

# Understanding the End Times 2017

The Bible has much to say about how the **world will end**, in fact, we know that the world will end because the Bible has prophesied its end. When we study this matter in the Bible we call it **Eschatology**, meaning the **study of the eschaton** (the word used for “**last days**” in the New Testament). In the major sections of the Bible that discuss the **last days**, or “**end times**,” the major event that is in focus is the **Second Coming of Christ**. When we see the **Second Coming** (“**parousia**” is often the Greek for “**coming**”) in many places in the Scripture, a whole host of events and outcomes are prophesied to come to pass. Also, in many **texts**, there are **chronological indicators** that give a **sequence** and order of fulfillment to these events. These texts are, but not limited to Daniel chapters 7-12, Jesus’ **Olivet Discourse** (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), 1Corinthians 15:23-28, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and of course the book of Revelation chapters 6-22. As we piece together the **unfolding** of these **future events** from the study of **end times** or the **last days** (eschatology), we come to have a clearer picture of how the current age will end, when Jesus Christ comes again to **save His people** and **bring judgment** on a world of unbelievers who have rejected His offer of salvation. This study of **Eschatology** is often working at **harmonizing** the **different passages** of **prophecy** that discuss these matters, and gaining a clear picture of what God has said about how the world will come to a **terrible end**, as His judgment is brought to bear upon a world ripe for His wrath, something His prophets have **warned** the **world of people** about for **thousands** of **years**.

In this consideration, one of the clearest and most **chronologically organized texts** is the **book of Revelation**. It has a **section (chapters 6-22)**, that has the **Second Coming of Christ** in view, including the few years leading up to His return (the **Great Tribulation**) and the time period following His return, the **Millennium** and the future **Eternal State**. Chapters 6-19 lay out a somewhat difficult set of visions exposing the few years directly preceding His return called the Great Tribulation, and chapters 19-22 lay out the time following His return, the Millennium and the Eternal State (or Kingdom). Some scholars see chapters 6-19 as picturing the **entire church age**, but that is a **minority view** which shall be given little to no consideration in this study. Because these events are laid out in some **chronology**, they have become the focus of much **discussion** and **controversy**, and therefore the object of much study and the **differing positions** that result from this study of Eschatology. This study will highlight several of these time periods (**The Millennium, Tribulation, Antichrist, resurrections and judgments, and the Eternal State**) and examine biblical texts which speak of them to seek to harmonize and gain a **clear picture** of **end time events**. God has said so much about the close of this age and the age to come, that we can have a **sure knowledge** of these events **generally**, but a little more **difficulty in sorting out** some of the **details**. Many of the details can be **complex** and difficult to understand, but the major general points are rather clear. For example, we **know** that **Christ is coming again** in a **visible, bodily, and earthly return** to **destroy evil** and bring **judgment** on all the **nations of mankind**, and **resurrect His people** of all **ages**, and give them **glorified immortal bodies** and **eternal life**. This is sure and **very clear**. But the exact sequence of events as this unfolds is **not so clear** and this accounts for the **complexity** and **controversy**. Nevertheless, Scripture says much about these issues. Because God has said so much and highlighted these matters in Scripture, this

makes this study of end times an **important matter** for His people to **know**. Theological textbooks almost always include a section discussing **Eschatology** because it is a major doctrine (teaching) from the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

## **Futurism and Preterism**

There are some students of the Bible who believe that many of the events of prophecy have **already happened (Preterism)**, where others believe that there is yet much to take place in the **future (Futurism)**. Below is information provided by Wikipedia with a few modifications.

**Futurism** is a Christian eschatological view that interprets portions of the Book of Revelation, the Book of Daniel, and the Olivet Discourse as future events in a literal, physical, apocalyptic, and global context.

**Preterism** is a Christian eschatological view which interprets some (**Partial Preterism**) or all (**Full Preterism**) prophecies of the Bible as events which have already happened. This school of thought interprets the Book of Daniel as referring to events that happened in the 2nd century BC, while seeing the prophecies of Revelation as events that happened in the first century AD. Preterism holds that Ancient Israel finds its continuation or fulfilment in the Christian Church at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Adherents of preterism are commonly known as **preterists**. Preterism teaches that either all (Full Preterism) or a majority (Partial Preterism) of the Olivet discourse had come to pass by AD 70.

**Partial preterism** - Partial preterism (often referred to as *orthodox preterism* or *classical preterism*) may hold that most eschatological prophecies, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the advent of the Day of the Lord as a "judgment-coming" of Christ, were fulfilled either in AD 70 or during the persecution of Christians under the Emperor Nero. Some **partial preterists** may believe that the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the advent of the Day of the Lord as a "judgment-coming" of Christ, were **not historically fulfilled**. Some partial preterists identify "Babylon the Great" (Revelation 17–18) with the pagan Roman Empire, though some, such as N.T. Wright, David Chilton, and Kenneth Gentry identify it with the city of Jerusalem. Most interpretations identify Nero as the Beast, while his mark is often interpreted as the stamped image of the emperor's head on every coin of the Roman Empire: the stamp on the hand or in the mind of all, without which no one could buy or sell. However, others believe the Book of Revelation was written after Nero's suicide in AD 68, and identify the Beast with another emperor. The Catholic Encyclopedia states that Revelation was "written during the latter part of the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, probably in AD 95 or 96". Many Protestant scholars agree. The Second Coming, resurrection of the dead, and Final Judgment however, have not yet occurred in the partial preterist system.

**Full preterism** - **Full preterism** differs from **partial preterism** in that full preterists believe that the **destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled all eschatological or "end times" events**, including the **resurrection of the dead** and **Jesus' Second Coming**, or *Parousia*, and the Final Judgment. Other names of full preterism include: *preterism* (because the term itself means "past") *consistent preterism*, *true preterism*, *hyper-preterism* (a

pejorative term used by opponents of preterists). Full preterists argue that a literal reading of Matthew 16:28 (where Jesus tells the disciples that some of them will not taste death until they see him coming in his kingdom) places the second coming in the first century. This precludes a physical second coming of Christ. Instead, the second coming is symbolic of a "judgment" against Jerusalem, said to **have taken place with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70**. For this reason, some people also call **full preterism** "the AD 70 Doctrine." Detractors of full preterism often refer to the school as *hyper-preterism*. Many evangelicals regard **full preterism** as **outside of Christian orthodoxy**. [end Wiki articles]

Concerning Preterism, let me simply say a few things. Obviously there are many prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled. Especially parts of the Book of Daniel and the Olivet Discourse. However, both **Daniel** and the **Olivet Discourse** clearly have **future events** in view at the close of this age, when Jesus Second Coming will occur, and many of the events surrounding His coming as well. Even Partial Preterists acknowledge that many prophetic events have yet to occur. Surely the second Coming of Christ, the great Tribulation and the global cataclysmic judgments of Revelation chapters 6-19 have NOT taken place yet. This fact surely puts **full preterism** **outside of Christian orthodoxy** and makes some of the doctrines taught by them **heresy** (especially that there will not be a **visible, bodily, and earthly return** of Christ to **destroy evil** and bring **judgment** on all the **nations of mankind**, and **resurrect His people** of all **ages**, and give them **glorified immortal bodies and eternal life**). Partial preterism however remains within Christian orthodoxy because it maintains that there will be a **visible, bodily, and earthly return to destroy evil** and bring **judgment** on all the **nations of mankind**, and **resurrect His people** of all **ages**, and give them **glorified immortal bodies and eternal life**. However, **partial preterism** has some work to do in acknowledging the future nature of the many end time events (which many partial preterists deny, but some acknowledge the possibility of) such as (**The Millennium, Tribulation, Antichrist, resurrections and judgments, and the Eternal State**).

Also most **Futurists** acknowledge that **some/many** of the **events of Daniel** and the **Olivet Discourse** have been fulfilled at some point in history already, yet hold that **most or all** of the events of Daniel and the Olivet Discourse have a yet future fulfillment at the close of this age. **Partial preterism** typically holds that **all of Revelation chapters 6-19** have been **fulfilled in AD70**, while **Futurists** hold that these events are **yet future**, in the time of the **great tribulation**. It is my opinion that the book of Revelation chapters 6-19 have not been fulfilled, which is plainly obvious most who read it, and that to dismiss the cataclysmic judgments of God that are there said to come upon the entire world is to do violence to the straightforward and obvious instructions of the text. Therefore **Futurism** should be **embraced** because of its obvious straightforward reading of the texts, and for much of the argumentation that is to follow in this study.

## Defining Millennialism - February 2017

**Defining Millennialism** – The idea or concept of millennialism is derived from the word “*Millennium*” which means “*a thousand years*” and is referred to **six times** in Revelation 20:1-10. It speaks of a specific (or general) period of time on earth when specific events spoken of in the passage will take place.

There have been *three* major views among **futurist** biblical interpreters throughout the years.

- **Amillennialism** – Realized Millennialism, or the Millennium is **now**.
  - The 1000 years are **not literal**.
- **Post-Millennialism** – Christ will return **after** the Millennium
  - The 1000 years may or may *not* be literal.
- **Pre-Millennialism** - Christ will return **before** the Millennium
  - The 1000 years **are literal**.

**Revelation 20:1-10** - 20:1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the **thousand years** were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a **thousand years**.

