

Understanding the End Times

The most important thing

Friends, as we look into these glorious truths concerning the End-Times, we must never forget the most important thing, that is Love. Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Paul said the same thing over and over, such as Gal 5:6-"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." John's epistles resound the same glorious truth, love is truly the greatest of all, it never fails. This is truly what it means to be ready for the Lord's return, that is to be a person of Love. It is the nature of God himself, and it is the desired fruit he is producing in the true vine. I urge you friends, bear with the failings of the weak, encourage the downcast, serve one another in love, and for Christ's sake, esteem one another more highly than yourself, for this was the attitude of Christ Jesus who died for your sin and for mine. To him be the Glory forever. Won't you thank him for his great love toward us. We are the instruments of his peace in this present age, so seek peace and pursue it, set your minds on things above, against such things there is no law. Friends where is our compassion and humility, are we not the ones whom Christ snatched from the burning flames, are we not the ones who have been given every spiritual blessing in Christ, and that by no merit of our own. We are, and as we see the Day approaching we should clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and be that people to the praise of his glorious grace. Come quickly Lord Jesus!

Defining Terms

SECOND COMING

Christ's future return to the earth at the end of the present age. Although the Bible explicitly speaks of Christ's appearance as a "second time," the phrase "[second coming](#)" occurs nowhere in the New Testament. Many passages, however, speak of His return. In fact, in the New Testament alone it is referred to over 300 times.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus told His apostles that He would return <John 14:3>. When Jesus ascended into heaven, two angels appeared to His followers, saying that He would return in the same manner as they had seen Him go <Acts 1:11>. The New Testament is filled with expectancy of His coming, even as Christians should be today.

Various opinions exist about what is meant by the Second Coming. Some regard it as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of PENTECOST. Others regard it as the coming of Christ into the heart at conversion. Christ's coming for the believer at the time of death is still another view. Careful examination of the New Testament, however, makes it clear that the Second Coming will be a climactic historical event. The Lord will return in the same manner in which He left. His coming will be personal, bodily, and visible.

The time of the Second Coming is unknown. In fact, Jesus stated that only the Father knew the time. Therefore, the return of the Lord should be a matter of constant expectancy. As He came the first time, in the "fullness of time" <Gal. 4:4>, so will the Second Coming be. The believer's task is not to try to determine the time of the Second Coming. We should share the gospel message diligently until He returns <Acts 1:8-11>.(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

2 Pet 3:11-14- Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

THE MILLENNIUM

The thousand-year period mentioned in connection with the description of Christ's coming to reign with His saints over the earth <Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-9>. Many Old Testament passages refer to the millennium <Is. 11:4; Jer. 3:17; Zech. 14:9>.

These and many other Old Testament passages are often taken to refer only to the thousand-year period itself. However, it is often difficult in these passages to see a clear dividing line between the earthly period of the millennium and the eternal state of new heavens and earth. Therefore, it is best to let one's teaching about the millennium be drawn specifically from the words in <Revelation 20>. The other great promises to Israel, while they have a temporary fulfillment

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in the thousand years, still await the fullness of the new heavens and new earth and the unhindered presence of Israel's king and the church's husband-- Jesus Christ our Lord.

During that thousand-year period, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit so he will not deceive the nations until his short period of release <Rev. 20:3,7-8>. The faithful martyrs who have died for the cause of Christ will be resurrected before the millennium. They will rule with Christ and will be priests of God and Christ <Rev. 5:10; 20:4>. The unbelieving dead will wait for the second resurrection <Rev. 20:5>. After the thousand years, Satan will be released and will resume his work of deceit <Rev. 20:7-8>.

The most important aspect of the millennium is the reign of Christ. Peter taught that Christ now rules from the right hand of God <Acts 2:33-36>. That rule will last until His enemies are made His footstool <Ps. 110:1>. The apostle Paul also understood Christ to be presently reigning in a period designed to bring all of God's enemies underfoot <1 Cor. 15:25-27>. Thus the impact of Christ's present rule over the earth from God's right hand must not be seen as unrelated to His future reign during the millennium.

The millennium is viewed by interpreters in several different ways. One position holds that the millennium only refers to Christ's spiritual rule today from heaven. This symbolic view is known as the amillennial interpretation. Another position views Christ's spiritual rule as working through preaching and teaching to bring gradual world improvement leading up to Christ's return. This is the postmillennial view.

