomous killer robot army is not the stuff of science fiction any longer. The US has been launching drone aircraft strikes for a number of years. A very brief sampling of some of the stories in the news includes the following:

Northrup Grumman describes their new X-47B UCAS unmanned aircraft can take off and land autonomously from the deck of an aircraft carrier.⁵ “The X-47B is a tailless, strike fighter-sized unmanned aircraft developed by Northrup Grumman as part of the U.S. Navy’s Unmanned Combat Air System (UCAS) Carrier Demonstration program... these aircraft were used successfully to demonstrate the first ever carrier-based launches and recoveries by an autonomous, low-observable relevant unmanned aircraft.”

Northrup Grumman currently produces the Switchblade. They report, “This optically-guided, miniature tactical missile is a remotely-operated lethal platform which provides the user with real-time targeting information, to include video and GPS coordinates for information gathering and feature/object recognition. Additionally, these outputs allow the operator to

⁵ [X-47B UCAS - Northrup Grumman](#)

exercise the system's wave-off capability as the situation requires." The missile is lightweight and easily man carryable.

The DOD Strategic Capabilities Office, partnered with Naval Air Systems Command and "successfully demonstrated one of the world's largest micro-drone swarms at China Lake, California. The test, conducted in October 2016 and documented on Sunday's CBS News program "60 Minutes", consisted of 103 Perdix drones launched from three F/A-18 Super Hornets. The micro-drones demonstrated advanced swarm behaviors such as collective decision-making, adaptive formation flying, and self-healing."

The "CRUSHER" Robotic Tank-Mobile being developed by Carnegie Mellon University is operable and field-tested.⁶ The vehicle can climb over short walls, traverse ditches, and move over rough terrain, all at a speed which would injure any human occupant."

The company UAVGLOBAL, a manufacturer of unmanned systems, has flight-tested an unmanned combat aircraft called "Taranis." On their web page, uavglobal.com, they state "A semi-autonomous unmanned warplane is designed to fly intercontinental missions, and will carry a variety of weapons, enabling it to attack both aerial and ground targets. It will utilize stealth technology, giving it a low radar profile, and it will be controllable via satellite link from anywhere on Earth. Taranis will make use of at least ten years of research and development into low observables, systems integration, control infrastructure, and full autonomy."

China has conducted tests of its unmanned stealth aircraft, Wing Loong II. The aircraft can accurately hit targets up to 25 miles away with up to 14 missiles.⁷

⁶ <https://www.nrec.ri.cmu.edu/solutions/defense/other-projects/crusher.html>

⁷ <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/china-unveils-deadly-bomber-aircraft-it-is-invisible-to-radar-5409806/>

The army described in Joel seems to be just around the corner.

Revelation 11:14 -- "The second woe is past. The third woe is coming quickly."

Trumpet 7 Revelation 11:15-19 – There are huge earthquakes, great hail, and lightning with thundering. This passage introduces the vial judgments where God will be as pouring His wrath out over the Earth.

Revelation 12:12 – "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 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."

Satan and his demons have been cast out of Heaven for all time and cast down to the Earth. He knows the content of the Bible very well and realizes his time is short, so he intensifies the attacks on mankind, and particularly on Israel and the Jews.

Chapter 5: The Vial Judgments

Revelation 16: - The Vial Judgments - the vial judgments seem to come in very rapid succession. They are so horrific it is clear there can be no one on Earth who can see these as natural calamities, but that all men might know this is straight from God's throne. These judgments must be poured out quickly because it is obvious the world is on its last legs and is rapidly dying after the seven trumpet judgments. It's difficult to see how the world could survive after such devastating events have taken place in the seven trumpet judgments. Add to it the vial judgments, and you have a planet which cannot survive any longer. The combination ushers in Jesus and His second coming to save this world on its deathbed. Does it sound too dramatic or exaggerated?

Matthew 24:22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew is saying if Jesus doesn't reduce the time until His coming, everyone and everything alive on the planet will be dead. We would be a lifeless, ruined ball of a tombstone floating silently in space.

In the vial judgments, we see seven angels of the Lord pouring out seven divine judgments on the Earth. It is easy to see these are not man-made calamities which people can assign to some natural occurrence. These are delivered from the very hand of God Himself as a last-ditch attempt to get people to understand there is a living God in place who loves them and wants them desperately to turn from their evil ways, acknowledge Him as their Savior, and be saved from eternal damnation.

Vial 1 - *Revelation 16:2 – “And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.”*

Perhaps it's just my way of thinking, but if I were to see a segment of the population getting these very grievous sores, while another segment of the population seems to be immune to them, I would probably look into it a little deeper to see how I could become one of those people who didn't have the sores. I suppose it's a simple statement to make while I'm just sitting here at my desk writing this. There is indeed sufficient evidence in the world to show people don't get analytical and think that way. I'm reminded of the days in the 1960s, and early '70s when the AIDS epidemic first hit the newspapers. People's minds were oriented such they thought it was strictly a gay issue and had nothing to do with the heterosexual population. How devastatingly wrong they were.

Very shortly after headlines proclaimed it as a purely homosexual disease, it became clear it was not, and no segment of the population was safe from its ravages. Men, women, and children across all social boundaries were impacted and died.

The early proclaimers saying AIDS was a gay-only disease had blinders on and could not see the complete picture. The reasons for the blinders may vary from mere ignorance to extreme malicious bigotry, but, from the perspective of the disease, it did not matter; it just kept spreading and killing one person after another. Similarly, these people with the sores in Revelation 16:2 may be deceived and blinded to the fact individuals who are following Christ do not have the lesions. If they do not make a link between being a Christian and not having sores, it is quite likely everyone may very well believe this is just another in a long series of naturally occurring plagues to hit humanity. It is unlikely the news media would point out Christians are the only group not subject to the disease. It sells more papers and advertising space if journalists point out flaws in Christians

rather than expound on the benefits of being one.

“Wait just a second!” you may say. “You mean we have gone this far in global destruction, and there are still Christians on the Earth? Does the Rapture come this late?”

Well, there may or may not have been a Rapture prior to this time, but as for the Christians still being around, consider the 144,000 witnesses who have been busy evangelizing the remaining population. Quite a number of people have seen the light and have given their lives to Christ by this time. One way or another, some Christians will be alive through this and will live to see Lord Jesus coming back to set up His 1000-year reign on Earth. After the 1000 years of His personal rule and reign is the final judgment.

Vial 2 – *Revelation 16:3* – “*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.*”

During the second trumpet judgment of Revelation 8:8 – 9, we saw one-third of the oceans turned to blood, and one-third of the sea creatures die. Vial Judgment #2 completes the job started earlier. With the seas dead, the game is pretty much over. There can be no recovery from this. Not only has a good share of the food supply been removed from our planet, but evaporation from the oceans provides much of the land with its rainfall and drinking water. In your mind, picture everything in the oceans dead. Then imagine the incredible stench this decay would spread over the entire Earth. The horror of it is almost impossible to conceive. I just can’t stretch my imagination out that far.

Vial 3 – *Revelation 16:4* – “*And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.*”

With vial three turning the rivers and the fountains of waters,

which are the underground aquifers, to something like blood, it can be seen the coup d'état to the Earth has been administered. Now it is self evident there can be no recovery. The planet is truly doomed. It's easy to reason the oceans of the world turning into something like a dead man's blood have contaminated the rain, the rivers, and all the ground water. That's not to say nobody will be drinking the water turned to blood, for when you are dying of thirst you will drink practically anything, but I imagine drinking it will hasten your death.

Vial 4 – *Revelation 16:8* – “*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.*”

The web site <http://www.theozonehole.com> tracks holes in the Earth's ozone layer. In areas where there is ozone depletion, there is an increased risk of skin cancer since the ozone is instrumental in blocking harmful UV solar radiation. We believe ozone holes to be caused, at least in part, by the overuse of a variety of aerosols containing chlorofluorocarbon (CFC). One such hole in the ozone has occurred over the southern tip of South America. It was found people living in high altitudes in the Andes Mountains in the general vicinity of the hole developed a significantly higher than average rate of skin cancer on exposed skin because of the increased exposure to ultraviolet and other radiation from space. This radiation would have otherwise been moderated by the ozone. The incidence of skin cancer is reduced in this case since the tip of South America has a colder climate, and most people keep their skin covered, limiting actual exposure to the sun.

With Vial 4 it is not clear if the scorching of men with fire is due to a depleted ozone layer, therefore exposing mankind to a significantly increased level of solar radiation, or if the sun is actually doing something within itself. It's entirely possible the condition within the sun may be undergoing some changes which

will allow solar flares of a size unheard of in history to be spewed forth towards the Earth.

Scientists have measured the neutrino output of the sun, and found it is significantly less than the expected output from their calculations. They believe something is going on deep within the sun.

Vial 5 – *Revelation 16:10-11* – “*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.*”

The fifth angel pours out his vial upon the seat of the beast. The seat of the beast is a specific reference to a limited geographic area. There can be no natural explanation for a total eclipse which stays, apparently, in one geographic area. Such an eclipse must be seen as exclusively the Hand of God at work. This seems to be understood by those affected by the darkness because they're blaspheming the God of Heaven, so they know where this malady is coming from. The incredible part is, after all this, they still don't repent of their deeds. They continue to blaspheme God. It is so difficult to understand how the heart of man can be hardened to this extent, but apparently it can be.

In several Scriptures, God says He will harden the hearts of some people (Exodus 7:3, 14:7, Joshua 11:20). Hardening hearts makes it seem as if God is unfair since He is hardening their hearts first and then banishing them to Hell forever because their hearts are set. It's not the way the scenario plays out. As people consistently turn their hearts away from God, their hearts become hardened against God. At some section of time in their lives, these people cross the point of no return. They have hardened themselves so much there is no chance of them ever turning to God in repentance and asking for His forgiveness for their sins. When this point is reached, it is almost as if the Father is saying “let it

be as you have determined by your own will,” and He agrees with them that their heart is forevermore hardened by their own decisions. Hardening our own hearts is a very dangerous potential outcome of God giving us freedom of will. We can use our freedom to turn to Him and ask for forgiveness and restoration, or we can use our free will to say we want no part of Him and turn our hearts away from Him forever. It is entirely our choice. Those who turn their hearts away from Christ will spend an eternity in darkness, much like those poor people in Vial 5 who live in darkness and pain, and will more than likely remember every single minute incident in their life were a loving and gracious God was reaching out to them and putting people in their path to turn them away from their sins and towards their Savior. What an awful taped ‘instant replay’ which will run for all eternity as they watch themselves time after time rejecting God’s hand reaching out to them, pleading with them to think about what they’re doing and to come to Him for His eternal forgiveness. It is an extremely painful scenario to think about. It’s our job as Christians to keep reaching out to everyone who is lost on the chance it may be just our touch which, if it does not affect a conversion then and there, will at least plant a seed which will grow down the road and eventually lead them to salvation.

Vial 6 – *Revelation 16:12* – “*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.*”

Vial 6 is the starting gun for Armageddon. This starts the armies into marching against Israel, and against Jerusalem, in particular.

Vial 7 – *Revelation 16: 21* – “*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: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

Vial 7 needs very little explanation, except perhaps to clarify what the weight of the hailstones might be. Wikipedia gives the weight of several talents which will work very well in this passage. Wikipedia defines a Greek talent as 26 kg or 57 pounds, a Roman talent as 32.3 kg or 71 pounds, and an Egyptian talent was 27 kg or 60 pounds, and a Babylonian talent was 30.3 kg or 67 pounds. They also state there was a heavy common talent used in the New Testament. It was 58.9 kg or 130 pounds.

Feel free to pick any one of these to represent the hailstones which fall as Vial 7 is poured out upon the Earth. Why do I say it does not matter which one we pick? Shouldn't we try to be as precise as possible? Well, in this case, it doesn't really matter. We have all seen news reports about golf-ball-sized hail falling some place in the world. Hail the size of a golf ball would only weigh a few ounces at most. This golf-ball-sized hail suffices to break car windshields, dent car hoods, destroy siding on the sides of homes, and injure livestock in the fields. And that's from hail that is just a few ounces. Multiply these effects in your mind when you're talking about the smallest talent, the Greek talent, which weighs in at a mere 57 pounds. Hail of that size can annihilate anything in its path. Houses of any construction could not stand up under the onslaught of such chunks of ice falling from the sky, let alone an army in the field, which would become targets for the hail.

One may wonder where all this hail originates. Two explanations come to mind. Three if you combine the first two. In the first

scenario, we have a vast amount of warfare going on as the armies of the world clash. The heat from the bombings and resulting fires can cause tremendous updrafts, which carry moisture high into the air where it can freeze. When we have seen golf- ball-sized hail in our own corner of the globe, the hail was formed because strong updrafts carry water droplets high into the atmosphere, where they freeze. The hailstones fall, but are initially small enough to be carried up again by the updrafts. Here they are coated with more rain and frozen into a slightly larger ball of ice. This cycle repeats until the hailstones grow to such a size the updrafts can no longer push them skyward, and they fall to the ground as hail. It's not impossible the intense battles in an area, coupled with the right weather conditions, could cause updrafts of sufficient velocity to create these gigantic hailstones. Another, and possibly a more reasonable, explanation is found in the book of Job.

Job 38:22 – 23: “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?”

It seems as if God has already reserved the hail He will use during that period. We don't know whether these may be chunks of ice floating towards us from space, or broken parts of an icy comet whose destiny is to play into the hands of God at the time He needs it. Either way, God has his hail reserved and piled on the sidelines, waiting for His command to release it to fulfill its icy destiny. That gives me quite a bit of comfort. In reading Job, we can see no matter what is happening on the Earth, even the destruction of most of the surface of the planet itself, is all under God's control and He knows exactly what He is doing to fulfill His divine purpose and schedule.

What happens after this point in Revelation is not the subject of this book, but I would encourage you to continue reading to see the triumphant reign of Jesus as he returns to the Earth to initially set up his 1000-year reign, and then to create new heavens and a

new Earth for us. It is the most amazing bit of truth you will ever read in your life.

What we have done in our short dissertation from the opening of the seals, through the blowing of the trumpets, to the pouring out of the vials, is to run through the events of the End Times hoping to discover a point at which Christ will pull his church out of the Earth. To do this in good faith, we need to look at several other factors in the next chapter.