7 And when the **thousand years** are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASB

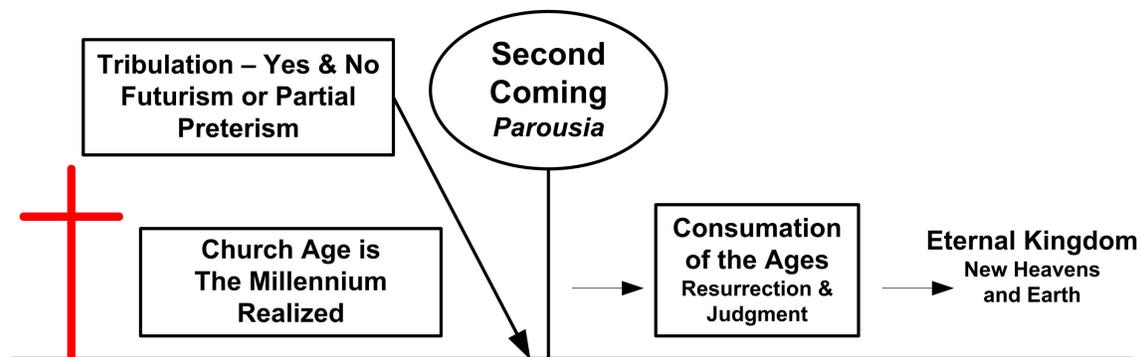
# Amillennialism

**Amillennialism – There is NO future Millennium.** Amillennialism is the belief that the current **church age** is the fulfillment of the Millennium spoken of in Revelation 20:1-10. Thus, **the Millennium is now**. This is also called “**Realized Millennialism.**” Amillennialism uses an interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 which is allegorical and non-literal. The 1000 years is simply a figure of speech referring to a long period of time. It typically assumes that Christ will **bring the final judgment** and **eternal state immediately** at his **Second Coming**. It sees no practical purpose for a future millennium on earth where Christ must rule as King over the earth. There are differences between Amillennial believers on various issues.

## Key Points in Amillennialism

- Revelation 20:1-10 describes the **present church age**
- 1000 yrs is *figurative*
- Christ reigns from heaven
- Satan is currently bound
- Binding of Satan greatly enhances the spread of the gospel in the world
- Those who reign with Christ are Christians who have already died and are in heaven
- Christ returns at the end of the church age
- One future resurrection of both believers and unbelievers; John 5:28-29
  - The first resurrection of Rev 20:4-6 is believers regeneration at salvation
  - Unbelievers to final judgment eternal condemnation in Rev 20:11-15
- New Heavens and Earth begin at Christ’s return after judgment
- Nature of the Millennium is *non-utopian* with a significant presence of sin
- Replacement Theology – No or little distinction between Church and Israel
- Some hold no *Great Tribulation*, tribulation occurs for Christians throughout history
- Some hold *Great tribulation and Antichrist*
- Covenantal, Non-dispensational
- Famous Amillennialists – Hoekema, Riddlebarger, Gaffin, Sam Storms

## Amillennialism



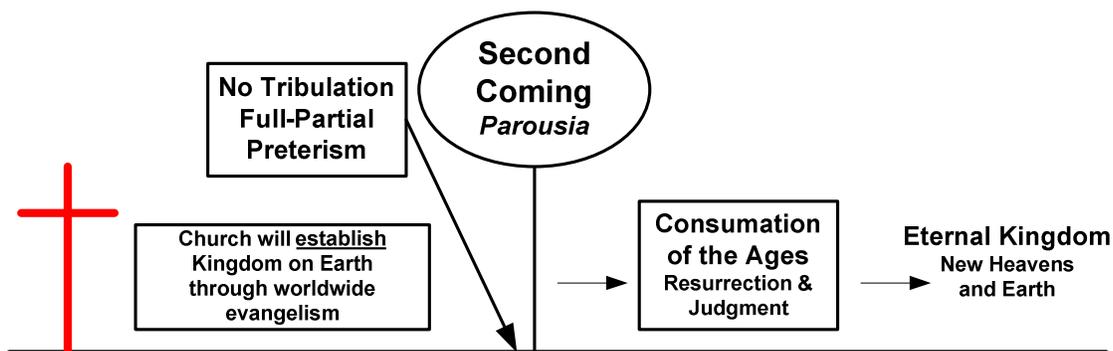
# Postmillennialism

**Postmillennialism – Christ will return AFTER the Millennium.** 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, and 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 Millennium spoken of in Revelation 20:1-10. These events will be followed by the resurrection, judgment and the eternal state. There are differences between Postmillennial believers on different issues.

## Key Points in Postmillennialism

- Revelation 20:1-10 describes the present church age which culminates in a worldwide reception of the Gospel and a time of unprecedented peace at the end of which Christ will return
- 1000 yrs may or may not be *figurative*
- Christ reigns from heaven, implements authority through Church and gospel
- Satan is currently bound
- Binding of Satan greatly enhances the spread of the gospel in the world
- Postmillennialism is very optimistic about the power of the gospel to change lives and society as well
- Christ returns at the end of or AFTER the Millennium or church age
- One resurrection of both believers and unbelievers; John 5:28-29
  - Unbelievers to final judgment eternal condemnation in Rev 20:11-15
- New Heavens and Earth begin at Christ's return after judgment
- Nature of the Millennium is *semi-utopian* with a significant presence of sin
- Some Replacement Theology – No distinction between Church and Israel
- Some hold to a *future restoration of Israel* in the Millennium
- No *Great Tribulation*, rather tribulation occurs for Christians throughout history
- Covenantal, Non-dispensational
- Famous Postmillennialists – Jonathan Edwards, Hodge, BB Warfield, Boettner

## Postmillennialism

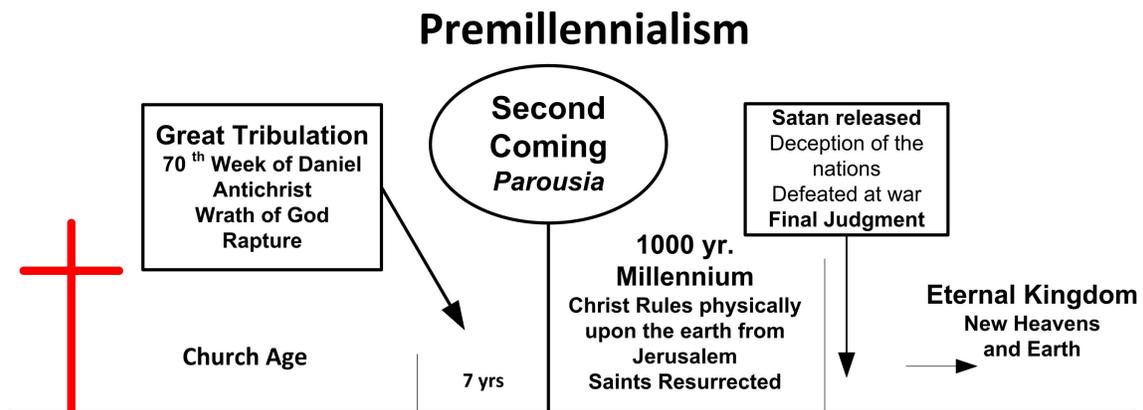


# Premillennialism

**Premillennialism - Christ will return BEFORE the Millennium.** The belief that Christ will return **before** the **millennium**, and establish a physical **Messianic Kingdom on earth**, which He will **rule** from **Jerusalem**. This will be a time of unprecedented peace and righteousness on the earth, as Satan will be bound, yet there will still be sin as rebellious nations will be disciplined by Christ and his saints (Psa 2:2-6, Isa 2:2-4, Dan 7:27, Zech 14:9-19). This view is based on a straightforward reading of Revelation 20:1-6. This return of Christ will include the **gathering** of His people from **every age** by **resurrection** from the dead (rapture) to a glorified immortal state (Dan 12:1-3, Matt 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 17:22-37, 1 Cor 15:51-54, 1 Thess 5:15-17, 5:2-4, 2 Thess 2:1-3). In the years prior to this return of Christ there will be a **worldwide Great Tribulation** period, a world deceiving **Antichrist** and **cataclysmic** judgments from God. This also will be the time of the fulfillment of many **Old Testament prophecies** and **covenant promises** to the ethnic **nation** of **Israel**, which will at this time be **saved** and **restored** (Zech 12:10-13:2) to the entire original Abrahamic land inheritance (Gen 13:14-18, Jer 3:15-18, Eze 37:20-28) and **blessing** of **God**. 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.

## Key Points in Premillennialism

- 1000 yrs is *literal* during which time *Satan* will be bound
- Resurrected *saints* will rule and reign with Christ and will never again be subject to sin and death (Dan 7:27, Rev 2:26-27, 20:4-6)
- A time of *Great Tribulation*, suffering, and Christian persecution directly precedes Christ's return. Premillennialists differ on the exact nature and timing of this period.
- Promises to *Israel* of Land, Seed and Blessing shall all be literally fulfilled
- **Two resurrections** of both believers and unbelievers – separated by 1000 years
  - Believers to Bema Seat judgment for degrees of reward at Christ's return
  - Unbelievers to final judgment eternal condemnation after Millennium
- *New Heavens and Earth* begin after Christ's defeat of Satan and the final judgment
- Nature of the Millennium is *utopian* with a very limited presence of sin
- *Imminency* (Christ could return at any moment) – some hold, some do not
- Variant Views - There are many *differences between Premillennial* believers on various issues (see chart below for a few– Premillennialism – Four Views)



# Premillennialism

## Variant Views and Key Differences

There are various views of Premillennialists on a host of different issues regarding the **nature, timing and sequence**, and fulfilment of **future prophetic events**. Below we will try to discuss briefly what some of those differences are and identify which view holds certain positions on some of the key future prophetic events.