The position that holds to an actual thousand year period in the future is known as the premillennial view. This interpretation does not diminish the power of Christ's present rule from heaven or limit that rule to the church only. That position sees the need for a thousand-year place in history for an earthly fulfillment of Israel's promises of land and blessing. It stresses that the one thousand years in <Revelation 20> are actual years and are not symbolic.

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Premillennialism- The belief that Christ will return before the millenium and actually establish a physical Davidic Kingdom which he will rule from Jerusalem. This also will be the time of the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies to the nation Israel, which will at this time be saved and restored to the entire original Abrahamic inheritance. (Rev 20:1-9, Jer 3:16-18, Gen 15:9-21) It should be noted that there are many differences between premillennialists on various issues, typically concerning the time of the rapture and other key end-time events.

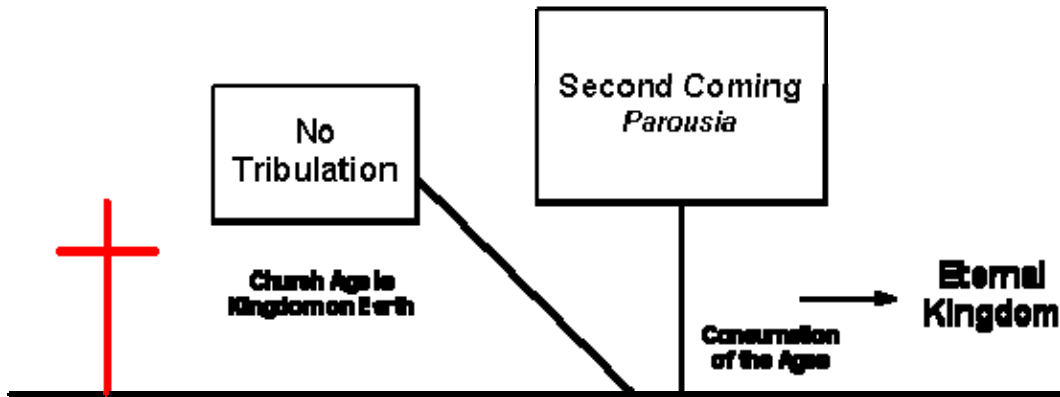
See Premillennialism Chart Below

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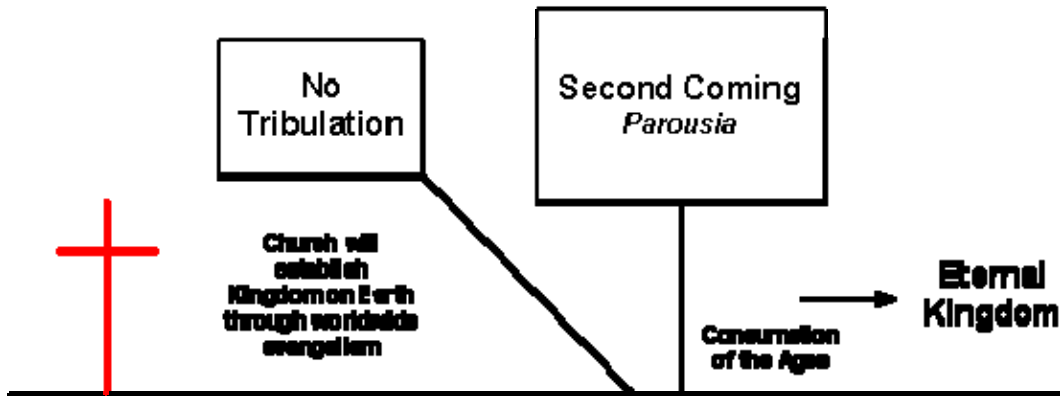
Amillennialism- Amillennialism is the belief that Christ will not establish a physical kingdom on earth but rather the church age is the fulfillment of the millenium. It typically assumes that Christ will bring the final judgment and eternal state at his [Second Coming](#). (Rev 20:1-15) Again there are differences between amillennial believers on various issues.

Post-Millennialism- Postmillennialism is the belief that the Kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit, that the world will eventually be Christianized, and that the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the millenium. These events will be followed by the resurrection, judgment and the eternal state. Again there are differences between postmillennial believers on different issues.