Before we dive in, however, it would be good to consider the words of Jesus in 2Thessalonians 2:1- *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”*

Chapter 6: Pre-Tribulation Argument

As we leap headlong into the Pre-Trib, Mid-Trib, and Post-Trib arguments, we will pause from time-to-time to do some necessary language analysis to ensure some of the critical words used in our modern translations align with the meaning from the Hebrew and Greek languages. Language is a living entity. It changes over time. We may assign the same words' different meanings as time passes.

For example: from the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word 'gay' used to commonly mean, "keenly alive and exuberant: having or inducing high spirit."

A more common meaning of the word is given as, "of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex." Same word, different eras.

We would never expect to find such a difference in meaning in scripture, but subtle changes might lead us to draw the wrong conclusions.

Now that we've discussed some events taking place during the last seven years of Earth's history, let's briefly discuss Scriptures which seem to show there will be a pre-Tribulation Rapture. It's important to note this is not an exhaustive list of Scriptures, but is representational of the body of Scripture which might indicate a pre-Tribulation timing of the Rapture. I will apologize in advance if I've not included some of your favorites.

Coming destruction:

Luke 21:36; "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The question is, naturally, "what are all these things that are to come to pass?"

Jesus himself provides us with quite a list of things which are to come to pass before we stand before the Son of Man. The bulk of the conversation in Luke 21 occurs because of the apostles looking at the beautiful way in which they built the temple, and the gemstones adorning the structure. Jesus explained in the days to come, not one stone will be left upon another. In this sentence, he is referring to the Roman destruction of the Temple under Titus in 70 A.D.¹

False Messiahs:

In Luke 21:8, He says, *“Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”*

For Christians who know their Bible, this should not be a difficult challenge. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that Jesus will come back and walk among the peoples of the Earth proclaiming that he is the Christ. The proof that someone is not Christ is claiming they are! The Bible says, however, when He comes back and is visible to all, there will be no doubt who He is. This bit of advice seems to be directed at either the new Christian, or at those who have mingled Christianity and Biblical teachings with worldly wisdom and folklore. I remember in the late 1960s and 1970s several famous gurus proclaimed they were the Christ. Obviously, they were not. There was even one gentleman who gave himself the name of Yahshua and ran late-night commercials and half-hour TV spots, promoting sending money to him, quoting Scriptures about worshiping Yahshua and tithing. I sincerely hope these people have come into the light and repented of their sin since then.

Coming warfare:

Luke 21:9 says, *“But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.”*

¹ <https://focusonjerusalem.com/thefallofjerusalem.html>

Although these words were given by Jesus to be comforting, the downside is He is saying there are wars and uprisings which will happen globally. We should not consider this to be the herald of the End Times, but rather these occur in the natural course of human events on a fallen, sinful planet.

None of us like war, but I believe many of the global conflicts are intermediary stages which move countries and powers into position for the last seven years of Earth's history. God must set specific political alliances up before the cataclysmic events we see in Revelation can come to pass. These global wars, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, are setting the stage for the last great conflict. In Luke 21:10, Jesus says nations shall rise against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms.

The rising of nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, unfortunately, happens so frequently many people around the globe miss the spiritual significance of it, and believe it is merely the way life is on Earth. They think there is no spiritual significance to the global power struggles. It is so incredibly easy to miss the big picture, isn't it? If we look at world politics, it's hard to find a country or national leader who recognizes the battles are virtually all spiritual battles. In almost every instance, we see people applying secular solutions to spiritual problems. You cannot solve spiritual problems with secular solutions.

For example, Russia was involved in a war in Afghanistan for decades. They finally had to pull out. Next, the United States became involved in a war in the same country. The US has pulled out after twenty years. Both the US and Russia poured untold dollars into the fight, with nothing to show for it. The Taliban is now in charge of Afghanistan. One of our top politicians recently bemoaned the fact there was so little to show for the billions we poured into the country. He was equating money spend with the probability of winning a war. The Taliban, on the other hand, were fighting for an ideal and had religious fervor. The actual fight takes place in the spiritual realm, so get on your knees and

fight like a man!

It is easy to understand why there has been no peace, and they have resolved none of the initial issues which caused conflicts among nations through warfare. Warfare doesn't resolve an issue, it only suppresses it. In some of the current conflicts, I hear the phrase "putting boots on the ground" as a solution to fighting off the "bad guys," whoever and wherever they may be. I can think of no instance since the Vietnam War where this strategy of military might has been successful in overcoming religious ideology. Global leaders still feel it is a matter of military might, combined with giving global hugs, which are the solutions to the world's problems. Military strength alone will not bring world peace for any more than a few fleeting moments, and good luck with giving global hugs to bring wars to a halt.

They will lay hands on you:

Jesus refers to huge earthquakes around the world, famines, pestilences, and fearful signs in the heavens as further indicators of His coming.

He also says in Luke 21:12, *"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My Name's sake."*

This part of the End Times prophecy is unfolding in our day. According to some estimates, over 100,000 Christians around the world lose their lives every year because of their faith.

Jesus says in Luke 21:14-19, *"And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 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. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."*

If most of us are really honest with ourselves, we will agree when we see an upcoming trial or a painful spot in our lives where we are required to speak with someone else, we will put together a little speech in our head concerning what we're going to say, and how we're going to present our case. Jesus is saying don't bother doing that; He'll give you the words to say. It's very interesting to note that He does not say that your life will be spared if you give the right testimony. He only says that they will not be able to resist your logic, although they will certainly kill some of you for what you have said.

"But doesn't that mean we will perish?" you may ask. No, even though in Luke 21:16 He does say "*some of you they shall cause to be put to death.*" In Luke 24:17 Jesus states, "*But there shall not a hair of your head perish.*" Is this a contradiction? No, not at all! Too often, we look at this world as our permanent home and/or our ultimate destination. Sure, we SAY that we believe in, and look forward to, the hereafter, but inside we desperately want to hold on to this life forever. We forget we are just transitioning through this corporal life to get to everlasting life, and our time on Earth is but a moment's breath in time.

Psalm 102:11 says, "*My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.*" Psalm 103:15-16 says, "*As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*"

Jesus acknowledges we may very well be killed for our faith and belief in Him, but from the eternal perspective, this momentary death is nothing, so from His eternal vantage point He can say that not a hair of our heads will perish (end up in Hell).

If we stick to our faith, no matter what happens here on Earth, it will not affect one hair on our head in the hereafter. We may face death, but we will not perish. The important part of our lives is the hereafter, not the here-and-now. As we age, we often begin to feel we are strangers to this world. That feeling is actually

correct. We are currently living in a shadow world, a world which is a mere shadow of what is coming. The real world awaits us. After a productive life, who has not said to themselves “Is this is all there is?” As we get closer to going to our real home, this world gets strangely dim and shadowlike.

So, what have we learned? We have seen quite several things will happen to the Earth, including wars, earthquakes, and all those events which go along with wars and earthquakes. What has not been revealed in this passage, however, is a clue as to the actual timing of the second coming. We need to forge on.

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

The phrase *“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation”* seems to have a second-coming flavor to it, where we are removed before the hour of temptation. The hour of temptation might refer to the events of the Tribulation and our potential temptation to deny our faith to escape persecution. That sounds very plausible, but let’s look at the Greek words for ‘from’ and ‘temptation.’

Being picky about words:

We have our own clear understanding of the words ‘from’ and ‘temptation,’ but is it the real meaning of the words in this passage? If the words have a slightly different meaning in the Greek, it could change how we interpret this Scripture. Remember, they did not write the Bible in modern English. Words today could have a different meaning than they did ‘way back when.’

The Greek word for the word ‘from’ is ‘ek’ (Strong’s G1 537) and means out of, from, by, away from, an exit, the separation. So far, this looks very promising. It indicates we will be removed from something, and that’s the entire basis of the Rapture; being removed from the world. For pre-Trib believers, this means being

removed before we get into the depths of the Tribulation. To understand what we will be removed from, let's look at the rest of the passage.

The Greek word for temptation is 'peirasmos' (pronounced pa-ras-mos, (Strong's Number G3986) and it refers to an attempt, a trial, a proving of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, or consistency. We find it 21 times in 20 verses of the New Testament. In each case, it is used to point to what we commonly consider to be a natural temptation. I have heard this passage of Revelation used to indicate we would be saved from the trials and temptations of the last days. A review of the 20 verses which contain the word in the New Testament provides no evidence this word is not to be read in any other manner than what is customary for the use of the concept of ordinary temptation. It does not seem to be connected with the second coming at all.

We would have to stretch the utilization of the word to make it fit, and, as we've stated earlier, if you have to stretch something to make it fit into your Bible theology, you will have a never-ending chain of stretching to do. It's a bunny trail we do not want to go down. We cannot use Revelation 3:10 as a pre-Tribulation proof verse.

Romans 5:9 says that we are *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."*

First Thessalonians 1:10 says *"And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."*

First Thessalonians 5:9 says *"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Ahhh, something refers to us as being saved from wrath, and no one can deny the Tribulation is full of God's wrath. There is also no doubt at all we who are born again into a new life with Jesus are actually justified by His blood (justified = just as if we had

never sinned!) Does this mean that we will be saved from the full measure of God's wrath in the Tribulation by being snatched out? Are we sneaking up on something here?

These passages strongly indicate Jesus will pull the church out of the world before the wrath of God takes place. The thing about English, though, is it is a superb language for technical communications, but is a bit lacking for expressing feelings and relationships. Consider, for instance, the following phrases: "I love my spouse," "I love my dog," "I love my slippers," "I love God." Each one contains the word love,' but no one would deny the depth of the concept is significantly different in each instance. We use the same word for many different things, and sometimes you can't even get the real meaning consistently from the sentence context! With that in mind, understand the Greek language, although not as good as English for very technical concepts, is far superior to English for expressing relational and emotional concepts. One word does not necessarily fit all. Let's check the Greek again to see what word was used for our word 'wrath.'

In each of these three instances, the Greek word used for the English word wrath is 'orge' (Strong's G3709). We can define this as 'anger,' 'temper,' or 'character.' This sounds good so far. We have three scriptures which seem to line up and use the same word, ogre, indicating God will not let us go through His wrath. That should end the argument and provide a solid win for a pre-Trib Rapture!

The only issue with the above passages being the last word on a pre-Trib Rapture is the definition of 'orge' does not project a strong enough feeling of the wrath of God. It seems to be a milder word. Although 'anger' and 'temper' can indeed indicate a form of wrath, the words by themselves do not give a real feeling for the intensity of emotions that we most commonly associate with the word 'wrath,' especially when we are talking about the wrath of God. Where in the Scripture does God use a word that aligns with our understanding of the word 'wrath'?

Most times, where temper and sudden angry passion erupt, the word used in Greek is ‘thymos’ (Strong’s G2372). Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines it as “be in heat, breathe violently, passion, angry heat, anger forthwith, boiling up and soon subsiding again.” Examples of the use of the word ‘thymos’ include the following passages:

- Luke 4:28 *“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with **wrath**, (thymos, G2372) and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.”*
- Revelation 12:12 *“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great **wrath** (thymos, G2372) because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”*
- Revelation 14:10 *“The same shall drink of the wine of the **wrath** (thymos, G2372) 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:”*

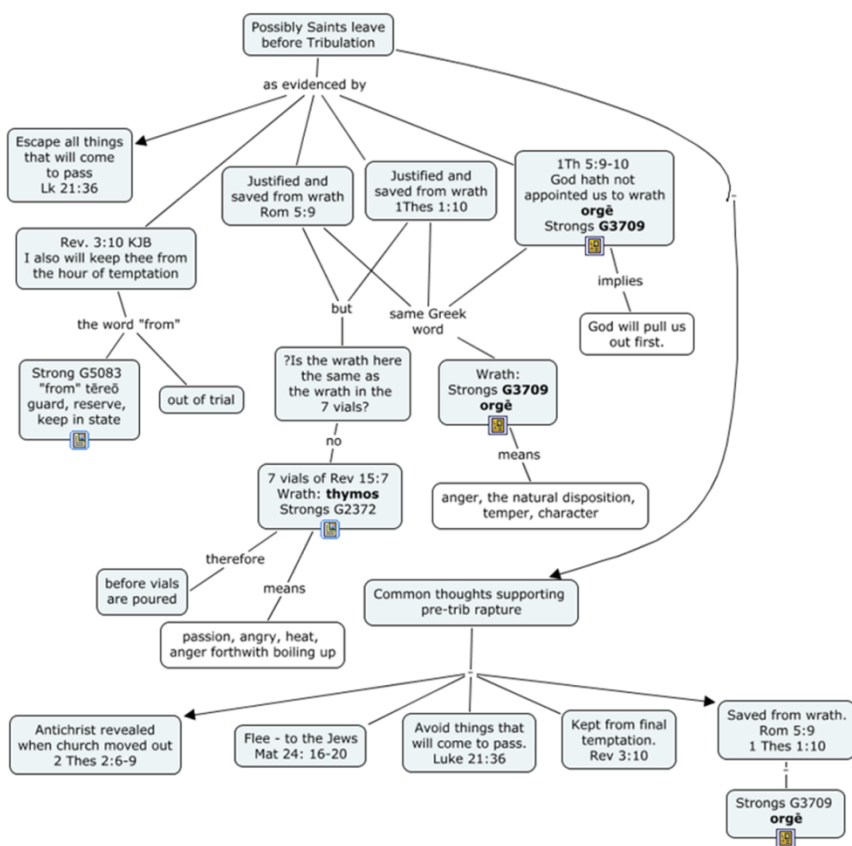
The BLB also defines ‘thymos’ as “glow, ardor, the wine of passion, inflaming wine (which either drives the drinker mad or kills him with its strength).” Wow. In my BC time of life (Before Christ) I had occasion to watch some of my soused friends get irrational over some minor issue in a bar and suddenly make the emotional transition from being fairly calm to fighting mad in an instant. On some occasions, they had to be restrained by others until their anger subsided. Shortly afterward, they would come back to being their normally calm, drunken selves. Their anger would flare up and then quickly subside. The trick was to restrain them so that they didn’t do something in the interim time that would land them in jail. The word ‘thymos’ has a similar secondary meaning, too: “flare up in passion and then subside.”