### The Great Tribulation

*Nelson's Bible Dictionary* - A short but **intense period of distress and suffering** at the **end** of this current **age**. The exact phrase, the **great tribulation**, is found 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). Some believe it is also to be **distinguished** from **God's specific wrath** upon **the unbelieving world** at the end of the age (Mark 13:24; Rev 16, 2 Thess 1:7-9).

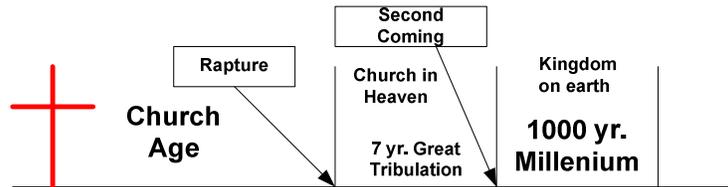
It should be noted that there are variant views within Premillennialism about the **length, nature and timing of the Great Tribulation**. A few key distinctions would be;

- **Length of the Great Tribulation**
  - Some see the Great Tribulation as a *7 year period* and equivalent to the *Seventieth Week* of Daniel (**Some Dispensational**)
  - Some see the Great Tribulation as only the *second 3.5 years* of it. (**Dispensational, Historic**)
  - Some believe the length of this time period is *NOT specifically defined* in scripture, its length is never clearly defined in scripture.
- **Nature of the Tribulation**
  - Some hold it includes the *“wrath of God”*
  - Some see the section of Revelation from Chapters 6-19 as an outline of this period, others see it only in shorter sections of Revelation. (**Dispensational, Historic**)
  - Some hold it is simply the events connected with the **rise of Antichrist to power** and subsequent persecution and suffering. The career of the Antichrist is highlighted in Scripture (Dan 7-12, Olivet Discourse, 2 Thess 2<sup>1</sup>1-12, Revelation 13, 19) and is characterized by certain behavior. This includes public blasphemy and idolatry, persecution of God's saints, worldwide deception, and he is personally killed by Christ at Parousia.
- **Day of the Lord**
  - Some see the events connected to the *“Day of the Lord”* as a part of the Great Tribulation
  - Some make a distinction between the *“Day of the Lord”* and the Great Tribulation as two separate time periods
  - Some see the *“Day of the Lord”* as **beginning** at Parousia and **ending** at Great White Throne. This sees both God's wrath and the age of Millennial peace as the *“Day of the Lord.”*
- **Persecution and the Tribulation Saints**
  - The *presence of Christians during this time period and the persecution of them* is something almost all premillennialists agree on. However, many see these Christians as **the church** in general, whereas others see them as a group called *“tribulation saints”* made up of people who are saved during the Great Tribulation by the preaching of believing Jews.
  - Some believe that the church is not present in Revelation 6-19 (because the word “church does not appear there), others say the church is present as saints (those who hold the testimony of Jesus and obey God's commandments, Rev 12:17).
- **Apostasy and Falling Away**
  - Many see a fulfillment of a great *Apostasy and Falling Away* (Matt 24:9-14, 2 Thess 2:1-3) which will take place before the return of Christ happening just before and during the time of the **Great Tribulation**. This will be marked by a *worldwide deception by Antichrist* leading to the worldwide idolatry wherein people of the earth will worship the beast and his image or be killed.

## The Timing of the Rapture

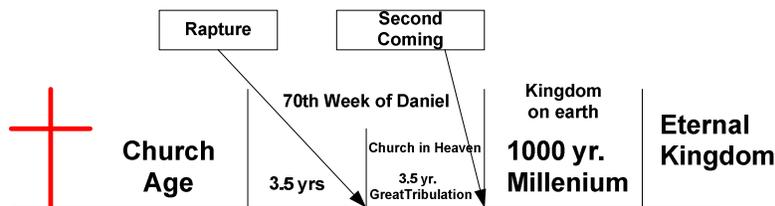
- **Pretribulational View** – In the Pretribulational view, the rapture happens **before** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation. Also, they make a sharp distinction between Israel and the church and insist that God cannot be dealing with both groups during Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Believers in Revelation 6-19 during Tribulation are Tribulation Saints.

### Pretribulational View



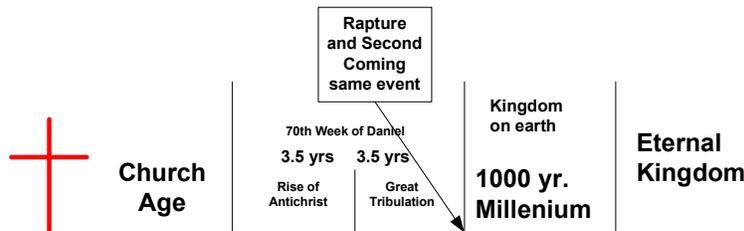
- **Midtribulational View** – In the Midtribulational view, the rapture happens at the **mid-point** of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and before the Great Tribulation which is defined as the last 3.5 years of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation.

### Midtribulational View



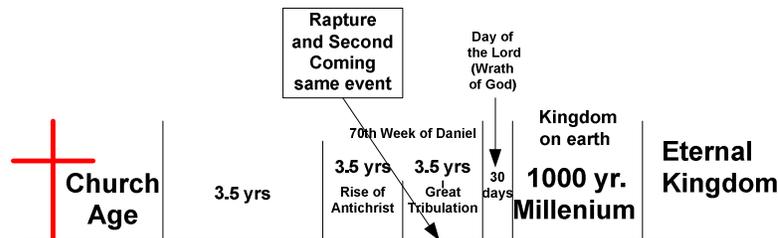
- **Posttribulational View** - In the Posttribulational view, the rapture happens **after** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church will go through the Great Tribulation. In this view the **rapture and the second coming are the same event**.

### Posttribulational View



- **PreWrath View** - In the PreWrath view, the rapture happens **during** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and after the Great Tribulation which is distinguished from the Day of the Lord, God’s wrath on the unbelieving world. Thus the church will go through the Great Tribulation, **but not through the wrath of God**. In this view the **rapture and the second coming are the same event, but separated by a short intense time of judgment**.

### Pre-Wrath View



## Imminency

Imminency is the belief that Christ could **return at any moment** with no warning signs prior to it. Scriptures used in this view are (Matt 24:36-39,42-44, 50, 25:13, Mark 13:32-33, Luke 12:40, Phil 3:20, 1 Thes 5:2-6, Titus 2:12-13, Heb 10:25, James 5:7-9, 1 Pet 4:7, 2 Pet 3:10, Rev 22:7, 20). It is clear from these scriptures that in a certain sense, the Lord's return is *imminent*, but clearly states that we do not know the "*day or the hour*," but to interpret the **times** and **seasons** we should not be **unaware** or **overtaken** as the wicked. However, the bible also clearly teaches that *certain signs will precede the Lord's coming* and that we should be paying attention to these signs as they happen. These signs would include;

- **The Preaching of the Gospel to all Nations** – (Mark 13:10, Matt 24:14)
- **The Great Tribulation** – Matt 24:15-22, Mark 13:7-8, Luke 21:20-24)
- **False Prophets working Signs and Wonders** – (Matt 24:23-24, Mark 13:22, 2 Thess 2:8-12, Rev 13:11-15)
- **Signs in the Heavens** – (Matt 24:29-30, Mark 13:24-25, Luke 21:25-27, Rev 6:12-17)
- **The Coming of the Man of Sin** - (Dan 7:21-27, 9:24-27, Matt 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, 2 Thess 2:1-10, Rev 13:1-18)
- **Great Persecution of the Church** – (Dan 7:21-27, 8:23-25, Matt 24:9-14, Mark 13:9-13, Rev 13:5-10, 15-17)
- **Apostasy, Falling Away and Rebellion** – (Matt 24:10-12, Mark 13:12-13, 2 Thess 2:1-13, Rev 13:5-18)

Therefore we should conclude that as **we SEE these signs** coming to pass, we should be **eagerly awaiting** the **Lord's return** and our subsequent deliverance. This is explicit in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 24:25,33, Mark 13:29, Luke 21:28).

**Luke 21:25-28** - 25 "And there will be **signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity** at the roaring of the sea and the waves, **26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world**; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **27** "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28** "But **when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.**" NASB

Jesus is clearly saying that **his disciples will be here** when these things "**begin to take place**" and that they "**will see them**," and that this should cause them to see the Lord's coming as imminent knowing that their "**redemption is drawing near**." He said something very similar in Mark.

**Mark 13:29-30** 29 "Even so, you too, **when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.**" NASB

He is clearly telling the disciples to "**recognize**" the **signs preceding His return**. In fact, in Mark and Matthew's account of the Olivet Discourse, **Jesus includes** [the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, the appearance of the Antichrist with His false signs and wonders, and the Abomination of Desolation,] as a **sign** that we are to "**recognize**" as **directly preceding His return**, and know that He is "**right at the door**." In Matthew he clearly says, "**behold I have told you in advance**." This is obviously so that we will know when the **season** of His coming will be, but not necessarily the "**day or hour**."