Amillennialism

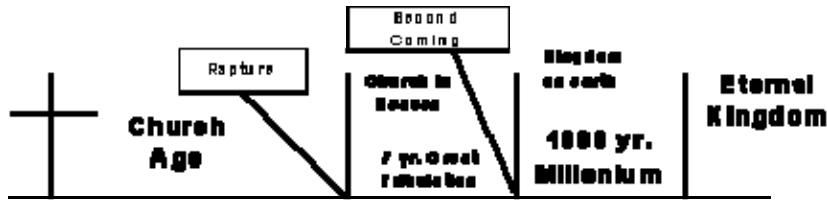


Postmillennialism

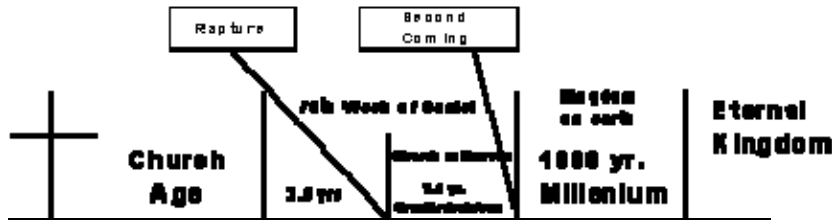


Premillennialism - Four Views

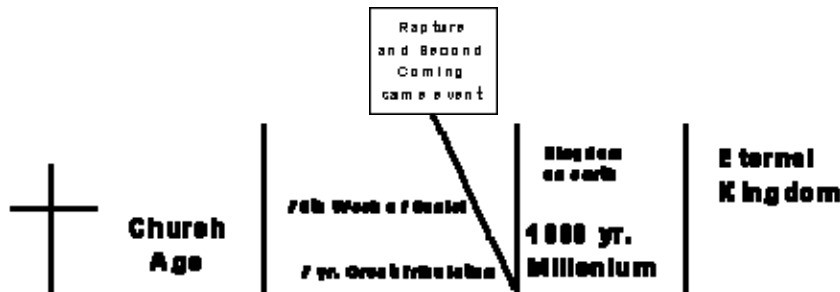
Pretribulational View



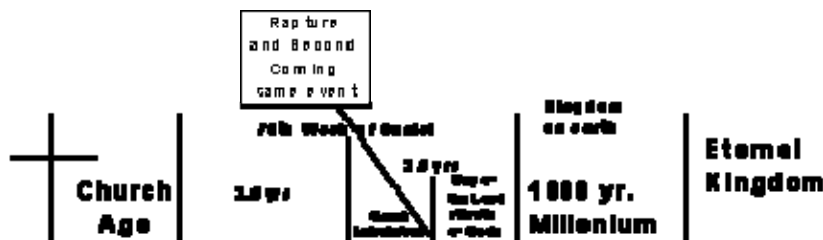
Midtribulational View



Posttribulational View



Pre-Wrath View



THE GREAT TRIBULATION

A short but intense period of distress and suffering at the end of time. The exact phrase, the great tribulation, is found

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only once in the Bible <Rev. 7:14>. The great tribulation is to be distinguished from the general tribulation a believer faces in the world <Matt. 13:21; John 16:33; Acts 14:22>. **It is also to be distinguished from God's specific wrath upon the unbelieving world at the end of the age** <Mark 13:24; Rom. 2:5-10; 2 Thes. 1:6>.

The great tribulation fulfills Daniel's prophecies <Daniel 7--12>. It will be a time of evil from false christs and false prophets <Mark 13:22> when natural disasters will occur throughout the world.(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

In the following references we will see exactly what the bible has to say concerning the Great Tribulation period. It is mentioned in direct reference seven times. Each time we are given a little bit more insight into what it is all about. Remember to use what the bible says for your frame of reference, and not some traditional form of teaching. The bible is crystal clear on these issues. The question is not what bible texts do we use to support our position, but does our position line up with the entire biblical account.

Daniel 12:1-2

- Time of distress(greatest ever)
- Daniel's people are defined (everyone who's name is written in the book)
- Deliverance (where many are raised from the dead, and judged)
- At that time(what time?, see comments)

Jeremiah 30:7

- Trouble (none will be like it)
- Jacob (the nation of Israel)
- Deliverance

Matthew 24:21-22

- great distress (KJV,NASV great tribulation)
- none will be like it
- this time will be cut short for the sake of the elect

Matthew 24:29-31

- this time period is " immediately after the distress (or tribulation) of those days"
- Signs in the heavens (ref. Isaiah 13:9-11, 34:2-4, Heb 12:26, Rev 6:12-17)
- Deliverance out of this time for the elect (after the distress)
- all the nations of the earth will see him coming to gather his elect
- loud trumpet call
- from the four winds