We now have a better feel for the meaning of the word ‘wrath,’

particularly the type of wrath we are promised to avoid. In my mind, the word ‘thymos’ is what we would call “last-straw wrath.” Parents all over the world who are unable to get their children to do the right thing have almost certainly spoken that universal phrase “Okay, NOW you’re going to get it!” That was a shadow of thymos. There are several other places in the Word which use the same word in a seemingly milder form, but I suspect it is because we are looking at the context in human terms and do not see situations from God’s perfect viewpoint. His wrath on the earth by way of the seven vials in Revelation would be justifiable wrath and not a fit of temper.

So what we have found so far is that Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 5:9 provide a reasonable case for a pre-Tribulation Rapture. God has not appointed us to ‘ogre,’ a milder word than ‘thymos.’ If we are not appointed to the milder word, we are certainly not appointed to the more violent word. It may be an excellent case so far, but let’s look at mid- and post-Tribulation-related arguments before we proclaim we have solved the puzzle.

The train of thought for the above pre-Tribulation passages is illustrated in the following chart. I most frequently think in relational graphics, so here is one of them for you to enjoy just in case you have the same preference.



Chapter 7: Mid-Tribulation Argument

While many people are voting for a pre-Tribulation Rapture due, in part, to our inherent human nature to avoid pain, persecution, and death, there is still evidence supporting a mid-Tribulation Rapture we need to consider.

Once again, for the sake of this discussion, we will limit our review to Bible passages themselves, and attempt not to draw any conclusions which are not specifically called out in Scripture. An example of the logic we want to avoid would be the New Testament church does not seem to be mentioned after Revelation 4:1, after Jesus addresses the seven churches. While this may very well indicate the church is no longer on Earth, there are no supporting, hard passages of Scripture which support this without some form of interpretation. I like them, but we will have to pass on these scriptures providing the hard proof we are searching for.

What about parables:

Parables often lend themselves to multiple interpretations and applications. An example would be the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1–13. In this parable, there were ten virgins waiting with their lamps to greet the Bridegroom when he arrived at the wedding feast. Some are deemed to be wise, and some are considered to be foolish. The wise virgins brought extra oil for their lamps, while the foolish virgins brought only their lamps and did not bring any additional oil. We frequently used oil as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 25:8-13 tells the rest of the story: *“And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘[Not so]; lest there be not enough for you and us: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom*

came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh'."

In most cases, we preach this parable about being filled with the Holy Spirit to prepare for the coming of the bridegroom. This passage can also show the wise virgins are the ones taken in the Rapture while the unwise virgins have to go through the Tribulation. They were not filled with the Holy Spirit to prepare for the coming of the Bridegroom and ultimately end up banging on the door, trying to get into the wedding. The painful part of the passage is Jesus's response to them, "*Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*"

They were full of external eagerness and caught up by the party atmosphere around the coming of the Bridegroom, but seemed to be in it for the fun and excitement of it all. I've seen altar calls where many people get caught up in the emotion, come forward, profess to ask Jesus into their hearts, but never truthfully and sincerely ask the Holy Spirit to live within them to change and direct their lives. They showed up with their 'lamps,' said some salvation words, and thought they were in the game, but did not give their hearts wholly to God. A short number of months later they can no longer be found within the congregation. If they are still there, it is often as part of 'Club Christian' without the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Painfully, they have never explored the depths of their dedication to the Lord, and may honestly think they are part of His flock. Get right with God, and ask the Holy Spirit to live within you, so you never have to hear the most awful words, "*I know you not.*"

Noah's Ark can also represent a type of the Rapture with relation to the Tribulation. The hand of God shuts Noah and his family up into the ark and saved from the worldwide flood before the flood

strikes.

To stress one more time, I'm not finding fault with the illustrative truth of any of these interpretations, nor of the protective hand of God that keeps us. I am only stating explanation along these lines is not what this book is about by design. I am not saying these thought processes are in error, or are in any way false; I'm only saying for the sake of this discussion we will go directly from Scripture to Scripture whenever possible to see what this most excellent of all books has to say all by itself, with little to no interpretation. As Jack Webb used to say in the old TV show "Dragnet" when people rambled with their explanation of an event and wandered off topic, "Just the facts, ma'am."¹

It is very interesting to note, depending on your viewpoint, we can use some passages as either pre-Trib or mid-Trib proof. One such reading is 1 Thessalonians 5:9 – 10 which says, *"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."*

The implication is since God has not appointed us to wrath, He will pull us out before his wrath on Earth. We covered this in the argument for the pre-Tribulation. We said in this passage the Greek word for wrath, 'ogre,' means anger, natural disposition, temper, a character. The first instance of the word 'wrath' in Revelation appears in Revelation 6:16 – 17 and speaks of the wrath of the Lamb. This occurs after opening the sixth seal. So if God has not appointed us to wrath, the first place in Revelation that the word 'wrath' is used is after opening the sixth out of seven seals. The Tribulation has already started, and we are well on our way to worldwide destruction. This drops us solidly into a mid-Tribulation Rapture.

Let's look at this just a little bit closer. The actual issue is, although the first five seals are incredibly difficult times on

¹ Dragnet produced by Mark VII Ltd.

Earth, is it the same as God's wrath? 1 Thessalonians 5:9 – 10 speaks of God not appointing us to wrath. Is this talking about man's wrath or God's wrath? Your interpretation of that determines where along the time line you place the Rapture. If the first five seals, include global destruction, warfare, and tremendous hardships for all the peoples on Earth are considered to be part of God's wrath, then we have strong evidence for a pre-Trib Rapture since He said that He would not appoint us to wrath. We have evidence for a mid-Tribulation Rapture if we do not see the first five seals as God's wrath, but only the hand of God lifting slightly to allow humankind to kill each other, as is apparently in our nature to do.

You may rightly say the word 'wrath' was used previously to Revelation 6:16 – 17: *"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:"* but mankind called it the wrath of God; God did not call it His wrath. This is indeed an area for productive discussion, but for now let's say that we will stick with what God calls things and not what man calls things. I think all of us would agree, if we were to look at our track record for accuracy, what God says would be far more accurate than what man says. It's not impossible God may see the disasters in the first five seals as self-imposed hardships.

Revelation 6:9 – 11 says, *"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."*

Revelation 7:13 – 14 says, *"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou*

knowest.’ And he said to me, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”

Now in Revelation 7:4 there are 144,000 Jews of all the tribes of the children of Israel who received a seal of God on their forehead. I picture these people as 144,000 on fire, completely sold out, pedal-to-the-metal, full-bore evangelists. I believe Jewish 144,000 preachers are suddenly released with zeal such as the world has never seen. They would be the students of Scripture who can interpret the events of their time by comparing the daily news to the Old Testament End Times prophesies. They are not afraid, or too religious, to dive into the New Testament to search for clarification and expansion of the O.T. prophesies. Then, because of the work of the Holy Spirit, their light bulb goes on! They understand time is very short. They fully realize who the Messiah is, and they are wasting no time telling the rest of the world all about King Jesus.

“How can you say such things about this group of people having such outstanding success in evangelizing the population?” you may ask. It’s pretty straightforward, really. Revelation 7:9 holds the answer. It says, *“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”*

The question becomes, “where did all these innumerable people come from?” Sure, there has been a lot of death and destruction among the saints of God over the ages since Adam, but it does not account for the full complement of people seen here.

First, it is reasonable to assume these on-fire evangelists vigorously push the Word into virtually every corner of the earth in an extremely short time. I’ve heard people speculate on what the process might have been during these perilous times for the 144,000 to get from Jerusalem to the four corners of the earth to

do their evangelizing. There's nothing in Scripture that says these people were converted in Jerusalem, or even if all 144,000 came from the same geographic area. The two witnesses are clearly based in Jerusalem, but not necessarily the 144,000. Currently, the Jewish tribes are scattered throughout the world, and I see no practical sense in gathering them together before become world-shaking evangelists. Direct descendants of the 12 tribes may already be seeded into every significant population center on Earth, just awaiting their call.

Second, and the most straightforward proof of who these people are, as we've said in an earlier chapter, is stated in Revelation 7:14 which says, *"And I said to him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, 'these are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"*

Just reading what the Word has to say is the shortest and straightest path to understanding. It gets back to the old but very, very true phrase that Scripture is the best tool for interpreting Scripture.

Most of these white-robed saints were killed during the Tribulation. However, just because they died doesn't mean the Rapture of the church hasn't happened. The Rapture could very well have occurred by this time. It merely shows there will be many conversions during the Tribulation, and a vast number of those converts will die for their faith.

Continuing on with mid-Trib scriptures, 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4 states, *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."*

Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth

himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

These passages are perhaps the strongest evidence of the mid-Tribulation Rapture and return of Jesus Christ. The passage speaks of Jesus coming, our gathering together to him, and the day will not come until the Antichrist is revealed. Let's look at some of the original Greek language before we say we have positively identified when the Rapture will take place. We will focus in on some of the key terms used here.

The passage uses the phrase "*by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" but does the word 'coming' mean the same thing in this passage as it does to us in English?

The word for coming used here is the word 'parousia' (pronounced pä-rü-sē'-ä, Strong's G3952). It is defined as meaning "presence, the coming, arrival, advent, the future visible return from heaven of Jesus." In each instance where the word is used, it always corresponds to our common use of the word 'coming.' It is frequently used to talk about the coming of Jesus, but it would be circular reasoning to use only those passages as proof of the meaning of the word, since the coming of Jesus is precisely what we are talking about. That notwithstanding, there are many common usages of the word which show they used it much as we use it today.

Examples include: (bolding and parentheses mine)

1 Corinthians 16:17 *"I am glad of the coming (**parousia**) of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied."*

2 Corinthians 7:6 *"Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming (**parousia**) of Titus;"*

Philippians 1:26 *That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming (**parousia**) to you again."*

Thessalonians 2:9 *"[Even him], whose coming (**parousia**) is*

after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”

It is clear the use of the word ‘coming’ is certainly referring to the physical coming of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:12 *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*

The bottom line is the word ‘parousia’ means a physical coming, in one form or another, wherever it is used. When Paul talks about Jesus coming, he is talking about a very literal coming. Jesus goes on to say we should not believe any deception because He won’t be coming back until after there has been a falling away from the church, and after the Antichrist reveals and exalts himself above God. So as always, let’s look at some words used in the Greek.

It’s interesting to me the English phrase *“that day shall not come, except”* is summed up in two small Greek words, ‘ean mē’ (pronounced e-ä’n mā, Strong’s G3362). Its meaning is “if not, unless, whoever... not”. Examples of its common usage in the Bible include the following (parentheses mine):

Matthew 5:20 *“For I say unto you, That except (ean mē) your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*

Matthew 10:14 *“And whosoever shall not (ean mē) receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.”*

Matthew 11:6 *“And blessed is [he], whosoever shall not (ean mē) be offended in me.”*

Matthew 12:29 *“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except (ean mē) he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”*

Matthew 18:3 *“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except (ean mē)*

ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 26:42 *"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except (ean mē) I drink it, thy will be done."*

It certainly looks like the word 'except' means except. We clearly have a literal returning of Jesus, but the coming will not happen unless (except, ean mē) the Antichrist is revealed.

To me, the real linchpin of the entire phrase is the word 'revealed.' What does Paul mean by 'revealed'? Is it about the son of perdition first coming on the scene and being recognized as a world leader, or is it about the Antichrist exalting himself as a god? So once again, let's go to the Greek and see what we could find out about the usage of the word 'revealed.'

The Greek word used is apokalyptō (Strong's G601, pronounced ä-po-kä-lü'p-tō). This word means "to uncover, lay open what has been failed or covered up, disclose, make bare, to make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown."

Some of the common usages of the word in the rest of the New Testament includes the following (parentheses mine):

Matthew 11:25 *"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed (apokalyptō) them unto babes."*

Matthew 11:27 *"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [he] to whomsoever the Son will reveal (apokalyptō) [him]."*

Luke 2:35 *"(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (apokalyptō)."*

Luke 17:30 *"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man*

is revealed (apokalyptō).”

1 Corinthians 14:30 *“If [anything] be revealed (apokalyptō) to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.”*

Galatians 3:23 *“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed (apokalyptō).”*

1 Peter 1:5 *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed (apokalyptō) in the last time.”*

From the usage of the word ‘revealed,’ it does indeed seem as if it is referencing something which was once hidden, but is now known to all. This appears to answer the question about whether Paul is referring to the Antichrist as he gains notoriety and rises to power, or whether he is referring to the Antichrist trying to show himself as God. The latter case is clearly the correct one, where the Antichrist openly and defiantly desecrates the third temple. So far, this looks like the strongest statements in the Bible for clearly stating will be a mid-Trib Rapture. It does, however, beg the question “when in the time sequence does mid-Trib happen?” We discuss that shortly.

Chapter 8: Post-Tribulation Argument

The post-Tribulation Rapture was the belief of the early church fathers¹.

The post-Tribulation Rapture view maintains there is a resurrection of both living and dead believers at the end of the Tribulation period. Post-Tribulationists believe Christians will remain on the Earth throughout the whole seven-year Tribulation period. Christians will be taken up to meet Christ in the air at Jesus' second coming, before the battle of Armageddon. They will return to the Earth with Jesus as He sets up his millennium kingdom.

Some of the Scriptures related to a post-Tribulation Rapture include:

Matthew 24:21 – 22 *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

This passage states, for the elect's sake, the days of the tribulation were shortened. It is understood the elect are the remnant of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6 *“For thou [art] a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth,”*) as well as those Christians who are still alive.

It is evident from this passage there are living Christians on Earth at the end of the Tribulation. Therefore, some followers of Christ will actually go through the Tribulation. This is in alignment with

¹ Apostolic Constitutions “Canon 85” (approved at the Orthodox Synod of Trullo in 692)

early church beliefs where the early fathers were preparing the church to go through times of Tribulation so they would not become fainthearted and fall away from the faith when times of trouble came.