**Matt 24:25-28** - 25 "**Behold, I have told you in advance**. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. **27** "**For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.** 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. NASB

**Matt 24:32-34** - 32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 even so you too, when you see all these things, **recognize that He is near, right at the door**. NASB

**Paul** also made it very **clear** that there were **signs** that **preceded Christ's return** and that we should **recognize them** in order to be **ready** and **aware** that **He was near** and coming soon.

**1 Thess 5:2-4** - 2 For you yourselves know full well that the **day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night**. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;**

He said that the unbelievers will be caught unaware, **"like a thief,"** but that believers would not be unaware or **"overtaken like a thief"** by that day. This is because believers are **"children of the day"** and walk in the light of the knowledge of Christ and are able to discern the season of His coming, even if they don't know the day or the hour. He described **signs** that **must take place** before the **"coming of the Lord,"** [Second Coming] which he called **"our gathering together to him"** [Rapture] (verse 2:1). These **signs** he said were

- 1) The apostacy ... v-2:3
- 2) The man of lawlessness revealed (the Antichrist).... v-2:3

**2 Thess 2:1-3** - 2 Now we request you, brethren, with **regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him**, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, NASB

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SECOND  
COMING  
& RAPTURE  
Same event

These won't  
happen UNTIL  
1) Apostacy  
2) Antichrist

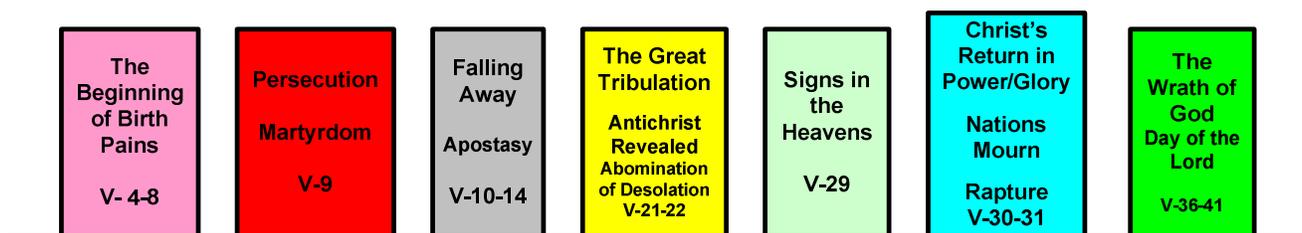
To summarize, the coming of the Lord is **imminent** in the sense that it is absolutely coming and **to the unbelieving world, it will come like a thief**, 1 Thes 5:2-3, and they will be **utterly surprised** and overtaken in the **judgment and wrath of the Lamb**. But to the **believing Christian**, they will **not be overtaken by this day as a thief**, because they know and recognized the **"signs"** of His coming, in fact have been **"watching"** and paying close attention to the signs of the times, and have made themselves **"ready"** for the bridegroom with **"oil in their lamps,"** by faith and consecration to the Lord, 1 Thes 5:4-6, Matt 24:25. See Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology pages 1095-1105, which is particularly helpful in discussing this **balance** between the **imminent return** and the **signs** that precede.

**Olivet Discourse** – In regard to eschatological events and their **timing** and **sequence**, the most clear passages in all of the bible are recorded in the *Olivet Discourse*. These passages are Jesus teaching on end time events while on the **Mount of Olives** with His disciples recorded in **Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21**. In these passages there are clear *chronologies* given of events leading up to Christ return and the **end of the age**. In fact, **these passages are Jesus’ answer** to His disciples’ question, “What will be the signs of your coming and of the end of the age?” They also include **parables** designed to teach His disciples to be **ready** for **His return**, because it will be **sudden, visible, glorious**, with **powerful angels**, and **deliverance** for His disciples from a world in the midst of **Great Tribulation**.

One important issue in the Olivet Discourse is that it predicts events that happen BOTH during the life of His disciples in the **destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD**, and also events that accompany His **Second Coming** at the **end of the current church age**. These prophecies are seen in prophetic perspective, a term used to describe the nature of some prophetic texts wherein events that happen in multiple times in history are seen as one event, yet when they unfold they are separated by many hundreds or thousands of years. An example of this would be Daniel’s prophecies of the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who attacked the Jews and overcame them and desecrated the temple and altar by sacrificing a pig on it (the abomination of Desolation) in 165BC. Even though Daniel’s prophecies of him were largely fulfilled then, Jesus speaks of the same prophecy as yet to come to pass after His earthly ministry in the person of the Antichrist during a time of worldwide Great Tribulation. Thus Daniel’s prophecy spoke of at least two different events in history separated by thousands of years. This prophetic perspective (also called near and far fulfilments) is used in the Olivet Discourse to speak of events in 70AD and also at the end of the current church age.

As we consider Matthew chapter 24, in the first 31 verses, Jesus gives a clear chronology of how events will unfold leading up to His Second Coming. This chronology is seen in the chart below.

### Chronology of Events in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24



It is the clearest place in all the Bible where these end time events and characters are seen in a **timing** and **sequence** which leads up to and culminates in His **sudden, visible, glorious**, return for **deliverance with powerful angels** for His disciples from a world in the midst of **Great Tribulation**. There is a very similar structure to the Olivet Discourse in **Mark 13** and in **Luke 21**, which also give timing and sequence to the events leading up to Jesus return in **power** and **glory**. There is also language in **Luke 17** which describes the **Second Coming of Christ**, the **judgment upon unbelievers** and the **deliverance** of His **disciples** which also has this structure. It is **remarkable** that this sequence can also be seen in **Pauline eschatological** passages and also in the **Book of Revelation**.

# 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.

This sequence of events is followed by **God's wrath** upon the **unbelieving world**, which Jesus describes with the **biblical types** of **Noah's flood** and the **destruction** of the **cities** of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** during the days of **Lot**. As is the case when the Second Coming is in view in most places in the Bible, Christ's **people** are **delivered** from a world where they are being **persecuted**, and then **God's wrath** is poured out on the **unbelieving world**.

**Matthew 24:36-41** - 36 "But **of that day and hour no one knows**, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 "For **the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah**. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, **until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be**. 40 "Then there shall be **two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left**. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; **one will be taken, and one will be left**. NASB

Jesus was not only telling how the **unbelieving world** would be **caught off guard** (like a thief in the night) and shocked by the **sudden wrath** of the **Lamb** at His **Second Coming**, but also teaching His disciples **to be ready** and **aware** of the times, **signs** and **season** of His **return**. He told them to be **watchful**, "**on the alert**," and "**be ready**." He was clearly giving them **signs** to **watch for** so that they would not be unaware like the unbelieving world, but would be **looking** for His **sudden deliverance**.

**Matthew 24:42-44** - 42 "Therefore **be on the alert**, for **you do not know which day your Lord is coming**. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "**For this reason you be ready too**; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. NASB

This **deliverance** is clearly the **rapture** of the **church** pictured in verse 31;

**Matthew 24:31** - 31 "And He will send forth **His angels with a great trumpet** and **they will gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. NASB

and spoken of in verses 40-41;

**Matthew 24:40-41** - 40 "Then there shall be **two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left**. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; **one will be taken, and one will be left**. NASB

There is also the passage in Luke where Jesus outlines some of the events of His Second Coming.

**Luke 17:22-37** - 22 And He said to the disciples, "The days shall come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 "And they will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. 24 "**For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day**. 25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 "And just **as it happened in the days of Noah**, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "**It was the same as happened in the days of Lot**: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but **on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all**. 30 "**It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed**. 31 "On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife. 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it. 34 "**I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left**. 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will

**be left. 36 ["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."]** 37 And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered." NASB

In fact, Jesus was so keen on teaching His disciples to be **watchful and ready**, He continued by telling them the **parables** of the **talents** (be good stewards of God's provisions), and of the **ten virgins** (be watchful and ready for the return of the Lord).

**Matthew 25:1-13** - 25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to **ten virgins**, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "And **five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.** 3 "For when the **foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,** 4 but **the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.** 5 "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 "But **at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'** 7 "Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 "And **while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.** 11 "And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, **lord, open up for us.'** 12 "But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, **I do not know you.**' 13 "**Be on the alert then,** for you do not know the day nor the hour. NASB

This of course is followed by **Christ reigning on His throne** and **judging the nations** who will be gathered before Him, this is undoubtedly His **glorious reign during the Millennium**, or a judgment just prior to it.

**Matthew 25:31-33** - 31 "But when the **Son of Man comes in His glory,** and **all the angels with Him,** then He will **sit on His glorious throne.** 32 "**And all the nations will be gathered before Him;** and He will **separate them from one another,** as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; NASB

This **pattern** and these **features** is exactly how the **Book of Revelation** comes to its fulfilment in **chapters 6-21**. The features of Great Tribulation, Antichrist deception, Second Coming, Millennial Kingdom, Final Judgment, are laid out in a **strikingly similar sequence**. There are various views and much controversy over the nature and details of the features, but nonetheless are **laid out in a pattern by Jesus**, and this **pattern** is also seen in many other passages of Scripture about the **Second Coming**.