Mark 13:19

- great distress (tribulation)
- none will be like it

Luke 21:23

- great distress (or Tribulation)
- wrath against this people

Luke 21:25-28

- Signs in the sun, moon and stars
- Men's anguish and perplexity
- Heavenly bodies shaken
- Son of man coming in power and glory(parallels Matt 24:31, Mark 13:26-27)
- Redemption(in him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins)

Notice that in none of these accounts is the wrath of God toward sinful man ever even mentioned. What we do see is a time of distress or tribulation centered around the rise of the Antichrist to power. When he is revealed he will cause astounding devastation and succeed at whatever he does(Dan 8:24). His goals are accomplished in the location of Jerusalem, therefore this will be the center of his(Antichrist's) wrath and a place of tremendous tribulation. Moreover, this time period does not exclude Christians but rather they are warned specifically not to be deceived by these events and also told that these days would be cut short for the sake of the elect(a term referring to Christians in the New Testament). In fact, the accounts of Matt 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are spoken directly to the church warning them that all these events would happen, and they are exhorted not to be deceived by false christs or false prophets(there will be many at that time) and then told of their deliverance from it all at the [second coming](#) of Christ in an event called the

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[rapture.(the term rapture is not actually used in the bible, but is used to refer to this event)(Matt 24:31, Mark 13:27, Luke 21:28).] The same event is referred to in the passage in Daniel 12:1-2, the deliverance of Daniel's people(everyone who's name is found written in the book), at which time the dead will be raised and their will be deliverance for God's people.

This event , the Great Tribulation, is widely confused with the time period of God's wrath against the world and the unforgiven sinners within it, referred to in the bible as the Day of the Lord. The Great Tribulation and the wrath of God are two separate events which happen at different times, this is what the bible clearly teaches. Understanding these key events is paramount to understanding the whole end time picture.

THE RAPTURE

The term rapture is an expression for the Greek word harpazo. At the end of the age, Christ will return to the air and take with him to heaven every person-both living and dead- who has trusted Christ as Savior. These believers are said to be "caught up", (harpazo), in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air(1 Thess 4:17). At this event the dead believers will rise first, followed in an instant of time by living Christians. In this instant, these individuals will receive resurrection bodies which will be free from corruption and death, they will put on immortality.(2 Cor 5, 1 Cor 15:52-54)

The following scriptures all refer to the event we call the **rapture, which is the first resurrection-**

1Thes 4:15-17-According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

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

Mark 13:26-27-"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

1 Cor 15:51-54-Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

Isa 26:19-21-But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer.

Col 3:4-When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Daniel 12:1-3-"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people-- everyone whose name is found written in the book-- will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Job 19:25-27-I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Phil 3:20-21-But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

These passages have several similarities such as the trumpet of God, the gathering of God's elect, and language referring to a resurrection.(Matt 24:31, 1 Thess 4:16, 1 Cor 15:52). These will help you to see these events referred to in other places in the scripture. The term "four winds" speaks of not only the physical realm, but also of the spiritual (Matt 24:31). This directly parallels the account in Mark which says "from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens".

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This speaks of the dead being raised just as 1 Thes 4:16-17 and 1 Cor 15:51-54 as well as Isaiah 26:19-20 and Daniel 12:1-3.

This event we call the rapture is directly preceded by "signs in the heavens", as clearly portrayed by the passages in Matt 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13. These passages also clearly point out that the rapture is preceded by several other events such as persecution, a falling away or apostasy, the rise of Antichrist and the abomination of desolation. Moreover, it will be an event witnessed by every person on earth (Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27, Matt 24:30, Rev 1:7).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

A special day at the end of time when God's will and purpose for mankind and His world will be fulfilled. Many Bible students believe the Day of the Lord will be a long period of time rather than a single day-- a period when Christ will reign throughout the world before He cleanses heaven and earth in preparation for the eternal state of all mankind. But others believe the Day of the Lord will be an instantaneous event when Christ will return to earth to claim His faithful believers while consigning unbelievers to eternal damnation.

<Amos 5:18-20> is probably the earliest occurrence in Scripture of the phrase, "Day of the Lord." According to Amos, that day would be a time of great darkness for any in rebellion against God, whether Jew or Gentile. The day would be a time of judgment <Is. 13:6,9; Jer. 46:10>, as well as restoration <Is. 14:1; Joel 2:28-32>.