One question that needs to be addressed, however, is the origin of these Christians who are still alive on the Earth. It cannot be readily determined from the passages if these were Christians who survived through the entire Tribulation from its beginning, or if they new converts. Possibly this is a combination of both. Because there are Christians who are clearly alive at the end of the Tribulation does not preclude the fact there could very well have been an earlier Rapture of the church, and what we are reading about here is about those people who were left behind, came to their senses, and gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:29-31 *“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:*

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

These verses serve as one of the most powerful indicators of a post-Tribulation Rapture. It explicitly states it is talking about the time immediately following the Tribulation. Jesus appears in the heavens and instructs His angels to gather the church from all over the Earth to Himself. Following this stunning triumphant entry, he comes to Earth with the saints to set up his millennial kingdom.

It may seem, on the surface, a little unnecessary for Jesus to call

everyone into the air with Him and then return for his millennial reign, but if we think back to what we learned in high school about world history, we may have heard that a triumphantly returning King would be met by all His followers streaming out of the city to honor His return. The saints being caught up into the air then immediately returning with Jesus sounds as if they are adhering to this ancient tradition.

Mark 13:24 – 27 *“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.

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”

Mark almost identically mirrors the words of Matthew to describe Christ’s coming. This is confirmation the apostles believed in a resurrection of the dead, and a Rapture of the living occurring at the same time. they expected the time to be at the end of the Tribulation period. That’s a compelling argument in favor of a post-Tribulation Rapture.

Consider the following scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:52 *“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.”

When we speak of the last trump, we have an idea that we are either talking about the final trumpet blast of the trumpet judgments, or of a final trumpet blast when Jesus returns to the Earth with His church. But here is another possible way of

looking at the last trump.

Who says that the trumpet blast has to be of Heavenly origin? With all of the angelic activity happening, it is very easy to assume Paul is talking about an angelic trumpet blowing in Heaven, but what if he is not doing that at all? What if he is referring to something very simple which would be easily understood for its significance to a Jewish audience and, therefore, requires no further explanation?

There are seven feasts set up in the Old Testament. These are the Feast of Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets, Feast of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles.

Trumpets were commonly used to signal various activities within those feasts. The last feast of the Jewish year was the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth). This joyous feast lasts seven days and begins on the 15th day of the Jewish month of Tishrei, which may fall in either the months of September or October on our calendar. God required the nation of Israel to live in temporary structures made of sticks and branches for seven days to remember their exodus from Egypt and their wandering in the desert, living in tents, for 40 years.

The last day of the feast is called Hoshana Rabbah. The priests sound their trumpets in three sets of seven blasts as ceremonial waters are being poured out. This water analogy nicely parallels Jesus's statements in John 7:37-40 *"In the last day, that great [day] of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said,

‘Of a truth this is the Prophet’.”

Could the last trump refer to the last trumpet blast on the last day of the last feast of the Jewish year. Many Jewish believers are looking for the Messiah to return during one of the feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles seems to be a likely launching platform for a Rapture event.

A very interesting point is this feast also occurs roughly at the calendar time frame when the annual read-through of the Torah comes to completion². One cannot help but play with the thought the last feast day of the year coincides so closely with the culmination of the Torah reading. It makes one wonder if it could also relate to the end/completion of the time on Earth for the existing believers immediately before the Rapture. This point would be extremely difficult to actually prove, but it is certainly interesting and quite a lot of fun to think about.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

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.”

These scriptures are clearly post-Tribulation, and occur with quite a bit of noise and fanfare. Jesus is coming back to establish His millennial reign on Earth, and is calling His people to Himself. There is no way to confuse the words and say this is not

² Hoshana Rabbah Biblical Discipleship Resources, Torah Study, Parshiot.

a full-scale Rapture of believers.

When applied as a post-Trib Rapture verse, however, we get into some sticky areas. This is where we have to depart slightly from strictly using Scripture upon Scripture to prove our point, and have to let other areas of query carefully enter the game.

It is problematic to assume all believers would be gone (Raptured) before the millennial kingdom is established. If we think about it, the only two groups of people left on the Earth after such a Rapture will consist of the remaining non-believing Jews and the non-believing Gentiles. Jesus comes back to shorten Armageddon so that some life could still survive on the planet, yet the people left after the Rapture are precisely the ones who were fighting to the death. What would the point be to just leave the Gentiles free to keep fighting with the Jews? Nothing seems to be resolved. It makes sense Christians would also be in the mix.

Another much smaller issue is if all of the believers have been Raptured, only the non-believers entering into the millennial kingdom will be having children during the millennial reign of Christ. All of the Christians received glorified bodies at the point of Rapture, and Scripture tells us glorified bodies do not have children. Only non-believers having children during the 1,000-year reign is not a show-stopper, but it just does not seem to sit quite right.

If we consider 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 with 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, we come up with other questions about the exact timing referred to.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–3 *“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him,*

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”

This is an interesting passage because it links the coming of Christ with a falling away, and the Antichrist being revealed for who he is. This series of events happen in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation period. Hence this could also be a strong supporting scripture for a mid-Tribulation Rapture as well.

When we look at the entire sequence of the conversation that Paul is having with the Thessalonians, beginning with 2 Thessalonians 1:6 and continuing through 2 Thessalonians 2:12, we clearly see this is a discussion on the judgment of those who have followed the Antichrist and have not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1, Paul is telling his audience not to be anxious about when they will be gathered up to Jesus. He tells them not to believe “the day of Christ is at hand” and then explains the signs preceding the day of Christ. The day of Christ is a time of judgment for non believers. Paul seems to separate the thoughts about the gathering to the Lord and the day of Christ, and is telling his audience not to be troubled by rumor and deception. Although the day of Christ calls for judgment, and therefore is a post-Tribulation day, it does not automatically follow that the coming of our Lord to take His church to Himself is part of that same time sequence. This is certainly a point theology majors can argue about all day. All I am asking you to do is to keep your mind open to the possibility Paul is talking about two separate, but similar sounding, events.

Wheat and tares together:

Matthew 13:39 – 40 *“The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”*

This is the parable of the wheat and tares (weeds) that Jesus

taught the disciples. The wheat represents the Christians, and the tares represent the rest of the world which does not accept Christ as their Savior. The servants are told not to pull up the weeds while the wheat is growing, for fear of pulling up some of the wheat crop along with the weeds. Apparently, the young tares look very much like the young wheat.

When the wheat is ready to harvest, both the wheat and the tares are harvested together. The wheat is brought into the barns, and they bundle together and burn the tares. The point is, both the believers and non-believers live in the world together until the harvest, the return of Jesus, then comes the final judgment. This parable strongly suggests a post-Tribulation Rapture since there was no removal of either the wheat or the tares until Jesus's return. On the other hand, both the wheat and the tares are both alive when harvested. Can it be possible that the Scripture is referring to the Christians and non-Christians entering the millennial kingdom together, with the last harvest tied to the day of judgment? Quite possibly.

The preponderance of the evidence for a post-Tribulation event speaks to Jesus's calling for His people to be raptured to Him, and almost immediately coming visibly back with them to the Earth. This 'second coming' event (Advent) is very noisy and a spectacular sight to everyone all over the world.

Contrast this with many of the pre-Tribulation passages that refer to the Rapture of the church as an almost secret event that happens without warning or visible precursors in the twinkling of an eye.

[1Corinthians 15:50-53 *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

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.”

Keep an ear out for that last trumpet, whatever it’s source or timing.

Does it seem as if we are talking about two separate events? It certainly does, doesn’t it? We should probably do a little analysis of selected verses to verify our theory.

Actually, we don’t have to go through all that trouble ourselves. It has already been done for us in a theology course from Oral Roberts University³. A selection of verses related to the Rapture are contrasted with verses related to the second coming of Jesus to the Earth with His bride. I’ve amplified the original text for reading vs. classroom instruction.

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
1. Christ comes <i>for</i> His own	1. Christ comes <i>with</i> His own
[Jhn 14:3 KJV] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.	[1Th 3:13 KJV] To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.
[1Th 4:15 KJV] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. [1Th 4:16 KJV] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with	[Jde 1:14 KJV] And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, [Jde 1:15 KJV] To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly

³http://web.oru.edu/current_students/class_pages/grtheo/mmankins/DrHebert/gbib516bibeschlectureshp_files/REV.Lectures,June2014/8.%20Lecture-June%2026.ppt

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [1Th 4:17 KJV] 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.	committed, and of all their hard [speeches] which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
[2Th 2:1 KJV] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, [2Th 2:2 KJV] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.	[Rev 19:14 KJV] And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
2. He comes in the <i>air</i>	2. He comes to the <i>Earth</i>
[1Th 4:17 KJV] 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.	[Zec 14:4 KJV] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, [and there shall be] a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. [Act 1:11 KJV] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
3. He <i>claims</i> His bride	3. He comes <i>with</i> His bride
[1Th 4:16 KJV] 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: [1Th 4:17 KJV] 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.	[Rev 19:7 KJV] Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. [Rev 19:8 KJV] And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
4. <i>Only</i> His own see Him	4. <i>Every eye</i> shall see Him
[1Th 4:16 KJV] 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:	[Rev 1:7 KJV] Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
5. Saved are <i>delivered from wrath</i>	5. Unsaved <i>experience the wrath of God</i>
[1Th 1:10 KJV] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. [1Th 5:9 KJV] For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing.	[Rev 6:16 KJV] 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: [Rev 6:17 KJV] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
6. <i>No signs</i> precede the rapture	6. <i>Signs</i> precede the second coming
[1Th 5:2 KJV] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. Mat 24:26 No man knows the day or the hour. [Mat 24:42 KJV] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [Mat 24:44 KJV] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. [Luke 12:35 KJV] Let your loins be girded about, and [your] lights burning; [Luke 12:38 KJV] And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants. [Mat 24:36 KJV] But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. [Mat 24:39 KJV] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.	[Luke 21:11 KJV] And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. [2Th 2:3 KJV] Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; [2Th 2:11 KJV] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: [2Th 2:12 KJV] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. [2Pe 3:10 KJV] But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
1. Christ comes <i>for</i> His own	1. Christ comes <i>with</i> His own
[Jhn 14:3 KJV] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.	[1Th 3:13 KJV] To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.
[1Th 4:15 KJV] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. [1Th 4:16 KJV] 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: [1Th 4:17 KJV] 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.	[Ide 1:14 KJV] And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, [Ide 1:15 KJV] To execute judgment upon all, and to convince 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.
[2Th 2:1 KJV] Now we beseech	[Rev 19:14 KJV] And the armies

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him, [2Th 2:2 KJV] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.	[which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
2. He comes in the air	2. He comes to the Earth
[1Th 4:17 KJV] 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.	[Zec 14:4 KJV] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, [and there shall be] a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. [Act 1:11 KJV] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? <u>this same</u> Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
3. He claims His bride	3. He comes with His bride
[1Th 4:16 KJV] 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: [1Th 4:17 KJV] Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:	[Rev 19:7 KJV] Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is <u>come</u> , and his wife hath made herself ready. [Rev 19:8 KJV] And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
and so shall we ever be with the Lord.	
4. Only His own see Him	4. Every eye shall see Him
[1Th 4:16 KJV] 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:	[Rev 1:7 KJV] Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they [also] which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
5. Saved are delivered from wrath	5. Unsavd experience the wrath of God
[1Th 1:10 KJV] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. [1Th 5:9 KJV] For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing.	[Rev 6:16 KJV] 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: [Rev 6:17 KJV] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?
6. No signs precede the rapture	6. Signs precede the second coming
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Pre-Trib Rapture Verses	Post-Trib Rapture Verses
[Luke 12:35 KJV] Let your loins be girded about, and [your] lights burning;	[2Th 2:11 KJV] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
[Luke 12:38 KJV] And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants.	[2Th 2:12 KJV] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
[Mat 24:36 KJV] But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.	[2Pe 3:10 KJV] But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.
[Mat 24:39 KJV] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.	

As we read these short excerpts, we can begin to see there may be more than one event talked about. Even more important to our analytical approach, one set of facts does not completely eliminate the other set from also being true. That is a critical factor in our analysis. Far too frequently, good meaning people will latch on to a set of scriptures which prove their point, and will be ready to fight to the death to prove they are right and you are wrong. Someone once said the Army of Christ is the only army which shoots its own wounded. There is some truth in that. The whole point of this analysis is to show **it may be possible** for various theories in theology to exist without, in reality, conflicting with other Biblical concepts. We must keep asking ourselves if it is possible for a set of circumstances to describe an event within Scripture without being in actual conflict, as opposed to presumed conflict, with other Scripture. The key point to remember is Scripture does not contradict itself!

So what have we learned? We have learned that there is very strong evidence for a post-Tribulation Rapture, but if that evidence is viewed through different frames of perspective, its

strength decreases to some extent. It is very possible the Rapture of the church and the second advent event may be separated by some amount of time.

Chapter 9: What triggers the Tribulation?

We've stated we know the Antichrist will reveal himself at the halfway point of the Tribulation. Although we know the period in which he will be revealed, we don't know where in the overall sequence of events in the Tribulation the middle actually occurs.

We know the middle is three and one-half years into the seven-year Tribulation period. That's easy math. What is not clear is what is physically happening on the Earth at this midpoint. Perhaps the actual seal or trumpet judgments hold a Rapture clue for us.

Before we can answer where in the sequence of events the Antichrist actually reveals himself for what he is, we first need to consider what events trigger the Tribulation. Why do we need that? Well, many people can state the Antichrist reveals the spirit within him 1,260 days into the Tribulation period. This is correct!

Revelation 13:5-6 says *"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty [and] two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."*

Matthew 24:15 adds: *"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:)"*

This verse is followed by all in Judaea fleeing to the mountains (Matthew 24:21-22) because: *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Just a second, you may say, the math doesn't add up. Three and a half years is $365 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days (rounded up), not 1,260 days, as it says in the Bible. Correct again. In ancient times, the Bible and a good portion of world civilizations used a 360-day year instead of our current 365-1/4-day year¹. Why did the year consist of 360 days? Simple. It looks as if God initially made it that way.

Were the early calendar makers (astronomers) so inaccurate and clumsy as to miss the mark by a full five days per year? Let's think about that for a second or two. If you are off five days per year, then you would be off almost a full month, or 25 days, in only five years. Think of what such an error would do to your planting cycle! I think they would have caught on pretty quickly their calendar was off and needed some significant change (or be out of a job!). It only makes logical sense the year really was 360 days long, and something else changed a year from 360 days to 365 days.