One important **issue** is the fact the **Olivet Discourse** clearly has a **prophetic perspective** where this prophecy predicts **two or more future events** but presents them in such a way that it **appears** that they will **occur simultaneously** (see chart below). Therefore it must be understood that even as Jesus was **in part telling** the disciples what would come **upon their generation** and how the **age of Judaism** would come to an **end**, He was **predicting** the **grander** and **whole world encompassing** judgments and deliverance that would take place at His **Second Coming**. Some say this would account for the statement in verse 34;

**Matthew 24:34** - 34 "Truly I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.** NASB

There are **varying views** on just **how much** of the narrative is **fulfilled** in **70 AD** when the Roman general Titus **destroyed** the **city of Jerusalem** and the **temple** and **killed 1.1 million Jews**. It surely was a horrific and terrifying **end** to the **age of Judaism** and the **worship of God** in the **temple at Jerusalem**. But much of the language is clearly pointing to the **great end time apocalypse** of **Jesus Christ**, and this would account for severity of the statement about the **Great Tribulation** and the **worldwide scope** of judgment portrayed in the type of **Noah's flood**.

**Matthew 24 Prophetic Perspective Text Chart**

**Matthew 24:15-22** - 15 "Therefore when you see the **abomination of desolation** which was spoken of through **Daniel the prophet**, standing in the **holy place** (let the reader understand),

16 then let those who are in **Judea** flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are **with child** and to those **who nurse babes** in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a **Sabbath**;

21 for then there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has **not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall**. 22 "And **unless those days had been cut short**, no life would have been saved; but for the **sake of the elect** those days shall be cut short. NASB

**Abomination of Desolation**  
Near Fulfilment – Temple Mount razed 70AD  
Far Fulfilment – Antichrist worldwide Idolatry Rev 13

**Destruction of Jerusalem and Temple 70 AD**

**Future Great Tribulation**  
Abomination of Desolation and Antichrist worldwide deception 2 Thes 2, Rev 13

These prophecies are seen in **prophetic perspective** (also called *telescoping* or *near/far fulfilment*), a term used to describe the **nature** of some **prophetic texts** wherein events that happen **multiple times** in **history** are seen as **one event**, yet when they unfold in history they are **separated** by many hundreds or thousands of years. Sometimes a given **prophecy** will **predict two** or more **future events** and present them in such a way that it **appears** that they will **occur simultaneously** (ex... Isa 9:6-7, 61:1-2, Jer 29:10-14), even though when they happen they happen **many years apart**. Here also is the example of **Daniel's prophecies** of the Seleucid King **Antiochus Epiphanes IV**, who attacked the Jews and overcame them and **desecrated the temple** and altar by sacrificing a pig on it (the abomination of Desolation) in **165BC**. Even though Daniel's prophecies of him were largely fulfilled then, **Jesus speaks** of the **same prophecy** as yet to come to pass **after His earthly ministry** in the destruction of the temple, and again at the **end** of the **age** in the person of the **Antichrist** during a time of worldwide **Great Tribulation**. The two events are clearly mingled in the text Matt 24:15-22.

Make no mistake, this **Olivet Discourse** really is the **passage in Scripture** that gives the most clear **timing** and **sequence** of **events** leading up to the **Second Coming**, having come from the Lord Himself in answer to the disciples question, "**tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**" (Matt 24:3). Having this pattern and these features laid out by the Lord, we can then look at other places in Scripture and **simply augment** this narrative with many varied details those other scriptures provide. But the **pattern** and the **main features** of the **Second Coming** are all **in view here**. As a result, we should always seek to **interpret** other **passages** about the **Second Coming** with a **harmony** of the pattern and features here.

## What about Israel?

One important feature of Premillennialism is the insistence by most that the **ethnic nation of Israel** will be **regathered in Palestine** in the **last days** (largely fulfilled in 1948), when the Lord will **supernaturally bring salvation to Israel as a nation**, and then and there **fulfill many promises** made to them in the **Old Testament** that have **yet to come to pass in history**. These promises have to do with the **land of Palestine** and the city of **Jerusalem**, where the worship of God in Israel at Jerusalem will be a prominent feature among all the nations coming worship God when also God's blessing upon the whole **regathered nation of Israel** will result in **God exalting them above** all the **nations** of the world. This idea is commonly called the **Restoration of Israel**, meaning the **ethnic nation of Jews** in **contrast** to the idea of the **Israel of God** which many Amillennialists refer to being the church (made up of believing Jews and Gentiles... Gal 6:16) that has **superseded Israel** (also called Replacement Theology). Premillennialists read these promises in the Old Testament and believe they must have a **literal fulfilment in history** in order for **God** to remain **faithful to His Word**, and so they look forward to the Second Coming and the Millennial Kingdom where God will fulfill these promises to Israel. It is typically the **hermeneutic** (method of interpretation) that **Premillennialists** use (**literal-grammatical-historical**) that drives them to this belief. This is held in **contrast** commonly to the hermeneutic of **Amillennialists** (**redemptive historical**) where they read these Old Testament prophecies as **typology** (types, symbols, shadows) of **Messianic salvation** in the **church** having there fulfilment in the **New Covenant** realities of the **church age** and the **Eternal state**. This **Amillennial** view of **Israel** is often called "**Supersessionism**" or "**Replacement Theology.**" These two different ways of interpreting the bible make a stark contrast when it comes to the **Millennial Kingdom** and also the **fulfilment of God's promises** to the **ethnic nation of Israel**, which Premillennialists believe is yet to come to pass in history. Therefore **Premillennialists** see many of these **promises** in the **Old Testament** coming to pass in **the Millennial age**, before the Eternal state, and this **Millennial age** is often called the "**Intermediate Kingdom.**" In what follows briefly I want to just make you aware of the New Testament teaching on **Israel's future restoration by God** and also some of these **promises** in the **Old Testament** that clearly inform us of the **nature** and **scope** of that **last days restoration** of **Israel** according to God's eternal purpose.

I cannot now give an exhaustive treatment of Supersessionism and the issue of **distinctions** between **Israel** and the **Church** (Continuity and Discontinuity) in this teaching. Let me suffice to say that being a committed Premillennialist I hold a certain level of **Discontinuity**, that is that **Israel** is **distinct** from the **Church**, even in the New Covenant age in some **degree**. The New Testament clearly teaches that **believing Israelites** become **one body and temple together** with the **Gentile church** in Christ (Eph 2:11-22), and that in Christ the **racial** and **religious barriers** are broken down (Gal 3:28) through the **sonship** and **peace** that **Christ brings**, especially in the **indwelling presence** of the **Holy Spirit**.

**Galatians 3:26-29** - 26 For **you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus**. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. NASB

Clearly, **Jew** and **Gentile** become **heirs together** of God's **Abrahamic Covenant** and brought into the privilege and blessing of **sonship**. This **does not** however **remove** the **Jewish identity** of ethnic Israel any more than it removes our **gender identity** of **male** and **female**. In what follows I will show that God does indeed have **eschatological** purposes for the **ethnic nation of Israel**, and in the **last days** He will **exalt** them **above** all the **nations** of the world under the Kingship of Jesus in the Millennium. This

He does according to His **Covenant faithfulness** to them where He will literally **fulfill** all the **promises** He has made to them. There are no grounds for somehow assuming that God has **cancelled** or forgotten His **promises to Israel** just because Jewish nation has **rejected Christ** as a whole, and that now individual Jews can be brought into Messianic salvation by grace through faith. What is at stake here is the **character and nature of God** and His **Word** in being faithful to fulfill His promises in spite of Israel's rejection of their Messiah, something the prophets emphasized. This is the subject of Paul **explicit treatment** of the **issue** of God's **elective purposes** for **Israel** and their **eschatological fulfilment** in the last days in the book of Romans chapters 9-11. One must understand that Paul is a converted Jewish Pharisee, and writing from the **perspective** of someone who **knows and understands** the entire **Old Testament**. He assumes that those who read his letters have some exposure to the rich Old Testament narrative and prophecies, something which is very much neglected in our day and time.

### The Future Restoration and Salvation of Israel

The New Testament clearly lays out a **future restoration and salvation** for the **ethnic nation of Israel**. This comes in a key section of the New Testament where Paul is giving a **treatment** on the **ethnic nation of Israel**, specifically in regard to **God's election** of them, **His faithfulness** to them (even though they rebelled), and the **nature and scope of God's present and future purposes** for them. After bringing up the **"Israelites,"** (Roman 9:4) Paul goes into a lengthy treatment in Romans chapters 9-11 discussing the **election of Israel**, God's faithfulness according to His **electing purposes** for them, and their **present and future state**.

**Romans 9:1-6** - 1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that **I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart**. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ **for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh**, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. 6 But **it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel**; NASB

This **treatment of ethnic Israel in Romans 9-11** can be seen in an overview in this outline.