Mal 4:5- "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

2 Pet 3:10- But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and ***the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.***

Zeph 1:2-3- "***I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth,***" declares the LORD. "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I ***cut off man from the face of the earth,***" declares the LORD.

Zeph 1:14-18- "The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like filth. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them ***on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth.***"

Isa 24:1-6- See, ***the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it;*** he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants-- it will be the same for priest as for people, for master as for servant, for mistress as for maid, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. ***Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.***

Isa 13:9-11- See, the day of the LORD is coming- a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger-- to make the land desolate and ***destroy the sinners within it.*** The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. ***I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins.*** I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.

Jer 25:31-33- The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth, for ***the LORD will bring charges against the nations;*** he ***will bring judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword,***" declares the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Look! Disaster is spreading from nation to nation; a mighty storm is rising from the ends of the earth." ***At that time those slain by the LORD will be everywhere-- from one end of the earth to the other.*** They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground.

More references to the day of the Lord -(Revelation 6:12-13, 14:19-20, 16, Isaiah 26:21,34:1-4,66:15-16, Jeremiah 25:29-33, Joel 2:10-11, 2:28-32, 3:13-16)

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This time period called ***the Day of the Lord is to be distinguished from the Great tribulation***. In the passages we just examined, the Great tribulation was never once mentioned. The **Great Tribulation** is a time of **men's wrath toward men**. The **Day of the Lord** is a time of **God's wrath directed toward a sinful and unbelieving world**, and it will be a time of dreadful terror from which the world will not recover. In fact, God will recreate a New earth and a new order of things upon the earth wherein will dwell righteousness and peace. This is not an opinion but rather, as you have seen for yourself, what the bible clearly teaches.

Notice the signs in the heavens mentioned again and again in these passages. This will help you to see this event in other places in the scripture (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, Rev 6 and many others).

FALLING AWAY

One of the key events to take place just before the return of Christ is a falling away from the faith or apostasy. The turning from the true faith, or falling away from the truth of God. Jesus makes it abundantly clear that this will happen during a time of tremendous persecution of the church. He says, (Matt 24:9-12) "At that time" referring to the preceding verses speaking of this persecution. He goes on to say that at this time many will betray and hate each other and that the love of most would grow cold. Paul clearly says the same thing in 2 Thess 2:1-4, that **the coming of Jesus and our being gathered to him** would not happen until **two things** happen;

- 1. The rebellion**[or apostasy, (Greek word 'apostasia' meaning apostasy from the true faith, to fall away or forsake)] **occurs**
- 2. The man of lawlessness**(or antichrist, son of perdition, little horn) **be revealed**

II Thess 2:1-4- Concerning ***the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him***, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, ***for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed***, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Matt 24:4-14- Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time **many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. **Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold**, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

1 Tim 4:1- In the lasts days, men will depart from the faith-

2 Tim 3:1-5- But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- having a **form of godliness but denying its power**. Have nothing to do with them.

Paul here in writing to Timothy warns of this time to come, saying that its people will have a form of godliness but deny its power. In other words they are a very religious people, but their religion has little value in the ability to produce God's holiness and character in them. They claim to be in the light, yet walk in darkness. Friends, we must be on our guard that these things do not come upon us. Let us hear the Word of God and its warning concerning this great tragedy. Let us be quick to obey His Word. May we be "effectual doers" of the Word. (Heb 10:33-39, Luke 8:13, Luke 21:31-36, Jude 5-6)

IMMINENCY

Imminency is the belief that the Lord could return at any moment. This clearly contradicts the Word of God. This does not in any way mean that we are not eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord, for this is our great hope(Titus 2:13). It simply means that the Lord has given us ample warning of the events preceding his return so that we will not be led

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astray, and that our faith will be proved genuine until the coming of our great God and Savior. As the Lord has said "he who endures till the end will be saved".