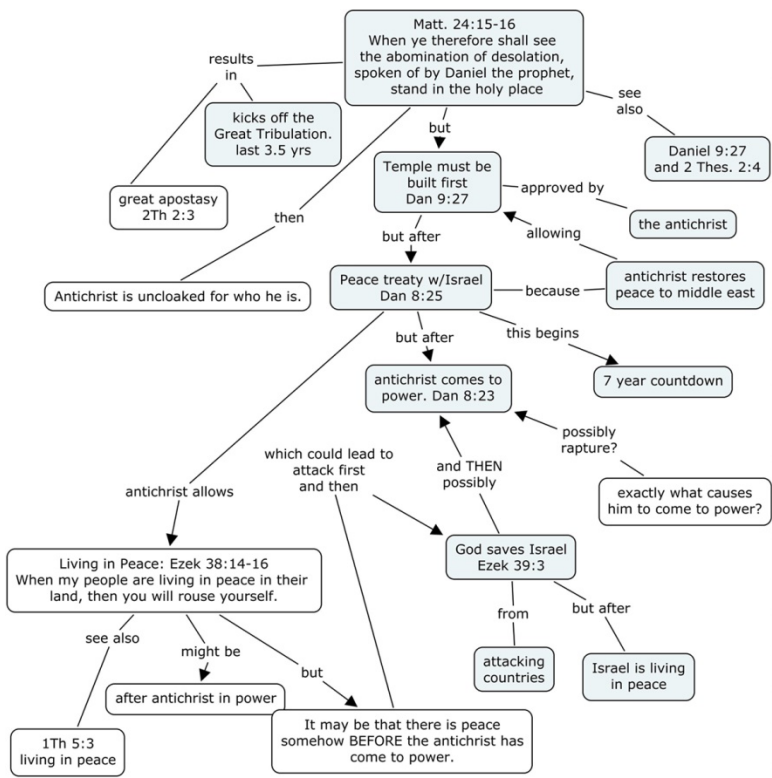
What caused the change to take place? I can only speculate since there is no hard evidence to prove any theories. I personally feel that there was an astronomical near-miss of such of a size it affected our planetary rotation and possibly our axial tilt. Other theories say the global flood slowed our rotation. All are theories, mind you, with no hard proof. Take them with a grain of salt. What is true, however, is the Biblical year was 360 days.

So recapping, we have the Antichrist coming to power and having his way with the world for 42 months (1,260 days), followed by his actions called the 'abomination of desolation' in the temple, which triggers the period of the Great Tribulation, wherein if Jesus did not shorten the days, all life on Earth would be extinguished.

The following chart contains some of the logic flow for this next

¹ Terry Hurlbut, <http://www.examiner.com/article/the-earth-originally-had-a-360-day-calendar> September 20, 2010.

portion of our discussion, since it may be harder to juggle all the details without a road map.



Let’s search for the start of the Tribulation by reviewing the events in reverse order of occurrence. Once again, we know the Antichrist stands in the holy place after 42 months (1,260 days, three and a half years), the midpoint of the Tribulation. Matthew 24:15 says this kicks off the Great Tribulation, or the last three and a half years of Earth’s history as we know it.

Daniel 9:27 says, “*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make [it] desolate, even until the*

consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

We also know there will be a great falling away of ‘the church’.

Thessalonians 2:3 *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”*

These who fall away are the people who know about Jesus, but don’t know Jesus Himself through an active relationship with Him. As with current times, many churches are full of people (including pastors) who know about Jesus, may even talk and preach about Him, but through their actions prove they don’t have the all important personal relationship with Him.

When trouble comes, they seek help from every avenue except falling on their knees and going to the source of all help. Who hasn’t heard the decidedly non-Christian phrase, “All we can do now is pray!” The phrase shows the people involved do not know the power and might of God, and only call upon Him immediately before the disaster overtakes them. Personally, I prefer to pray at the very first hint trouble might be coming, way before I can see any actual events.

Matthew 24:15, 2Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Daniel 9:27 clearly mark what happens during the exact middle of the Tribulation period, so we have a firm reference point. Well, the reference point is set (1,260 days into the Tribulation), but what is happening at that specific time occurs is still very much undefined. Can we nail it down a little more? What else needs to happen?

For one thing, there needs to be a standing temple for the Antichrist to desecrate. Daniel 9:27 explicitly states the Antichrist does his deed in the temple. As discussed in previous pages, there is currently no temple in place on the Temple Mount, other than the Dome of the Rock. The Antichrist must craft a peace treaty with Israel and its Middle East neighbors to calm the

area down so the temple can be built on the site. The signing of the peace treaty will initiate the start of the Tribulation period according to Scripture, *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week...”*

A firm covenant is made for seven years, or one week of years, but is broken in the middle of the week (after 3 ½ years). The breaking of the treaty in the midst of the week and the subsequent desecration of the temple will trigger the Great Tribulation.

So what do we know for sure?

- We know the Antichrist comes to power.
- We know the act of Israel signing a peace treaty with her neighbors starts the clock on the last seven years of history and begins the tribulation.
- We know the desecration of the temple by the Antichrist marks the middle of the Tribulation and kicks off the Great Tribulation.
- Therefore we know the beginning and midpoint events of the Tribulation period, but we don’t know where they fit against the Rapture time line and the seal and trumpet judgments.

Chapter 10: Can we tell when the Antichrist comes to power?

So far, so good. Let's boldly continue on and see if we can tell when the Antichrist comes to power and look for a Rapture clue that way.

Perhaps we can get some ideas from Daniel 8:23-24, "*And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.*

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."

The phrase "*And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full,*" speaks somewhat to the timing of the appearance of the Antichrist.

The question is, are the transgressors coming to their full? As we follow the news today, we find globally those things which are opposed to God are being lifted up as good and proper, while the commandments which were given by God, and in fact, the very concept of a one true God, are being ridiculed by social media, the entertainment community, and governments. There are very few places left on Earth where you can stand up for Christian beliefs and not become labeled as a 'hater' or worse. Even our society in the United States, founded on Christian principles, is now officially moving against Christ. Our government has passed laws that forbid Christians from speaking against other groups, but do not prohibit those other groups from speaking out against Christians. They label one form of expression as 'hate speech,' while the other, with more vile and hateful rhetoric, they label as 'free speech.'

Governments officially represent their countries to God. There may be a multitude of Christian groups within a country, but the judgments which come to a country will depend on its official governmental relationship with God. In the Old Testament, a country, or tribe, was judged by the relationship it's official rulers had with God.

When the United States even so much as gave lip-service to following God, the country prospered. When the culture in the U.S. shifted in the 1960s, and people started “doing their own thing” and looked away from Godly principles, there seemed to be a decline in the social health of the United States. To be sure, more goods and products were manufactured after that time than ever before, but before the 1970s, most parents would let their children play outside unsupervised, knowing they would be safe. That time is long gone, and children now are under constant surveillance by a supervising figure. We have more ‘stuff,’ but have lost freedom and safety.

All one needs to do today is publically take a Christian stand on a topic and you may find yourself in court. Refer to the recent court battles of Hobby Lobby for not having the ‘morning after’ abortion pill covered under their employee insurance plan, and Chick-fil-A when their CEO sent out a tweet critical of the Supreme Court decision against the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). If you own a business, you may end up in court, boycotted, or even put out of business for expressing your Christian beliefs. Are transgressors coming to their “full”?

Therefore, another thing we know is that:

- By general observation, we can agree we are coming very close to fulfilling the prophecy of “*the transgressors are come to the full.*”

The signing of a peace treaty with Israel, per Daniel 8:25, begins the Tribulation period. The question remains, though, Why is a peace treaty signed? Realistically, with Israel's current neighbors, can anyone think the time would be ripe for countries to decide

to live in harmony with Israel? It doesn't seem very likely, does it?

Perhaps there might be a clue in the sequence of events which happen just before the peace treaty is signed. There are several scenarios which could occur to allow the Antichrist to come into power. As discussed previously, he could come to power:

- Slowly, by arranging peace treaties between nations. This is very plausible.
- By amassing an enormous military and seizing world power. This is pretty unlikely since the world just doesn't quite work that way.
- By brokering a peace treaty after the war outlined in Ezekiel 38. We'll cover that in a moment.
- To fill the void and confusion left by Christians caught up in the Rapture. That's possible, but just speculation until we gather further evidence.

Ezekiel 38:14-16 and Ezekiel 39:2-3 say:

Ezekiel 38:14 *"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know [it]?"*

Ezekiel 38:15 *And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:*

Ezekiel 38:16 *And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O God, before their eyes.*

Ezekiel 39:2 *And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:*

Ezekiel 39:3 *And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and*

will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.

Ezekiel 39:4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that [is] with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and [to] the beasts of the field to be devoured.

Ezekiel 39:5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken [it], saith the Lord GOD.”

This scenario spans Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. We see Israel initially living in peace, but are attacked by Gog and other countries. God allows the attack to show His power to Israel, and to let them know He is still on the throne and they are still His people. The enemy swarms down on Israel, but it is the hand of God which stops them cold. Approximately 83% of the enemy forces are wiped out in this attack (*“and leave but the sixth part of thee”*).

Let’s allow Israel could be living (somehow) in peace with its neighbors before the Ezekiel 38 attack, and before the Antichrist signs a peace treaty with them. It could be possible the overwhelming defeat of the attackers by the hand of God prompts the neighboring countries to sign a peace treaty, which is crafted by the Antichrist, to prevent such carnage in the future.

It is a somewhat more likely scenario Israel is not living in peace with its neighbors, and the Antichrist forges a peace treaty to bring peace to the Middle East to cement his power. As with other treaties, things work out for a time and give a false sense of security to Israel because anyone who can forge a peace in this land of strife must be the messiah. A peace brought about by the messiah must, therefore, hold, by definition.

To Israel, it would look like they are living in peace in their land, as Ezekiel 38:14 says. 1Thessalonians 5:3 agrees that *“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”*

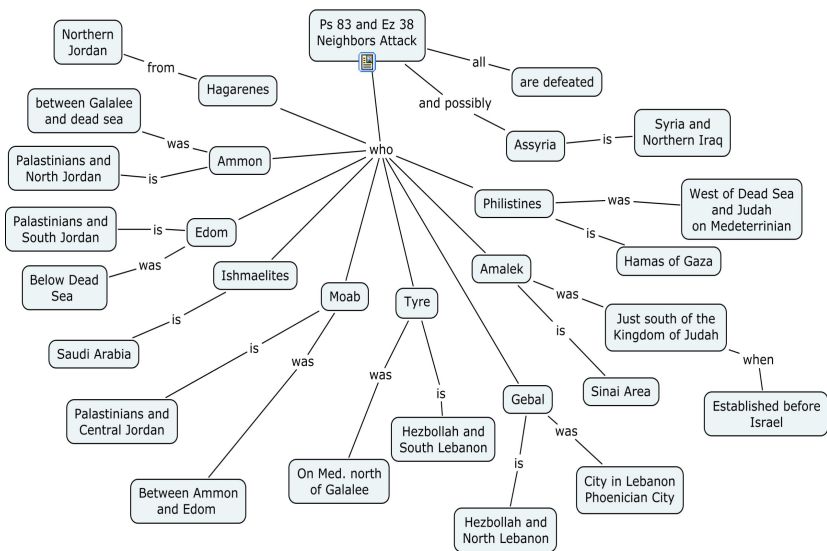
We know Gog (Russia) will combine military forces with Put (Libya), Persia, Ethiopia (Cush), the House of Togarmah (grandson of Japheth, Noah's son), the princes of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (people from their homeland of Magog (Russian peoples) grandsons of Japheth).

Some countries challenge Gog and charge it with attacking Israel to gain their resources. These countries are Sheba and Dedan, descended from Abraham through Keturah. Both are Southern Arabian tribes. Tarshish (son of Javan, the grandson of Japheth) also challenged Gog.

When the Bible speaks of peoples from strange-sounding countries and areas that do not exist on world maps today, it is not being vague or figurative. We know the names of countries can easily change, depending on the volatility of their current government. Compare a world map from even 100 years ago to a current world map. You will see quite a few name changes. To get around this inconvenient issue, the Bible uses family names to locate geographic areas, so country name changes will not impact the text. It uses the family name of the people who originally settled the area. Country names change, but family names remain constant.

The following diagram illustrates how some of these countries are related through the lineage of Noah. Noah fathered three sons; Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The following chart gives a very rough approximation of what nations Noah's grandchildren developed into.

time Biblical names with some of the POSSIBLE areas where their descendants may be found today. Please note these are estimates, and do not represent a scientific genealogical study based on the Human Genome Project, which relates people groups around the world. We are just going for a general idea of who is who today, and from what peoples they may be descended.



As we can see from this graphic, Israel is still surrounded to this day by some of its Old Testament enemies you may have read about. All it would take is a galvanizing event of some sort to bring about the Ezekiel 38 attack. Perhaps advanced word that Gog will attack Israel would be enough to embolden the populations and cause them to join or cause the fight.

When the attack from Gog does come, God wipes them out.

Ezekiel 38:18 *“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, [that] my fury shall come up in my face.”*

Ezekiel 38:22 *“And I will plead against him with pestilence and*

with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that [are] with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”

Ezekiel 39:3 “And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.”

Ezekiel 39:4 “Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that [is] with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and [to] the beasts of the field to be devoured.”

Ezekiel 39:5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken [it], saith the Lord GOD.”

Ezekiel 39:6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I [am] the LORD.”

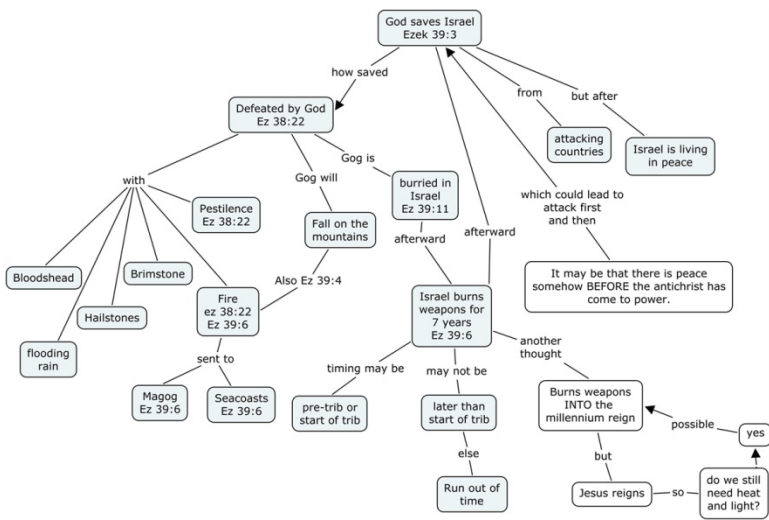
Ezekiel 39:9 “And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years:”

Ezekiel 39:10 “So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down [any] out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.”