- I. Israel's Past: The Election of God** **9:1-29**
  - A. Paul's Sorrow 9:1-5
  - B. God's Sovereignty 9:6-29
- II. Israel's Present: The Rejection of God** **9:30—10:21**
  - A. Israel Seeks Righteousness by Works 9:30-33
  - B. Israel Rejects Christ 10:1-15
  - C. Israel Rejects the Prophets 10:16-21
- III. Israel's Future: The Restoration by God** **11**
  - A. Israel's Rejection Is Not Total 11:1-10
  - B. Israel's Rejection Is Not Final 11:11-32
  - C. Israel's Restoration: The Occasion for Glorifying God 11:33-36

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

When Paul arrives in chapter 11, he begins to deal with **Israel's rejection of Christ**, its **consequences** upon them in the **present age**, and God's faithfulness in His **election** of them to **save them finally**, in **spite** of their **hardened hearts**. This we know that God finally does for the **sake of His own glory and faithfulness**, but nevertheless it results in a **powerful salvation and restoration of Israel** in the **last**

days. In verse 11:1-10 Paul makes the point that their **rejection is not total** in that even now in the **church age** some **Israelites** are being **saved by grace** through faith in Christ alone, and Paul refers to these Messianic believing Jews as a “**remnant chosen by grace**” (Romans 11:5).

**Romans 11:1-6** - 11 I say then, **God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.** Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." **5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.** 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. NASB

There is then a **remnant chosen by grace**, who through **election and regeneration believe in Christ** and are **saved** (like us Gentiles), and the **rest of the Israelites in this present age** (Church Age... times of the Gentiles) are given a **blindness and hardening by God to the Gospel**.

**Romans 11:7-10** - 7 What then? That which **Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained**, but those who were chosen obtained it, and **the rest were hardened**; 8 just as it is written, "**God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day.**" 9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. 10 "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever." NASB

Now in verse 11-32 Paul makes the point that even though they have received a **blindness and hardening by God in the present age**, their rejection of Christ is **not final** and they will again be restored by God, because of God's faithfulness in electing them for blessing and privilege. So Paul argues that they will not be **totally cut off**, but **finally restored and saved by God** and in God's time. Paul argument progresses and builds to include the supernatural work of God and re-grafting Israel back into the olive tree (the true and genuine elect of God). Notice how in this text/context that Israel (they, their, them) is set in contrast to the believing elect/chosen Jews (v-1,5) and Gentiles(v-7,12-13) who are described as (you, your).

**Romans 11:11-24** - 11 I say then, **they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be!** But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, **how much more will their fulfillment be!** 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. **15 For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?** 16 And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, **18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.** 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 **Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;** 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. **23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?** NASB

Paul has **built the argument** to this point to set this **important and fundamental** point of **God's covenant faithfulness** in view. Israel was “**cut off**” for **unbelief, blindness and hardness of heart**, but God will for the **sake of His great name, electing love and covenant faithfulness** graft them back in in spite of their sin, and bring about a supernatural restoration and salvation of the **whole ethnic nation** of “**Israel,**” who is clearly in this context the **blood descendants** of “**Jacob.**”

**Romans 11:25-27** - 25 For I do not want you, brethren, **to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved;** just as it is written, "**The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will**

**remove ungodliness from Jacob." 27 "And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."**

NASB

He furthers the contrast of the **unbelieving ethnic nation** of **Jews** with the **elect Jew/Gentile believers** in verses 28-32, calling them **beloved enemies** of **God** who have an **irrevocable calling** from God by His election, and that ultimately in the same way He saved us Gentiles through His mercy in the Gospel, He will again save them through His mercy verse 31.

**Romans 11:28-32 - 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. NASB**

Don't miss this important last verse 32. God has allowed Jew and Gentile to go astray in sin so that He might **manifest** the **glory** of His **mercy** upon them all. This absolutely **incredible** thing that **God has done** with the **nation of Israel** in **redemptive History**, including the **mystery** of the **Gospel** in saving the **Gentile Church**, is an astounding epic saga of events that has taken thousands of years to unfold. During this time **Israel** has been **scattered** among the **nations** of the **world**, sorely pressed, harassed, persecuted and hated, which is exactly what He said would happen to them by the mouths of the **prophets**. And through it all, they were **without a homeland**, having been **dispersed** from the Land of Judea, and yet God has **supernaturally preserved** them as a nation of people for the **grand finale**, which is His glorious **Millennial Kingdom** He will bring about in Judea in the last days. There He will fulfill all His **covenant promises** to **Israel** as He brings the whole **remnant** of the **nation** under the **salvation of Christ**, through the Gospel and saving faith. This special election of Israel and **His plan** for them **through the ages** is an event of ineffable glory that brings the Apostle to doxology and praise for God's unsearchable wisdom.

**Romans 11:33-36 - 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. NASB**

This we know that God finally does for the **sake** of **His own glory** and **faithfulness**, but nevertheless it results in a **powerful salvation** and **restoration of Israel** in the last days.

This idea that **Israel** would go through a **time** of **blindness**, **hardening** and **judgment** from God, was mentioned in the **Old Testament**, but not clearly understood until the fuller light and revelation of the New Testament, revealing of the **mystery** of the **Gospel** and the times of the **Gentile's salvation**.

**Hosea 3:4-5 - 4 For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols. 5 Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days. NASB**

In light of the history of Israel and Judaism in the last 2000 years, Hosea's prophecy is clearly seen to be fulfilled during the times of the Gentiles. We clearly see that the Jews have remained **"for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols."** But the prophecy has a **glorious end** for the **wandering Jews** that have been scattered to every nation under Heaven, **exiled** from the **land of promise**. But let us see Paul's promise that Israel will be **saved** in the **last days** confirmed in the **mouth** of the **prophet Hosea** in verse 5, **"Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days."** You see, **Redemptive history** is **unfolding** and God has grand plans for the **future** of **Israel** and their **final salvation**. We now know that God has a **Messianic saving purpose** for the **Gentile church** and that **Israel** is **blinded** and

**hardened** as **judgment from God** as a result of the rejection of Christ. But God will clearly **save** and **restore** them when the “**times of the Gentiles**” are fulfilled. Then God will again move to **regather**, **save**, and **restore** the **glory of Israel** in the **last days**. This makes so many of the Old Testament passages that refer to **Israel’s gory** in the **last days** finally make sense, in light of their hardening and **rejection** of the **Christ**. They are seen in the prophets of being under the **judgment** of **exile** and dispersion (**diaspora**) by God, until in the last days God once again **regathers** them **in the land** of Judea to bring about a **national Messianic salvation** for them, for the sake of His own glory and covenant faithfulness, and in spite of their disobedience and rebellion against Him.

**Zechariah 12:6-14** - 6 "In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. 7 "**The Lord also will save the tents of Judah first in order that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah.** 8 "In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them. 9 "And it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 "**And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.** 11 "**In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.** 12 "And the land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves. NASB

There is much happening in this text in Zechariah that concerns the last days and Israel. But what I want you to see here is that **Messianic salvation** will come to the **entire ethnic nation**, just as Paul described in Romans and Hosea referred to. Notice verse 7, the “**Lord will save the tents of Judah,**” and also the “**house of David.**” Hardly words describing a few individual Jewish converts to Christianity. Zechariah goes on, verses 10-12 to describe this **massive regeneration** of the whole **Jewish population in Jerusalem**, as they see Christ and mourn over the fact that they killed their own Messiah. "**And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.**” By God’s grace in bringing about **regeneration** for the whole nation they come to see Christ as Savior and in **mourning** and **repentance** they come trembling to God, who cleanses away their sins.

**Zechariah 13:1** - 13 "In that day **a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.** NASB

This will come about at the **Second Coming of Christ** when He has returned to **destroy** the **kings** of the **earth** who have gathered in Judea (Megiddo-Armedgeddon) to make war against Him (Psa 2:1-5, Rev 16:13-16, 19:17-21).

**Zechariah 14:1-5** - 14 Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 **For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured,** the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 **Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.** 4 **And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.** 5 And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!** NASB

Did God forget this prophecy? Is he really going to **pour out a spirit of grace** and supplication upon all the **inhabitants of Jerusalem** and then come to **save them** with all of His **holy ones** stepping on the Mount of Olives and splitting it into a great valley? Yes indeed He is, and then he will **rule the nations** with a **rod of iron**, and His saints with Him (Psa 2:6-9, Rev 2:27, 12:5, 19:15). Zechariah goes onto speak of Christ ruling **“over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one.”**

**Zechariah 14:9-11** - 9 And **the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.** 10 All **the land will be changed into a plain** from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11 And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for **Jerusalem will dwell in security.** NASB

We will treat these passages further below concerning the **Millennial Rule of Christ**. But consider first concerning **Israel's final salvation**, that it is an all important **part of the promise of the New Covenant in Christ**.

### **Israel and the New Covenant**

The **New Covenant** salvation that has come in the **Lord Jesus Christ** is not entirely or exclusively a Gentile salvation. It is actually, **“first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile”** (Rom 1:16). God's New Covenant is a Covenant that He has first promised to the **“house of Israel and Judah.”** This is a reference to the **entire nation of Israel** before the **Kingdoms** where **divided** into two Kingdoms, Israel to the North and Judah to the South after the reign of David's son Solomon. The Gentile's have through the **mystery of the Gospel** become heirs **together with Israel** in the **New Covenant blessings** and brought into the household of God through faith in Christ (Eph 2:11-22). But they have been brought into the **“covenants of promise”** which have always and still do belong to **ethnic Israel**.