Matt 24:24-25- "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible. **See, I have told you ahead of time.**"

Reasons why imminency cannot be reality

1. The falling away must take place first.(2 Thess 2:1-4, Matt 24:10)
2. The Antichrist must first be revealed, rise to power, and accomplish his goals. (2 Thess 2:1-4, Daniel 7:21-25, 8:23-25,11:31-12:7, Rev 13:5-18)
3. The gospel must be preached "in the whole world to all nations" (Matt 24:14, Mark 13:10)
4. The Abomination of Desolation must first take place. (Matt 24:15, Mark 13:14,2 Thess 2:3, Daniel 9:27)

ANTICHRIST

A false prophet and evil being who will set himself up against Christ and the people of God in the last days before the [SECOND COMING](#). The term is used only in the writings of John in the New Testament. It refers to one who stands in opposition to all that Jesus Christ represents <1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 7>. John wrote that several antichrists existed already in his day--false teachers who denied the deity and the incarnation of Christ-- but that the supreme Antichrist of history would appear at some future time.

The Antichrist's primary work is deception, which also characterizes SATAN in his attempts to undermine the work of God in the world. Satan's deception began in the Garden of Eden <Genesis 3> and will continue until the end of time. The DRAGON (or serpent) of <Revelation 12> is Satan, the Serpent mentioned in <Genesis 3>. Thus the thread of Satan's deceptive work may be traced from Genesis through Revelation. That work reaches its climax in the Antichrist, who receives his authority and power from the dragon, Satan <Rev. 13:4>.

The work of Satan through the Antichrist is clearly rooted in the prophecies of Daniel. Daniel spoke of a dreadful beast with ten horns and one little horn <Dan. 7:7-8>. The Ancient of Days will kill the beast and throw it in the fire <Dan. 7:11>. Then, according to Daniel, one like the Son of Man will receive the everlasting kingdom <Dan. 7:13-14>.

He will speak arrogant, boastful words; and he will be aided by a FALSE PROPHET, who will make the entire earth worship him <Rev. 13:11-12> and receive his mark <Rev. 13:16-17>. The number of the beast, says John, is 666--a mysterious code name.

Those who worship the Antichrist will experience certain doom through the wrath of God <Rev. 14:9-11>. The Antichrist makes war against Christ and His army, but he is captured and is "cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" <Rev. 19:20>. He is later joined by the DEVIL; together they "will be tormented day and night forever and ever" <Rev. 20:10>. The devil, the BEAST (or Antichrist), and the false prophet form a kind of unholy trinity, counterfeiting Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. After much wickedness and suffering has been loosed against Christ and His people, the satanic rebellion will be crushed by the power of God.

Although the apostle Paul does not use the term Antichrist, he surely had the Antichrist in mind when he wrote of the great apostasy, or falling away, that would occur before the return of Christ <2 Thes. 2:1-12>. The Antichrist is also called the lawless one <v. 9> who, empowered and inspired by Satan, will lead the final rebellion against God <v. 3>, (NEB), but will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Paul urges believers to stand firm in the faith and not be deceived by the Antichrist who will display "all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders" <2 Thes. 2:9>, (NIV).

The main reason the Bible discusses the Antichrist is not to encourage idle speculation, but to warn believers not to be misled by his deceit <Matt. 24:4-5,23-24>. The times when the Antichrist will appear will be very hard for the faithful. They need to be prepared with special instructions on how to deal with this unsettling event.

WHAT DANIEL SAYS ABOUT ANTICHRIST

Dan 7:19-28-

1. Eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.(Rev 13:5-6)
2. Wages war against the saints and defeats them.(Dan 8:24-

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25, Matt 24:15-22, Rev 13:7)

3. Fourth kingdom will devour the whole earth, it will be global.(Rev 13:1-13, Dan 2:40)
4. He will be a king or ruler.(Dan 8:23, 11:31-40, Rev 13:5-17)
5. He will speak against the Most high(Dan 11:36, 2 Thess 2:4)
6. He will oppress God's saints or holy ones(Dan 11:30-40, Rev 13:7)
7. Saints are handed over to him for 3.5 yrs.(Dan 12:7, Rev 13:5)
8. His power will be taken away and destroyed forever.(Dan 8:25,7:11,2 Thess 2:8,Rev 19:20)
9. The saints will be given sovereignty and power forever.(Rev 20:1-7, Matt 25:34)