Ezekiel 39:9-10 may have a clue for us as to the timing of the attack, and therefore about the rise of the Antichrist. It says that Israel will burn the enemy's weapons of war for seven years, and will do not need to cut trees for firewood because of the enormous mass of armaments left behind.

One way of thinking about it is this attack must happen just before the Tribulation period, since the people will burn the weapons for seven years, and the whole Tribulation period is only seven years. If the Antichrist sees God Himself coming to the aid of Israel, it will prompt him and all of the other countries to sign a peace treaty with Israel out of fear of the Hand of God.

Once the peace treaty is signed, per Daniel 8:25, the countdown starts, and the seven-year Tribulation period begins.



Pre-Tribulation Rapture believers hope to be gone by this point. If believers see the peace treaty signed, the Rapture will come during the Tribulation period, making it a mid- or post-Trib Rapture. We will not split hairs to define what we consider to be a reasonable start to the concept of mid-Tribulation Rapture. Let's just agree we will define mid-Tribulation as any time after the signing of the peace treaty with Israel. We will be 'amid' the Tribulation.

So, have we clearly proven the Ezekiel 38 attack happens before the Tribulation period begins, by the signing of a peace treaty? No, we have not. It is possible to have peace in the region without the Antichrist signing the peace treaty. It is possible other governments can forge a limited peace treaty without the Antichrist. The Tribulation does not start until the Antichrist himself signs the peace treaty. A general treaty can fall apart, resulting in the war with Gog, followed by a peace treaty initiated by the Antichrist.

If the attack occurs after the start of the Tribulation, the seven years of burning armaments for heat will interfere with the period where Jesus comes to physically reign on Earth for 1,000 years prior to the White Throne Judgment.

Revelation 20:2-5 *“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection.”

Revelation 20:7-8 *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom [is] as the sand of the sea.”*

Revelation 20:11 *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”*

Could Israel be burning weapons of war at the time Jesus is physically present on Earth and actively ruling the nations Himself? The answer is “Yes, why not?”

If we recall the horrific circumstances on the Earth just before Jesus comes, we see the population of the earth has not been completely wiped out. Very nearly wiped out, but not completely. As Matthew 24:22 states, *“And except those days should be*

shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

The people who are alive when Jesus comes to reign consist of both believers and nonbelievers. Satan is bound in the pit for 1,000 years, and all of the people on Earth will live under the just, fair, and loving rule of Jesus Himself.

Hold on, you may say, I thought only the saints would make it into the millennial reign. No, the mixed cadre of people who are still alive when Jesus returns will make it into the millennial kingdom. This includes both the saved and the unsaved. Recall Jesus will come back to interrupt the Armageddon war so that all human life on the planet is not extinguished. There must obviously be at least two opposing sides fighting each other for there to be a war. In this case, there are three distinct groups alive at His coming. One consists of the supporters of the Antichrist. A second group consists of the Christians who are alive at His coming. Finally, the the third group is composed of the Jews. Everyone alive at His coming makes it into the millennial kingdom, and will have to learn to deal with each other during the millennia under the direct rule of Jesus.

So, since Jesus Himself will rule in the millennial kingdom, can we assume everybody will get along, and work well with each other for these 1,000 years? Unfortunately, no we can't. The key to that lies in several Scriptures such as:

Psalm 2:9 *"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*

Revelation 12:5 *"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and [to] his throne."*

Revelation 19:15 *"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."*

We keep seeing the theme of ‘rod of iron.’ When we speak of the love that Jesus has for us, we rarely think of Him ruling with a rod of iron. In fact, the thought seems relatively foreign to us. However, when we consider the mixed multitude which make it into the millennial kingdom, it becomes apparent just because Jesus is here, people have not dropped their prejudices or rebellion. In one instant, they were fighting the biggest war in all history, attempting to annihilate every existing Christian and Jew, and the next instant, Jesus is here establishing His 1,000-year kingdom and ruling over them. Do you think He has to implement some ‘attitude adjustments?’ You bet! I believe Jesus has to enforce the laws of righteousness over a very strong-willed and rebellious people.

How can we say this? At the end of His 1,000-year reign, Jesus releases Satan from the pit and allows him to walk on the Earth again. At this point we see one of the most astounding and incomprehensible acts I can ever imagine. After 1,000 years of being ruled by Jesus Himself, some people’s hearts are so incredibly hardened against God they actually form a rebellion and seek to overthrow Jesus by using their military might. Incomprehensible!

A key to our original question of “Is it possible that the weapons of the Gog attack will be burned during the millennial period?” is found in Isaiah 65:21, where people living in the millennium are building their houses, planting gardens, and enjoying the fruits of their labor. The implication is that daily activity and work will be the same as they were before Christ’s reign. This would logically include providing heat for your house in the cold and cooking your food. It is entirely possible the weapons of war in Ezekiel 39 can be burned well into the millennial period with no scriptural problem. As a result, we can not explicitly say the war will happen before the Tribulation period starts in order to have all of the armaments burned during the seven years of the Tribulation and before Christ’s physical rule on Earth. Nor can we rule out the war will start after the Tribulation period begins

and the signed peace treaty with Israel fails. In a similar manner, we can not tie the Rapture into either the Gog attack or the burning of the weapons of war.

It looks as if we would have to stretch a little to use the burning of weapons for seven years as an indicator when the peace treaty with Israel is signed, signaling the start of Daniel's seventieth week.

Chapter 11: Revisiting the Three Woes

There has been much written speculation concerning the three woes of Revelation, especially that these woes are brought about by God's wrath, and it follows since 1 Thessalonians 5:9 says, *"for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"* the church will be raptured at or before the occurrence of these three woes.

Let's look at things carefully.

Woe #1 occurs during the fifth trumpet of Revelation 9. The blowing of this trumpet results in a star falling from heaven. The star was given the keys to the pit, signifying the star was a sentient being, and not merely a heavenly body falling to earth.

Revelation 9:2 states that smoke will rise from the pit and the smoke will darken the sun and the atmosphere. Hordes of locust-like creatures charging out of the pit follow this (Revelation 9:3), scourging people for five months with their sting (Revelation 9:5). It is interesting the description in Revelation 9:7–10 sounds very much like some mechanized or robotic army of sorts.

"And the shapes of the locusts [were] like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads [were] as it were crowns like gold, and their faces [were] as the faces of men.

And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as [the teeth] of lions.

And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings [was] as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power [was] to hurt men five months."

Whatever is coming out of the pit, most likely fueled by Satan's

demons, is being led by a king called the angel of the bottomless pit, who is given the name Apollyon. These demon locusts have the power of the scorpion, with stings so powerful and painful as to cause men to seek death (Revelation 9:6). Miraculously, although men will want to die and will try to kill themselves, they cannot die and will have to endure the torment. Does this mean people who try to commit suicide will still live, despite their attempts? Yes, it does. Will people who jump from buildings to stop their pain live on with horribly broken bones and bodies? I believe so, as terrible as that sounds.

It is very interesting these demon locusts cannot kill with their sting, but can only torment those who do not have God's seal on them (Revelation 9:4). I don't know if God's seal upon His people will be visible to anyone else, but I can't help but think if I were being tormented by these hellish creatures and saw a group who was spared from the suffering, I would surely want to do whatever I could to join the other group and become one of God's people. Unfortunately, it looks like most people will have hardened their hearts, and no matter what happens, they will not choose to give their allegiance to Jesus Christ. That is genuinely a sad state of affairs, but we see terrible tragedies happening around the world today without people repenting and giving their lives to Christ. It doesn't look as if the global horrors in Revelation will significantly change people's hearts, either.

If there are Christians still around, does it mean the Rapture has not happened? No, it doesn't. People can still be saved throughout the Tribulation.

Woe #2 happens during the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9:13–19. After the sixth angel sounds its trumpet, four angels that had been bound in the River Euphrates are released (Revelation 9:14). These angels are released to slay one-third of the remaining population on Earth. They pull together an army of 200 million men (Revelation 9:16) and set out killing people with their weapons.

Once again, I can't help but think at least a portion of these troops entails some sort of mechanized warfare.

Revelation 9:18–19 says, *“By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails [were] like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.”

To me, it sounds like very intelligent people in the donkey and ox cart days trying to describe their visions of modern robotic warfare being waged.

Enter the Two Witnesses:

During the time of Woe #2, we see the introduction of two somewhat mysterious witnesses for God. Revelation 11:3 says, *“And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”*

These two witnesses are first introduced in Zechariah 4:11–14 as God's two olive trees. We see them again in Jerusalem, proclaiming the Word of God openly for 1,260 days. Although there is a lot of conjecture about who these witnesses are, the most reasonable thought is they are two Old Testament witnesses. Since we are living in the New Testament era, why not use some of the New Testament pillars, such as Peter, James, or John, to be witnesses? The answer is pretty straightforward. We have had New Testament witnesses for 2,000 years proclaiming Christ and His power and glory. During this time, there has not been a tremendous number of Jewish conversions. Keep in mind the Tribulation period is an awakening period for Israel to come to the Lord. It makes sense for the Gospel to have credibility for them. They would have to hear it from two Old Testament Jewish evangelists. Sometimes it's not only the message itself but who delivers it, that causes the change in people's hearts.

These witnesses are given miraculous power to prove they are from God. They can prevent rainfall, turn water into blood, and cause plagues as they see fit (Revelation 11:6). Also, if any man tries to hurt them, these witnesses can kill that person with a fire that issues out of their mouths.

Revelation 11:5 says, *“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.”*

The general population, and the Antichrist, in particular, will want to get rid of these two witnesses. They will, however, continue their witnessing for 3 ½ years, or 42 months. At the end of the specified time, the beast coming out of the bottomless pit (Satan) will overcome them and kill them.

People will be so relieved the pair are finally dead, their bodies will be left lying in the street. Authorities will not allow them to be buried. Revelation 11:10 says everyone on the Earth will be delighted, give each other presents in celebration, and will just watch them laying there, dead.

In a practical sense, this means the world’s news media will have their cameras live on the scene, recording the celebrations over the two dead bodies in the street. After three days, however, the Holy Spirit will come upon them, they’ll stand back up on their feet, and they will ascend into heaven in a cloud as the entire world watches.

To say there may be a little bit of panic from the population at this point is probably putting it mildly. I don’t wish panic on anyone, you understand, but you can’t help but be amused at the little movie that runs through your head as you picture the two witnesses awakening from the dead, dusting themselves off, and ascending into heaven in front of the cameras, with the entire world watching. Wow, talk about a late-breaking news story that day!

It’s fascinating this is at least the fourth instance of a small-scale

supernatural departure occurring in the Bible.

1. Enoch walked with God and was no more (Genesis 5:24)
2. Elijah was taken away in a fiery chariot while Elisha watched (2 Kings 2:11)
3. After Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch in Gaza, the Lord caught Philip away (Acts 8:39)
4. The two witnesses ascend into heaven (Revelation 11: 12)

Based on this pattern, is it possible there could also be multiple large-scale Rapture events too? We will have to see.

Revelation 11:13 has a little good news about some conversions, however. It says it right after the witnesses ascend there's a tremendous earthquake resulting in 7,000 people killed in Jerusalem (not the good news part). It also says the remnant (of the Jewish population) was frightened, and finally gave glory to the God of heaven. A breakthrough at last!

The story of the two witnesses is such a compelling one, it seems as if it should be somewhat easy to fit it to the Rapture time line. As it turns out, it isn't such an easy fit, but we will attempt to put numbers to it in the next chapter.

Woe #3 is announced after the seventh trumpet blast in Revelation 11. Revelation 12:12 states, *"Therefore rejoice, [ye] heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 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."*

The issue we run up against is woe #3 does not happen within a neat and orderly segment of time. Woe #3 is generally considered to be an overview woe, which takes place over a period of time, and continues into the vial judgments. Woe three is somewhat parenthetical in nature and serves as an illustrated summary of Satan's antagonism towards Jesus, in particular, and also to the church in general.

This woe spans a period since Revelation 12:14 contains a 3 ½

year time reference: *“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”*

Although woe #3 is listed after the first two woes, it goes back to the birth of Jesus and possibly before, and continues to the end of the age. That makes it somewhat difficult to use it to help accurately identify specific event timings that we need, to narrow the range in which the Rapture can be expected.

Chapter 12: Putting Numbers to the Event Time Line

Have you ever put together a jigsaw puzzle and found yourself with a block of puzzle pieces that fit together but didn't fit into any of the completed sections of the puzzle yet? That's what we have here. The woes fit together very well with the trumpets, but that entire piece of the puzzle is still floating by itself without a hard reference point. We know the *relative* timing within that chunk of puzzle pieces, but we are as yet unable to fit those puzzle pieces in firmly with the rest of the Tribulation time scale.

Let's see what we can do to get a better overall picture of the puzzle. I strongly recommended you use a pad and pencil to map out the details in Chapter 12 in order to clearly keep in mind what is being talked about. It gets a little hard to follow without visual guidance.

It's time for a quick review of what we know of our floating puzzle pieces so far:

- The Tribulation is 2,520 days long, or seven years, based on a 360-day year.
- The Tribulation period is bisected into two time periods called the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation.
- The midpoint of the Tribulation is 1,260 days after it begins, or 3 ½ years, based on the 360-day year.
- There are 21 major events occurring during the Tribulation, and they include seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowl judgments.
- Woe #1 lasts for at least five months.
- The end of woe #2 comes after trumpet #6 but before

trumpet #7.

- The two witnesses carry on their ministry for 3 ½ years, or 1,260 days.
- The witnesses are Raptured, or taken up to heaven alive, between trumpet #6 and trumpet #7.