**Ephesians 2:11-13** - 11 Therefore remember, that formerly **you, the Gentiles in the flesh**, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — 12 remember that **you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.** 13 But now in Christ Jesus **you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** NASB

I point this out simply to say that the **New Covenant** bears within it the **final salvation** of the whole **nation of Israel**, not just a **believing remnant** during the **times of the Gentiles**, as Paul clearly taught in Romans 11. There remains a day yet future when God will **save the nation** just like Paul, and Hosea, and Zechariah have confirmed.

It is important to take notice that **Israel's privilege and blessing** is always **tied together** with their prosperity **in the land that God promised to them** in the **Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants**, a **“land flowing with milk and honey”** (Ex 3:8, Deut 11:9). When Israel **obeyed** God they would live in **prosperity** in the land. And when they **rebelled and disobeyed** they would be **exiled from the land**. This Moses taught them again and again.

**Deuteronomy 11:8-17** - 8 **"You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land** into which you are about to cross to possess it; 9 **so that you may prolong your days on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.** 10 For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. 11 But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, **a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12 a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.** 13 **"And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, 14 that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. 15 And He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied.** 16 Beware, lest your

hearts be deceived and **you turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17 Or the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens** so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and **you will perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.** NASB

In fact, Moses (Deut 28) and the prophets prophesied that Israel would continue to rebel and disobey God until ultimately they would be **exiled from the land** and **dispersed** and **scattered** among all the nations of the world. This dispersion would last for many years until in the **last days** God would again **regather them in the land**, and because of **His mercy** and **faithfulness**, and His promises by Covenant to them, would bring about a great restoration in the land, with prosperity and blessing, which includes the amazing **Messianic salvation of God through Christ**, when God **removes their iniquities**, and **remembers their sins no more**. This will happen when God brings about saving faith through the **regeneration** of the **Holy Spirit** for the **entire remnant** of **Israel**. But this salvation of Israel also includes their **dwelling in the land**, which is finally **fulfilled** in the **great Millennial Kingdom** upon the earth where **Christ the King of Israel** will **rule the nations** of the world, and **Israel** will be **exalted above all the nations** of the earth, and a **Jew will rule the world!**

**Jeremiah 31:23-40** - 23 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, **"Once again they will speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I restore their fortunes, 'The Lord bless you, O abode of righteousness, O holy hill!'"** 24 "And Judah and all its cities will dwell together in it, the farmer and they who go about with flocks. 25 "For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes." 26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me. 27 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will sow the **house of Israel** and **the house of Judah** with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. 28 "And it will come about that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to bring disaster, **so I will watch over them to build and to plant,"** declares the Lord. 29 "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge.' 30 "But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge. 31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,** 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, **"I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** 34 **"And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,"** declares the Lord, **"for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."** 35 Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day, And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The Lord of hosts is His name: **36 "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the Lord, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever."** 37 Thus says the Lord, "If the heavens above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the Lord. 38 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, **"when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 "And the measuring line shall go out farther straight ahead to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goah. 40 "And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever."** NASB

You see that God will take the **"house of Israel and Judah"** and will make a New Covenant with them, verse 31, and He will **"put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."** Here is a clear reference to the **regeneration** of the **Holy Spirit**, writing the **law** on the **heart**. But notice God **emphasizes** the **faithfulness** of this promises saying, **"36 "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the Lord, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever."** I will fulfill this promise to the **"nation"** of **Israel** as surely as the **sun shines** every day and the moon shines every night. This **regenerating** last days salvation that God promised also appears in the prophecy of **Ezekiel**. Here again notice that the **national salvation** of **Israel** is tied to them **dwelling in the land**. This **national salvation** is also spoken of by **Ezekiel** in **great detail**. After Israel's rebellion against

God and defiling of their land, they will be scattered by God among the nations, where they will also “profane His name among the nations.”

Ezekiel 36:16-21 - 16 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 17 "Son of man, **when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds**; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18 "Therefore, **I poured out My wrath on them** for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 "Also **I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the lands**. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. 20 "When **they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name**, because it was said of them, **'These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.'** 21 "But I had **concern for My holy name**, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. NASB

But for the sake of God’s holy name, He will “**vindicate the holiness of my great name**” by taking Israel from “**all the nations**” where they have been scattered, and “**gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land.**” Moreover He will regenerate their hearts and put His Spirit in them and cause them to obey Him and there “**you will live in the land**” where God will bring great prosperity upon them.

Ezekiel 36:22-36 - 22 "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.** 23 "**And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,**" declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. 24 "**For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land.** 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "**Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** 27 "**And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.** 28 "**And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.** 29 "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 "**And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, that you may not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.** 31 "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!" 33 "Thus says the Lord God, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, **I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.** 34 "**And the desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passed by.** 35 "**And they will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.'** 36 "Then **the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it.**" NASB

Here we have seen in Ezekiel 36 that there will come a day that the entire nation of Israel will be regenerated by God, after He regathers them into the land. This was Jeremiah’s promise of a New Covenant where He would "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Jer 31:33). That is an almost verbatim quote of Ezekiel 36:26-28 which clearly connects the New Covenant with the latter days regeneration of the ethnic nation of Israel, where they will be regathered and settled by God in the land to experience the blessing and prosperity. This God will do to vindicate His own name, when He restores His wayward people and plants them in the land “**Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it.**” Those who say this salvation of Israel is somehow fulfilled by a Jew simply believing the Gospel and being brought into the church (New Covenant) are dismissing important faithful promises that God has made to save His own covenant people whom He promised He would regather and plant in the land for the sake of His own glory and faithfulness. Did God forget this prophecy? Is He really going to do this? Consider that He has made the same prophecy to

**regather in the land** and **ble**ss and **prosper Israel** by the mouth of no less than **Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah, and Zechariah**. Consider with this knowledge what is going through Paul's mind when he wrote **Romans 11**, "**all Israel will be saved.**" He knows all too well the **incredible promises** that God has made to Israel and the God will for His own sake and faithfulness make these promises good!

### **Gather them in the land to dwell**

These "**covenants of promise**" that **Paul** mentioned in **Ephesians 2:12** center on the **final** and **complete salvation** of God's **elect people Israel** whom He will not forget, but will indeed bring about a great **last days salvation** for them, **in their land**, under the **blessing** and **prosperity** that will last **forever**, from that day forward. You have to have blinders on not to see the huge importance of this last days salvation in the Old Testament, and you have to dismiss some very **specific promises** made with very **specific circumstances**. Or you can choose to believe that **God means** what **He says** and He will bring it to pass. This is seen most clearly in His promise to **regather Israel into the land**, **regenerate** them, and **ble**ss them and **prosper** them, which will include the **Messiah reigning** over them as **King, in the land**, and them being **exalted above** all the **nations** of the world.

**Jeremiah 23:3-8** - 3 "Then **I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply.** 4 "I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord. 5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "**When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.** 6 "**In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely;** And this is His name by which He will be called, '**The Lord our righteousness.**' 7 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when they will no longer say, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 but, 'As the Lord lives, **who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.**' Then **they will live on their own soil.**" NASB

**Jeremiah 30:3-4,10-11** - 3 'For, behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, '**when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.**' The Lord says, '**I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers, and they shall possess it.**' 4 Now these are **the words which the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah,** 10 'And fear not, O Jacob My servant,' declares the Lord, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity. And **Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, And no one shall make him afraid.** 11 'For I am with you,' declares the Lord, 'to save you; For **I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly.** And will by no means leave you unpunished.' NASB

Here see that **God** has **regathered** "**the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them, then they will live on their own soul.**" How could this prophecy possibly be fulfilled in the NT church? **First**, it is for the descendants of the **household** of **Israel** and **Judah**, who are also called **Jacob**. **Second**, it is a **promise** of a **regathering** of God's people whom He has driven them (something that hasn't happened to the church). **Third**, it is a **promise** for them to **possess** "**their own soil.**" The church has no land promises from God, but the descendants of Israel who have been scattered by God indeed have **promises of land** which God will **restore** to be "**their own soil.**" This **regathering in the land** includes the New Covenant promise of **regeneration** by the **Holy Spirit**. This is what the famous "**valley of dry bones**" prophecy in Ezekiel is about!

**Ezekiel 37:11-14** - 11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, **these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.'** 12 "Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' Behold, **I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.** 13 "Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. 14 "**And I will**

**put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land.** Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it," declares the Lord." NASB

But Ezekiel goes on to promise the **reuniting** of the **two divided Kingdoms** (Israel and Judah), **in the land**, on the **mountains of Israel**, with **one King** ruling them, and them being **cleansed** from their **sins** and **reconciled to God**, **“they will be My people, and I will be their God.”**

**Ezekiel 37:21-23** - 21 "And say to them, "Thus says the Lord God," Behold, **I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms.** 23 "And they will **no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them.** And **they will be My people, and I will be their God.** NASB

The **regathering** and **regeneration** is a theme in Ezekiel and does not just appear in chapters 36 and 37, but also in other places.

**Ezekiel 11:14-21** - 14 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 15 "Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles, and **the whole house of Israel, all of them,** are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Go far from the Lord; this land has been given us as a possession.' 16 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God,' **Though I had removed them far away among the nations, and though I had scattered them among the countries,** yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone. " 17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God,' **I shall gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I shall give you the land of Israel.** " 18 "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 "And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them.** And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. **Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.** 21 "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I shall bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord God. NASB

And **Jeremiah** and **Ezekiel** are not the only prophets to give these **promises** from God to Israel. Indeed no less than the great prophet **Isaiah** told of them same **regathering** after their great dispersion (**diaspora**) among the nations, at the time **Messiah** (the root of Jesse) is exalted among the nations.