Dan 8:9-26-

1. Takes away the daily sacrifice and makes his sanctuary low.(Dan 11:31,12:11)
2. Because of rebellion, the saints are handed over and the truth is thrown down to the ground.(2Thes 2:3,Dan 7:21-25,Rev 13:7)
3. He becomes strong, but not by his own power.(Rev 13:4, 17:12-13)
4. Causes astounding devastation and succeeds at whatever he does.(Matt 24:15-22, 2 Thess 2:3-12, Rev 13:3-17)
5. Destroys the mighty men and the holy people.(Dan 7:25, 8:10-12, Rev 16:6, 17:6)
6. Causes deceit to prosper(2 Thes 2:8-12, Rev 13:3-9)
7. He considers himself superior(Dan 8:11, 11:31-36, 2 Thes 2:3)
8. When they feel secure, he will destroy many.(Dan 11:21)
9. He will be destroyed but not by human power(Rev 19:20, Dan 7:11, 2 thes 2:8)
10. Vision concerns the time of the end

Dan 9:26-27-

1. His people will destroy the city and the sanctuary.
2. Abolishes the daily sacrifice and sets up the abomination of desolation(2 Thes 2:3-4, Matt 4:15-22, Dan 11:31)
3. He will confirm a covenant for 7 yrs. and in the middle of that time period he will set up the abomination of desolation.

Dan 11:28-38-

1. He will vent his fury against the holy covenant.
2. Abolishes the daily sacrifice and sets up the abomination of desolation.
3. People who know their God will resist him and instruct many, but many will fall and be refined.
4. He will magnify himself above God and say unheard of things against God.
5. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed.

Reasons why the saints in Daniel refer to the church?

1. The saints in Daniel 7:21-25 directly parallel the saints in Revelation 13:5-7.
2. Daniel's people are clearly defined in chapter 12:1 as "all whose names are found written in the book." This directly parallels Revelation 13:7-8. Revelation 13 is clearly speaking of people in this age, defining them as "those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."(Rev 12:17, 14:12)
3. The saints in Daniel 7 are to possess the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heavens and are referred to as the people of the Most High. This is clearly Jesus promise to the church.(Matt 25:34, Rev 2:26-27, 3:21)
4. Jesus makes it clear in Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 that the church will see the rise of anti christ to power and the events which follow, and the people involved in Daniel 7, 8, 11, 12 are referred to as the holy people, the people of the Most High, and the holy covenant. There is only one "Holy people", and one "Holy covenant" and they are both sanctified by the blood of the Perfect Son of God.
5. The saints of Daniel 8:12 directly parallel 2 Thes 2:3 and Matt 24:10. Because of rebellion, ["**the falling away**"], the saints are given over to it and the truth is thrown down to the ground. Furthermore, Jesus makes reference to the church being the salt of the earth, and then says that if it loses its saltiness it is good for nothing but to be thrown down and trampled underfoot.
6. The holy people of Daniel 8 and the holy covenant of Daniel 11, refer to the same people who are under the persecution of the antichrist in Daniel 7. As we have already pointed out, the saints of Daniel 7 are the saints of Rev 13.

OLIVET DISCOURSE-Jesus' teaching of last things

Reasons why the Olivet discourse is written not only to the Jewish disciples, but also to the Church, the disciples of Christ?

1. If the book of Matthew is written to the Jews and not the church, how then can we as Christians claim any of its promises?(Matt 11:28-29, 13, 18:3, 19:26, 28:18) Furthermore, since when do we pick and choose which scripture that we want to speak to us and which scripture is not for us? Danger! If we used this practice we could make the bible say anything we want.
2. The question of Matt 24:3, Mark 13:4, Luke 21:7, was asked by Jesus disciples and addressed to them.
3. The statement, "watch out that no one deceives you" is a statement referring to the church for the Jew is already deceived having rejected Christ. Therefore Jesus is addressing believers.
4. Matt 24:9, Mark 13:13 says that you will persecuted and hated by all nations because of Christ. How will the Jews be hated because of Christ? Jesus is addressing believers.
5. Matt 24:10 says that many will turn away from the faith, and that many false prophets would arise and deceive many. These are terms referring to Christianity. Likewise the following verse that the gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in the whole world.
6. Matt 24:22, Mark 13:20, say that the great tribulation will be cut short for the sake of the elect. The term elect is used to refer to the church throughout the New Testament and never once refers to the physical line of Israel.(Rom 11:7)
7. The Olivet discourse is recorded not only in Matthew but also in Mark and Luke, and these are clear teachings directed to those who partake in the Kingdom of God through Christ.

The Sign of His Coming and of the End of the Age

A Chronology of End Time Events by Jesus Christ

Matthew 24:4-31

The Beginning of birth pains

4 Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ!' and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the **end is still to come**. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 **All these are the beginning of birth pains**.