Perhaps if we try to calculate the relative timing of the Tribulation events, we can come up with something that may be useful to us.

Playing with numbers:

There are several different ways to attempt to calculate the relative time of the 21 Tribulation events.

We can take the 2,520 days of the Tribulation (seven 360-day years) and divide them evenly among 21 events. This will give you 120 days per event. This is not a very realistic, however. Just from reading the events which occur in the first five seals it seems apparent many of them should take more than 120 days to fulfill in the real world. Setting up for global warfare will generally take longer than a few months.

At this point, many of you will say something like, “Yeah, but there is nothing to say some of the 21 events can’t overlap.” That is quite correct, however if we go that route practically anything can take any length of time and we make the whole time line a soupy mess. Since we don’t know how long each event will last, let’s agree to simplify it and try to come up with some reasonable numbers in order to give us some kind of a mental image, overall.

Back to our narrative. If we carefully read the vial judgments, we can plainly see that 120 days is far too long to sustain each event. As we’ve stated before, the Earth’s population could not survive if each of the vial judgments took 120 days to complete.

This calculation allows you to place the midpoint of the Tribulation (1,260 days) very neatly between trumpet four and trumpet five, but does not indicate the midpoint of the Tribulation actually happens between these two events. It is

strictly a mathematical calculation.

Based on our 120-day cycle, and knowing the end of the two witnesses ministry must happen between trumpet six and trumpet seven, as explicitly called out in Scripture, we can calculate backward and subtract 120 days from each event, and find the witnesses have first appeared on the scene 1,260 days earlier, placing them somewhere around the time of seal four. Once again, this is easy math, but not very accurate. I cannot imagine the world living through the bowl/vial judgments if they totaled 840 days long (120 days x seven vial judgments)! Life on Earth could not be sustained for that long.

Let's try again:

I could find another potential option for calculating the duration of each event in Revelation 9:12 where it states, *"One woe is past; [and], behold, there come two woes more hereafter."*

This phrase opens the possibility woe #2 begins after the close of woe #1. The two witnesses begin their ministry after the end of the first woe, where the locusts are released from the pit. This seems to be an intuitive sequence of events. Most of the time in life, event #1 proceeds event #2. Event #2, therefore, follows event #1. That's not terribly hard to see.

The concept works, until we remember the two witnesses have a 3 ½ year (1,260 days) ministry on Earth. Woe #1 does not begin until after the fifth trumpet sounds in Revelation 9. The locusts have the power to torment people for five months, 150 days, based on a 360-day year.

If the two witnesses begin their ministry five months after the fifth trumpet sounds, they will have insufficient time to complete their 3 ½ years before the end of the Tribulation. They would have started their ministry way too late.

Alternatively, we could simply add additional time to trumpet #5 through vial #7 to make them extend long enough for the 3 ½-year ministry of the witnesses, but, as we have already

determined, there would be no person alive to see the end of their ministry. Recall that Jesus Himself said that he will shorten the days of the End Times or else no one would survive. This calculation is also unworkable in the real world.

One last try:

We can base another strategy on Luke 21:25 – 26 where it says, *“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; 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.”

This corresponds closely with Revelation 6:12–14 where it says, *“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.”

By comparing the events of these passages we can conclude it is possible both Luke and John are describing the same events. If you and I were observing almost any event, it is very natural that each of us would describe it with some variation, depending on which of the specific piece struck us the most. This is like the four Gospels. Each one covers the life of Jesus differently, but it is the same life of Jesus the four writers are talking about. There does not need to be a word-for-word correspondence between the Gospels to make them valid. If such were the case, you would only need one Gospel, and that would be that. It is quite acceptable for different writers to describe the same event with some variation in their focus.

The midpoint of the Tribulation could very well come sometime

after seal #6 has been opened. Seal #6 also gains support for the midpoint from the promise that we will be kept from wrath. As we have stated earlier, seal #6 is the first clear instance where we see the wrath of God falling on humanity.

Let's do a little math and see how things work out.

Assume seal #6 is the first instance of God's wrath in the Tribulation sequence of events. Until this time, we have seen man's wrath against man in the seal judgments. Perhaps seals one through five could be considered a portion of God's wrath because He is lifting His hand of protection, and allowing man to act out the dark deeds which lie within man's heart.

While it is very true God is lifting His hand of restraint, it seems a bit of a stretch to say the first five seals only represent God pouring out His wrath onto the inhabitants of Earth. People are doing what unrestrained people do. Read the online news services from around the world. People and armies are doing heinous things to each other daily today. Governments and religious groups are fighting each other, and killing many people who have nothing to do with the issues. People worldwide are getting slaughtered because they are members of the 'wrong religion.'

As I write this, I'm reading a news article online with horrifically barbaric news article stating there were 6,000 Christians in Nigeria hacked to death by Boko Haram in a fifteen month period.¹

I recently viewed a video of approximately a dozen men kneeling, their hands tied behind their back, being executed. After they were shot in the head, the cheering crowd fired hundreds of rounds of ammunition into the dead bodies. People without Jesus can be inhumanly brutal.

¹ <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/5682/alarm-as-over-6000-christians-hacked-to-death-in-nigeria-in-fifteen-months-report>

It is little wonder many atheists look at the wars and bloodshed fought over religion, and conclude there can be no God at all. They are wrong. The religious wars are, in fact, proof people follow a very real god of hate and darkness. The Bible calls him Satan. It seems as if the true nature of man, when the Most High God is left out of the equation, is to do whatever wicked thing is in their hearts.

The enemy does not care what religion you choose to follow, as long as you are not a Biblical Christian. The only thing he cares about is stirring up the hearts of men to convince them to kill one-another, because ultimately, he gets the spoils of war, their very souls.

Does that seem harsh? The Bible is full of statements about the evil which lies in the hearts of people. A tiny sampling of scriptures to illustrate the point include:

Genesis 6:5 *“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.”*

Ecclesiastes 9:3 *“This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead.”*

Mark 7:21-23 *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”*

Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*

So much for the concept that man is inherently good at heart.

Back to our time line. Events indicate seal six is most likely the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This would locate the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel and in Matthew

24:15 on the time line of the seals, trumpets, and vials. Revelation 13:5 speaks of the same desecration of the temple by the Antichrist.

With the temple desecration now assigned to the time of seal six, we can calculate seals one through five might be, on the average, 210 days long each if we were to divide six into 1,260 days evenly. Given this is a time of man's warfare against man, and of rampant disease across the planet, this seems like a realistic length of time for the individual events in seals one through five to unfold. Do I think each event will really be 210 days long? Certainly not! This is just an average time produced by a simple calculation. The time between each seal can vary considerably, with the only requirement being the sum of them cannot exceed 1,260 days or 3 ½ years, based on a 360-day year. They may even be overleaped one upon another.

Again, using seal six as the Tribulation midpoint, and dividing 1,260 days evenly by the 15 remaining events in the Tribulation, we can estimate each event is approximately 84 days long. But this again puts us into mathematical error.

If we calculate that woe #1 (trumpet #5) is five months long, based on Scripture (remember those nasty stinging locusts), or 150 days out of a 360-day year, this leaves 1,110 days remaining for the rest of the events (1260-150). We can divide the remaining events in the second half of the Tribulation (Fourteen in all. Seal seven plus the remaining six trumpets plus the seven vials.) and calculate the final trumpets and the vial judgments could be as short as 79 days each (1,110/14).

Do I think these numbers are accurate? Again, no, I don't. They are just used to give a relative feel for what might be possible as far as the timing of the events in the Tribulation. Personally, I believe 79 days apiece for the vial judgments is too long a period. Life on Earth would not be sustainable for 553 days under those conditions (79 days times seven judgments). I feel the trumpet judgments are probably longer than 79 days each, on average,

and the bowl judgments shorter by the same amount, but there is no way to get too precise about it. That doesn't impact our study of the Rapture timing in any way. Feel free to distribute the remaining number of days across the trumpet and vial judgments in any manner you would like which makes sense to you, because, in the final analysis, there is no way of knowing exactly how long each event lasts, and our best tries at determining their lengths come down to educated guesses.

The only real restriction to our time line is the midpoint of the Tribulation must be at 1,260 days, and the total time for the Tribulation must be seven years, with 3 ½ years reserved for the Great Tribulation. Beyond those restrictions, have fun with the eschatological calculations. It is an excellent way to study and understand your Bible.

Back to the two witnesses:

If we were to place the midpoint of the Tribulation after trumpet #4 sounds, or if we were to place the midpoint of the Tribulation during seal #6 (the first clear instance of God's wrath), the two witnesses still arrive on the scene around seal #4, and are raptured after trumpet #6 sounds. In both cases, the two witnesses are proclaiming Jesus as Savior for a significant time before the Antichrist desecrates the temple in Revelation 13:5-6 and begins the Great Tribulation as in Matthew 24:15.

Revelation 13:5 *"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty [and] two months."*

Revelation 13:6 *"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."*

Matthew 24:15 *"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:)"*

Daniel 11:31 *"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall*

pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily [sacrifice], and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

How does this help us with determining when the Rapture will be? Well, it doesn't directly, but it serves as a useful benchmark which is unambiguous. If we follow Christ with all our strength, and see on the news there are these two rather odd-looking people preaching salvation in the streets of Jerusalem, we can be sure we are already in the Tribulation and the Rapture will be a mid-Trib event. I say this tongue-in-cheek, but only slightly. With all of the global warfare currently going on, plus remembering World War I and World War II engulfed practically the entire globe, it might be difficult to identify the actual start of the Tribulation. A better indicator we are close might be the Gog attack on Israel, or the physical signing of the peace treaty.

Just experiencing large-scale warfare may not be as much of an indicator as it may once have been.

So, if we see the two witnesses preaching, as we sit in our balcony seats in heaven, we will know that there was a pre-Tribulation Rapture. If we actually watch the witnesses preaching in Jerusalem on our TVs, we know there will be a mid-Tribulation Rapture.

The Chart below represents a summary of the timing which we have concluded seems to be the best fit for the Tribulation Timeline. The chart is linear and should properly be viewed on one line, but it is too long to fit this page size. Again, the times listed are starting points for your personal research and fact-finding. Go to it!

The 1260 under Seal 6 represents the midpoint of the Tribulation. Feel free to jockey numbers around according to your understanding. The DaysPerEvent under the Trumpet and Vial judgments are a great place to start changing the numbers. Trumpet timing can be longer, Vial timing is probably shorter.

Event	Seal 1	Seal 2	Seal 3	Seal 4	Seal 5	Seal 6	Seal 7	Trump 1	Trump 2	Trump 3	Trump 4
Day #	210	420	630	840	1050	1260	1344	1428	1512	1596	1680
Witness Day#				42	252	462	672	756	840	924	1008
DaysPerEvent	210	210	210	210	210	210	84	84	84	84	84
						Midpoint					
						3.5 yrs					
Trump 5	Trump 6	Trump 7	Vial 1	Vial 2	Vial 3	Vial 4	Vial 5	Vial 6	Vial 7	# Years	
1764	1848	1932	2016	2100	2184	2268	2352	2436	2520	7	
1092	1176	1260								3.5	
84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	84	7	

Chapter 13: The difference between Wrath and Woe

An issue that comes up is some expositors and bloggers use the words ‘wrath’ and ‘woe’ interchangeably. If we accept this approach, we can skew our findings and inadvertently develop a case for a mid-Tribulation Rapture based on the misuse of the words. The three woes do not happen until deep into the Tribulation. After all of our work to get this far in our discussion, we do not want to taint our data now.

Recall that 1Thessolonians 5:9 says, *“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”* (emphasis mine).

If we are going to progress logically through the issue of not being appointed to wrath, we need to identify the difference between the words ‘wrath’ and ‘woe’ since they seem to be very much alike in our language. We need to note the differences between the several words used in the Greek for our one word ‘wrath.’

Let’s start with Webster’s Dictionary¹ definitions to look at the words ‘wrath’ and ‘woe.’

Wrath: noun - Violent anger; vehement exasperation; indignation; rage; fury; ire, the effects of anger or indignation; the just punishment of an offense or a crime, an intense emotional state of displeasure with someone or something.

Related words include: a transient madness, angriness, enragement, envy, gluttony, heat, indignation, infuriation, mad, wrathfulness.

¹ <http://www.webster-dictionary.net>

Woe: noun - Grief; sorrow; misery; heavy calamity, a curse; a malediction, woeful; sorrowful, a state of great suffering of body or mind.

Related words include: abomination, aching heart, affliction, agony of mind, atrocity, bewailing, bitterness, broken heart, calamity, cataclysm, catastrophe, crushing burden, curse, death, defilement, desolation, despair, destruction, scourge, suicidal despair.

Now we're seeing a difference between wrath and woe. To overly simplify the terms for the sake of illustration you could say; "If you have wrath against someone and take action, they will suffer woe."

Wrath comes from one person and is directed to cause woe to another. So much for the words being used interchangeably. They can't be.

The Greek word used for the three woes is ouai (G3759), which is frequently used to show the cause of the woe was a divine penalty for sinful attitudes or actions.

We will be, for this reason, saved from God's fury.

Where does this leave us as far as Rapture timing? The one thing we can say for sure is the three woes, as described in Revelation, do not by themselves point to rapture timing because we will be saved from the wrath that is to come, not a woe.

To support that idea, Paul says in Colossians 3:8, *"But now ye also put off all these; anger (orge), wrath (thymos), malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."*

In Romans 2:8, Paul says, *"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation (thymos), and wrath (orge)."*

From our review of the words wrath and woe, we can conclude that although we will escape the wrath, it's difficult to tie the words to rapture timing.

Chapter 14: Where does all that leave us?

In our search of the Scriptures, we have looked at passages supporting the pre-Trib, mid-Trib and post-Trib viewpoints. The natural question now is, “where does that leave us?” In this chapter, we will review Scriptures which point to various likely times in which the Rapture may occur, and use a little discipline and logic to see if we can sort through the statements. Keep in mind, however, it is impossible to come up with the absolute, 100% correct, definitive answer. I would be very skeptical of anyone who said their theory was the correct one and all other theories were in error.

Eventually we must define what we must prove to determine which of the mid-, pre-, and post-Tribulation theories are correct, or at least are the most likely.