THEN

Persecution

9 "Then **you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death**, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

AT THAT TIME

Falling Away

10 **At that time many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and **then the end will come**.

THEN THE END WILL COME

The Great Tribulation

15 "So when you see standing in the holy place '**the abomination that causes desolation**,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel let the reader understand- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For **then there will be great tribulation**, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

26 "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS

Signs in the Heavens

29 "**Immediately after the tribulation** of those days
"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

AT THAT TIME

Rapture

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. **They will see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will **gather his elect** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

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1. The words "beginning" v-8, "then" v-9,21, "at that time" v-10,30, "immediately after" v-29, are all chronological indicators giving us a detailed sequence of these events. These do not indicate the day or the hour of his return, but they clearly outline the sequence of events leading up to it.
2. Since this discourse is spoken to the church as we have already examined, let us not overlook that we will see all of these things leading up to his return.
3. The purpose of Christ's teaching here is expressed in v-4, v-25, v-26, v-42. It is that we would not be deceived concerning these events because at this time in history the deception will be so strong that even the very elect would be deceived if that we possible, see I have told you ahead of time, said Jesus v-25.

Chronology of Matthew 24



4. Jesus makes it clear that Noah (Matt 24:37-39) is a type of these events. People were going about life just as they would normally, until the flood came and took them all away. Not even Noah knew the day or hour, but he knew it was getting close because he was loading the animals on the Ark. Consider this passage in **Luke 17:26-35**- "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage **up to the day** Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But **the day** Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. **"It will be just like this** on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." Jesus said very clearly that the Day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down.

Likewise with Noah, the day he entered the Ark, the flood came and took them all away. This is totally consistent with the Olivet Discourse. Jesus says, v-30, "At that time (the time of the preceding verse 29 of the signs in the heavens, or the Day of the Lord), the Lord will send forth his angels to gather his elect from the four winds. He will then rain down destruction from heaven and none will escape.

5. He tells us then to keep watch, for we do not know the day. So v-44 we must be ready.

6. The **parable of the ten virgins** (Matt 25) then tells us how to be ready. The five virgins with the oil in their lamps are ready for the Lord's return and are saved, taken to be with the bridegroom. But the foolish virgins are **left behind**, not to be saved, but shut out from the kingdom. They are unsaved, the bridegroom pronounces, Matt 25:11-12 - 11 "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' 12 "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, ***I don't know you.***' This parable clearly teaches that those who are left behind after the bridegroom comes do not know Christ and cannot be saved. They call out "Sir open the do for us" but Christ answers, "I don't know you."

7. The parable of the talents clearly explains the fruits of genuine salvation so that we may examine our lives to know that we are ready.

Another insight from Luke

Consider this profound scripture found in Luke.

Luke 13:24-27-

"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because **many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.** ***Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside***

Understanding the End Times

knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'" Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!' (NIV)

Using the very same language of Matthew 24 concerning the owner of the house and being ready for his return, the Lord now tells us what it will be like after he returns. "You will stand outside knocking and pleading, Sir open to us, but the door will be shut. Now how can we fit the "tribulation saints" in here. We can't because they don't fit. **No one will be saved after the rapture, that is what the bible clearly teaches.** Or can you think of scripture that teaches otherwise? When the Lord shuts the door, no one will open it.

Rev 3:7-8 - 7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and ***what he shuts no one can open.*** NIV

Right now is the Day of salvation and the door of God's lovingkindness and Grace is wide open, and if anyone is thirsty let him come and drink freely of the water of Life. But a day is coming in the near future when the door will be shut and many will stand outside knocking and pleading, but the Lord will answer, "Away from me you evildoers, I never **knew** you." "Can you see the people knocking on the door of the Ark and pleading, open up for us, as the rain began to flood the earth.

SUMMARY

This study is quite condensed and many of these points could be expounded on in great detail, but for the purpose of this study time will not allow. I hope and pray that this brief look at End Times truths has both challenged and encouraged you to seek the Lord and his protection from all these things. Jesus said "pray that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things and stand before the Son of Man".

Friends, these things are a very serious matter and we should be about the business of warning others to find refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know him? Don't kid yourself. Do you really know him and the power of his coming Kingdom? Does it live inside your heart? I pray that it does.

Let us make every effort to be found worthy of the coming King. May we be a people to the praise of his Glory! Amen!

If you have questions, comments, or criticism, please feel free to correspond with me at shaan@heavenlight.org.