- The arguments for all three theories must fit the facts, as defined by Scripture.
- Statements of fact should never contradict other well-known and documented truths found in the Bible. It is possible some statements may very well contradict conventional folklore and teaching, but this is another issue.

The important part to keep our eye on is if a theory is true, it will fit within Scripture with no conflict with the wording. Please note this does not imply there will be no conflict with personal beliefs and positions. It is unlikely any one Rapture theory will prove the other two Rapture theories erroneous, therefore we need to focus on finding out if it is **possible** for the theories to be true without outright contradiction of Scripture.

What we will be left with, at best, is identifying which Rapture timing theory is perhaps the most likely of the three. The most

likely will fit most of the Scriptures addressing themselves to End Times and the Rapture, without flagrantly violating the letter of other Scriptures.

Let's look at another table of Scriptures to see if a specific Scripture pertains to pre-, mid-, or post-Tribulation. The scripture is listed, and then a Yes or a No as to whether the Scripture could fit into that category. Please note, however, these are verses lifted out of contextual to make them fit into a table. Please read passages before and after each one to get the full impact.

As an example of how to interpret the chart, let's look at 2Thessalonians 2:1; *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him,"*

The rest of the passage talks about Jesus not coming to gather His people until there is:

- 1) a falling away and
- 2) the man of sin is revealed.

This passage does not fit the pre-Tribulation requirement since the man of perdition is not revealed until the middle of the Tribulation period. So under the 'pre' column we've identified it with a 'no' to show it does not fit well into the pre-Tribulation Rapture concept.

It supports mid-Trib very nicely, and possibly even the post-Tribulation if you consider there might be a time lapse between when the man of sin is revealed and Jesus' coming, therefore under the 'mid' and 'post' column you will find a 'yes' to indicate it could fit these concepts. This passage is unlikely to be a prime candidate for a post-Tribulation passage. The wording does not exclude it entirely from the possibility of fitting a post-Trib Rapture event, however.

The rest of the Scriptures listed below should also be viewed with the same logic in mind.

Scripture	pre-	mid-	post-
[1 Th 5:9 KJV] For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,	Yes	Yes	No
[Rom 5:9 KJV] Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.	Yes	Yes	No
[1 Th 1:10 KJV] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.	Yes	Yes	No
[Rev 14:10 KJV] The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,	Yes	Yes	No
[Rev 3:10 KJV] Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.	Yes	Yes	No
[Isa 65:20 KJV] There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner [being] an hundred years old shall be accursed.	Yes	Yes	No
[Rev 20:7 KJV] And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, [Rev 20:8 KJV] And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom [is] as the sand of the sea.	Yes	Yes	No
[Luk 21:36 KJV] Watch ye therefore, and pray	Yes	Yes	No

always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.			
[Zec 12:10 KJV] And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.	Yes	Yes	No
[Rev 19:14 KJV] And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.	Yes	Yes	Yes
[Rev 6:16 KJV] 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:	No	Yes	No
[2 Th 2:1 KJV] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him,	No	Yes	Yes
[1 Th 4:16 KJV] 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:	No	Yes	Yes
[Mat 24:30 KJV] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.	No	No	Yes
[1 Co 15:51 KJV] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,	No	No	Yes

[1Co 15:52 KJV] 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. [1Co 15:53 KJV] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality.			
[Luk 21:27 KJV] And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.	No	No	Yes

You will note there are fewer clear post-Trib Scriptures than there are pre-Trib scriptures. Does it mean it is most likely the post-Trib Scriptures do not really refer to a post-Tribulation Rapture? No, that is not the case at all, as we shall see in a moment.

The thing to keep in mind when reviewing Scriptures, is the Rapture of the church and the second advent of Christ may be separate events. If it is possible they are separate, the points of view of the pre-Trib and post-Trib people are both valid. Please note we are not discussing the actual probability of either a pre-Trib or mid-Trib Rapture taking place, but only the possibility it could happen that way, and that the text of Scripture does not outright forbid it from happening.

For a point of view to be invalid, we must prove it is practically impossible for the Rapture to happen as stated. This will occur if the viewpoint violates other Scripture. Alternatively, if there seems to be a conflict where several Scriptures contradict each other, we may have a case of both sets of Scriptures being correct! The Bible does not contradict itself. If we find cases where it seems as if there is a contradiction, it commonly turns out to be our interpretation of what we are reading. Sometimes we have to adjust our long-held beliefs to allow Scripture to mesh perfectly together as it was designed to do by the Holy

Spirit. To put it very bluntly, when things don't fit, do we think we are wrong or God is wrong?

One of the biggest argument in favor of pre- and mid-Trib devotees lies in the Rapture-only verses where there is no mention of judgment following the Rapture event. Refer to verses 1 Thes 4:13-18, 1Cor 15:51-55, Jn 14:1-3. The saints are being blessed by being taken up, without a corresponding punishment of non-believers. In the passages where Jesus returns with a great deal of noise and visibility, He is not only coming to gather His people to Himself, but also to pass judgment on the wicked. This seems to be enough differentiation between the Rapture- only passages and the second advent passages to strongly imply they are two separate events. Therefore, a pre- or mid-Trib Rapture becomes a genuine possibility. Passages referring to escaping the wrath of God adds additional support and strength to the position.

The mid-Tribulationists need to prove the same things the pre-Tribulationists need to prove, but also have the added responsibility of equating the Last Trump with the seventh trumpet in the trumpet judgments. It's obvious the events on Earth occurring in the timeframe of the seventh trumpet are judgments from God. However, it is also clear the events we have covered during the sixth seal are also judgments from God. The question then remains concerning the day of God's wrath. When exactly is that? We have determined earlier Seal 6 is most likely the midpoint of the Tribulation period. One can argue against this point, but for our analysis, it will logically provide the best guess for a midpoint event. Does the mid-Trib Rapture have to happen dead-center of the seven-year Tribulation period? No, it does not. It actually depends on how you define mid-Trib. Earlier we said we were going to give it the most lenient definition and say it is any time after the Tribulation starts. We can do this because the pre-Trib-believers expect the Rapture before the Tribulation starts, while the post-Trib-believers expect the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation. This nicely leaves the middle ground, the entire Trib, for the mid-Trib supporters. Significant issues remain

with the mid-Trib supporters when we discuss escaping God's wrath. The seventh trumpet puts us a good deal past the expression of God's wrath on the Earth.

Post-Trib:

The post-Tribulationists have the strong argument a Rapture will happen at the end of the Tribulation period. Their point is supported by 1Th 4:16, Mat 24, Luke 21:27 and other Scriptures. Therefore the post-Trib advocates feel the Rapture and the second coming (advent) are one event. Many of the second advent Scriptures also talk about setting up the millennial kingdom on Earth. All of this is a pretty convincing argument for a Rapture event happening after the Tribulation.

A primary issue with the post-Trib theory, however, has to do with reconciling Scriptures which say God's people will escape the coming wrath. There may be many ways to circumvent this, including a variety of church hiding and shielding theories, but none are very strong, and all rely on interpretive Scripture reading. Yes, God protected Noah and his family in the ark, and yes, God also protected the nation of Israel in Egypt from the plagues, but in our scripture-to-scripture method, this does not quite prove the point. I'm not saying that these are not good arguments, but they just don't fit our agreed upon method of trying to determine when the rapture will happen through a strict scripture word analysis.

Consider the argument the post-Tribulation Rapture concept is the most beneficial to believers since it prepares them to endure unbelievable hardships in life and not fall away when persecution and natural disasters in the world threaten their lives. Expecting to die for your faith builds a strength which disaster and extreme persecution will not weaken. These will be solid Christians who will be battle-hardened and ready when the Tribulation comes. This is very much like the military strategy of the U.S. Marines. Train for the worst possible conditions and, when they come, you will survive and prevail. It's easy to see the benefit of that reasoning in strengthening believers and minimizing the chance

they will fall out of faith when hard times come.

It's said the pre-Tribulation belief will lead to weak Christians because it teaches we will not have to go through the Tribulation at all. If the Rapture tarries, the pre-Trib believers will weaken in faith and potentially be discouraged, and fall away from their beliefs if they have to go through impossibly hard times. That could be a valid argument.

Personally, I'm not buying the arguments. Christians are humans too, and subject to moments of failure under stress. Both the above concepts mechanize people and do not allow for great strength mixed with great weakness in the same person. We are neither battle-hardened marines, nor are we snowflakes.

Topics having to do with obtaining your salvation are non-negotiable. They are what they are, and we pin our faith to them. This leaves quite a few scriptures we can agree to disagree on. Like many other non-salvation topics, does the decision have to be either black or white? Is there room for any middle ground? Does it all have to be one way or another? I don't think so.

Get out the torches and pitchforks:

This brings us back to which of our three Rapture arguments is the correct one. How can so many brilliant people throughout the church age have such opposing views on this topic? How can Scripture contradict itself?

Concerning our very bright forefathers, as well as some of the scriptural giants of today having different viewpoints, it seems as if some of the disagreement is the hardening of positions and entrenching themselves with favorite scriptures which prove their point. While it may be true people are still people throughout the ages, and are subject to all of the errors and foibles of humanity, there is still sufficient evidence to conclude that it is not impossible (carefully avoiding those words 'entirely possible') there will be more than one Rapture (in my mind at this point I hear a gigantic gasp and people calling for torches and pitchforks). If this were the only support for multiple Raptures, I

would leave it alone and wait to see what actually happens. As it is, though, we've already stated that if a review of scripture seems to contain conflicting statements, it is most likely our interpretation of what the Bible is actually saying is being skewed by our education and beliefs. I choose to believe the Holy Spirit is always right on the mark with His statements, and it is we who are not interpreting His words as they should be.

There is strong evidence for both a pre-Tribulation and a post-Tribulation Rapture when the Scriptures are examined with an open mind. Additionally, there is good evidence for a mid-Trib Rapture. Okay, now you can call for the raging villagers.

As far as the expediency of Jesus's imminent return, everyone should expect His return at any moment, and make themselves ready. This means your lives must be in order and your faith in Him strong. It also means you should expect to be persecuted for your faith and endure hardships, even if the actual Tribulation has not started. Revelation chapters 3 and 22 say Jesus is coming quickly.

Revelation 3:11 *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."*

Revelation 22:7 *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed [is] he that keepeth the sayings of the prophesy of this book."*

Revelation 22:12 *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*

Revelation 22:20 *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

In Titus 2:12-13 Paul says that we should look for the glorious appearing of Christ *"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;" His words have a feeling of immediacy and expectancy.

Matthew 24:44 says *“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”*

So, putting the scriptures together, we see:

- Jesus is coming quickly
- We are to look for Him
- He will come unexpectedly.

Okay, that’s not too hard to keep straight.

It could just be my way of thinking, but if I were to live into the time of the Tribulation, I would undoubtedly expect Jesus to come soon. We would all probably chart the nightly world news and events against the backdrop of Biblical prophecy to tell where we were in the final years of history.

Given that Scripture is not crystal clear about exactly when the Rapture will take place, we can safely say in those turbulent times we could realistically look for the Rapture at any time.

All well and good, but as Matthew 24:44 says, *“therefore be also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man cometh.”*

This could indicate a pre-Tribulation Rapture. This verse would certainly not apply in a world which has been racked by global warfare, starvation, plagues, and environmental catastrophes. With those events happening around us, we would most assuredly be looking for the return of the Son of Man. Prior to the start of the Tribulation we could still understand Jesus is coming quickly, we should look for His imminent return, and, like the bridesmaids awaiting the arrival of the groom, we should keep our lamps filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit and our wicks trimmed at all times, ready to receive the Bridegroom when He comes.

Whenever God pours out his wrath on unbelievers, he always makes provision to move his people out of the way first. He did this for Noah. He did this for Lot when he left Sodom and

Gomorrah. There is no reason to believe that he would not do it for us too.

This in no way, shape, or form implies the church will not go through tremendous persecution. Even today the newspapers are full of stories of Christians losing their lives for their faith, and being beheaded for their belief in Christ. Whatever your personal belief in the timing of the Rapture, you absolutely **MUST** ensure you are ready to leave this planet at all times. Should the Rapture not come when you planned, be prepared to live through the most difficult times the world has ever seen and to give your very life for your belief that Jesus is the Son of God and your Savior and Redeemer.

In the final analysis, this is all that really matters. Life is but a vapor which is here for a moment, and then gone. Eternity is forever. In his book *Heaven*, Randy Alcorn explains our life on Earth is much like a short layover stop when flying from coast to coast. Picture we are flying from one rather small and run down home on the East coast to a mansion on the West coast. We can keep the mansion forever. On the way, our airplane makes a brief stop in Dallas. Would we tell people how excited we are to have a layover in Dallas? Would we make long-term plans to stay there and get used to living in the airport? No, of course we wouldn't. That would be just ridiculous. All of our attention and planning would be for our new home in California. Similarly, this Earth is a short layover on our way to Heaven (or more precisely, the New Earth). Why would we spend so much time worrying about this short stopover? Our focus should be on our permanent home. If we are Raptured pre-Tribulation, post-Tribulation, or if we die before any Rapture(s), what is the difference when our blink-of-an-eye time on Earth is compared to our real life for all eternity in Heaven? Prepare for Heaven and leave the actual timing of the Rapture in God's most capable hands. Enjoy your life here, but keep your traveling bags packed.

Above all, remember God is always in charge. Nothing happens on the entire planet surprises Him. He knows when we will be

Raptured, and He knows when Jesus is returning. Our job is to keep ourselves spiritually clean and ready if there is a pre-Trib Rapture. Steel our minds and our will to endure the hardships if there is a Mid or Post-trib Rapture. And always remember God is in charge and loves us beyond anything we could ever imagine. In the following verses, Jesus is praying to the Father. He says we are all rolled up in Him and in the Father and He wants us to be with Him forever. That makes the whole controversy of when the Rapture will happen fall by the wayside. It shifts our focus to what is crucial; being one with Jesus and the Father. Make peace with your brother, and deal with each other in the love of Christ. As we said, nothing else really matters in the long run.

John 17:21-24 *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

Let's put aside petty arguments and discussions, and focus on our oneness in Christ in the way He prayed just hours before His death. What could be more important than that? Be at peace with one another.

I'll see you top-side.