**Isaiah 11:10-12** - 10 Then it will come about in that day That **the nations will resort to the root of Jesse,** Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. 11 **Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea.** 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations, And will assemble the banished ones of Israel, And **will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.** NASB

And also the prophet **Amos** writes of a time when Israel will be planted **“on their own land”** but also, **“not again be rooted out from their which I have given them.”**

**Amos 9:14-15** - 14 **"Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them,** They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 **"I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them, "Says the Lord your God.** NASB

And **Zephaniah** tells of that **great and awesome Day of the Lord’s** wrath at which time He will **regather Zion** and **exalt** them among the **nations** and **“restore your fortunes before your very eyes.”**

**Zephaniah 3:18-20** - 18 **"I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts** — They came from you, O Zion; The reproach of exile is a burden on them. 19 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. 20 **"At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes, "Says the Lord.** NASB

**Zechariah** writes of God **saving** the house of **Judah** and **Joseph**, and **Ephraim** and **gathering** them together **“into the land of Gilead and Lebanon”** after they have been scattered.

**Zechariah 10:6-10** - 6 "And I shall strengthen the **house of Judah**, And I shall save the **house of Joseph**, And I shall bring them back, Because I have had compassion on them; And they will be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the Lord their God, and I will answer them. 7 "And **Ephraim will be like a mighty man**, And their heart will be glad as if from wine; Indeed, their children will see it and be glad, Their heart will rejoice in the Lord. 8 "**I will whistle for them to gather them together, For I have redeemed them**; And they will be as numerous as they were before. 9 "**When I scatter them among the peoples, They will remember Me in far countries, And they with their children will live and come back.** 10 "I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria; And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, Until **no room can be found for them.** NASB

All of these **promises** from all of these **prophets** to scatter and disperse them to all the nations, and to **regather Israel into the land, regenerate them, and bless them and prosper them**, are in fact the **very thing** that **Moses** said would happen to them when they got **into the land** and **rebelled** against God.

**Deuteronomy 4:25-31** - 25 "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke Him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **you shall surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but shall be utterly destroyed.** 27 And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where the Lord shall drive you. 28 And there you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29 **But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.** 30 When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, **in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice.** 31 For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; **He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.** NASB

And even **Moses** speaks of that **latter days salvation and restoration** upon **Israel**, not for their sake, but because "**God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.**" See here the **record of Israel's final salvation** in the **Old Testament** spoken **3400 years** by the mouth of **God's prophet Moses** before it ever comes to **pass in history**. This overwhelming set of **promises** that we have seen from all these prophets concerning **Israel's latter days salvation, regathering in the land, blessings and prosperity** from then on and **forever**, and for the **sake of God's own name and faithfulness**, is summed up in **Jeremiah's** second mention of the **New Covenant**. There God promises "**with all My heart and with all My soul**" to not only **save them and their children in perpetuity** by **regeneration**, but also to plant them **in the land** and **prosper** them from then on and **forever**. Here also here defines their inheritance as the entire land of **Judea** in verse 32:44.

**Jeremiah 32:37-44** - 37 "Behold, **I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them** in My anger, in My wrath, and in great indignation; and **I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety.** 38 "And they shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39 and **I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them.** 40 "And I will make **an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.** 41 "And I will rejoice over them to do them good, **and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.** 42 "For thus says the Lord, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so **I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.** 43 'And fields shall be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44 'Men shall buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and **call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes,**' declares the Lord." NASB

One must see that is **blasphemy** to think or **say** that God will **not** carry out these **promises** to the **descendants** of those **Israelites** that He punished in His wrath, (the objects of this discourse v-37), especially because in verses 41-42 He **emphatically** makes the point that **He will make good** on His **promises** to them; "**41 And I will rejoice over them to do them good, "and I will faithfully plant**

them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. 42 "For thus says the Lord, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.'" This is not a promise to the New Testament Gentile Church, but a people that God has brought great disaster upon in His wrath whom He will specifically "restore their fortunes." These amazing prophecies of God's faithful promises to Israel should cause us to wonder and awe at the amazing miraculous spectacle that the latter days salvation and restoration of Israel will be. And added to these great promises of being regathered and restored and saved in regeneration (New Covenant), is the great promise of Jesus' Messianic Rule over the nations, from Jerusalem, in the land of Palestine (Israel), when a Jew rules the world!

### The Millennial Rule of Christ from Jerusalem

Not only will God regather Israel into the land of Palestine with blessing and prosperity, and also regenerate all of the living nation of ethnic Israel at the Second Coming, but the prophets have said that when He does this Christ the Messiah will also reign as King over the entire world from Jerusalem, with the whole house of Israel and Judah in the land, and even His New Testament Gentile saints (the Church) ruling with Him. There will come a day yet future when God will establish Christ's throne and kingdom and He will rule all other nations. His kingdom will never end or be destroyed.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. NASB

Daniel 2:44 - 44 "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. NASB

Revelation 11:15 - 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." NASB

He will Judge the nations with justice and they will obey and serve Him.

Psalms 67:4 - 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For Thou wilt judge the peoples with uprightness, And guide the nations on the earth. NASB

Psalms 96:13 - 13 Before the Lord, for He is coming; For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness. And the peoples in His faithfulness. NASB

Acts 17:30-31 - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NASB

Jesus will be the ruler of the nations of the earth, the kings and people of the earth will be in subjection to Him and will serve Him. The extent of this rule will be worldwide including people from every tribe and language.

Psalms 72:10-11 - 10 Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. 11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him. NASB

Daniel 7:13-14 - 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. NASB

Psalms 72:8-11 - May he also rule from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. 9 Let the nomads of the desert bow before him; And his enemies lick the dust. 10 Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. 11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him. NASB

Moreover, this **rule** is a **forceful rule**. This implies that the **existence** and **presence** of **sin** and **rebellion** among the **nations** that will still exist in a world where Christ is implementing the **enforcement** of His **government**. This will obviously be **before** the New Heavens and Earth, and yet **after** His Second Coming during an **“intermediate Kingdom”** (the Millennium), for Christ does not now use a **forceful rule** over the **rebellious nations** in the **Church Age**. Christ will yield **exceeding great power** over them and they shall live **under His rule** or be **destroyed**.

**Zechariah 14:16-20** - 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem **will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** 17 And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 **This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

**Psalms 110:5-6** - 5 The Lord is at Thy right hand; **He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He will judge among the nations.** He will fill *them* with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. NASB

**Psalms 2:8-12** - 8 'Ask of Me, and **I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. 9 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.'** 10 Now therefore, **O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. 11**

Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. 12 **Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled.** How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

When the man **Christ Jesus reigns** as **King** over all the earth, His throne will be **located** in **Jerusalem**, on Mount Zion, in the midst of the **ethnic nation** of **Israel**. At this time **God** will **restore** His people **Israel** to Himself, and they will  **dwell in the land** of **Israel** which **He promised** to them, under the rule of the **One King Jesus**.

**Psalms 2:6** - 6 "But as for Me, **I have installed My King Upon Zion,** My holy mountain." NASB

**Isaiah 24:23** - 23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, **For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.** And His glory will be before His elders. NASB

**Micah 4:7** - 7 "I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcasts a strong nation, And **the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on and forever.**" NASB

**Ezekiel 37:21-22** - 21 "And say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD," Behold, I will take **the sons of Israel from among the nations** where they have gone, and **I will gather them** from every side and bring them into **their own land;** 22 and **I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them;** and **they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms.**

**Joel 3:16-21** - 16 And **the Lord roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem.** And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the Lord is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. 17 Then you will know that **I am the Lord your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy,** And strangers will pass through it no more. 18 And it will come about in that day That the mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the Lord, To water the valley of Shittim. 19 Egypt will become a waste, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood. 20 **But Judah will be inhabited forever, And Jerusalem for all generations.** 21 And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, **For the Lord dwells in Zion.** NASB

**Luke 1:31-33** - 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and **you shall name Him Jesus.** 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever;** and His kingdom will have no end." NASB

**Israel** will be **exalted** above all other **nations** in that day, and **God** will **restore** their **fortunes**.

**Isaiah 49:22-23** - 22 Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, **I will lift up My hand to the nations,** And set up My standard to the peoples; And **they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.** 23 "And kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. **They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the Lord;** Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame. NASB

**Zephaniah 3:20** - 20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the Lord. NASB

**Isaiah 60:9-14** - "Surely the coastlands will wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first, To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them, For the name of the Lord your God, And for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you. 10 "And foreigners will build up your walls, And their kings will minister to you; For in My wrath I struck you, And in My favor I have had compassion on you. 11 "And your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession. 12 "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined. 13 "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, The juniper, the box tree, and the cypress together, To beautify the place of My sanctuary; And I shall make the place of My feet glorious. 14 "And the sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, And all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; And they will call you the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. NASB

In this **Kingship**, all the **nations** of the **earth** will come and **pay homage** to **Jesus the King**. **ALL** the **nations** will come and **worship the Lord Jesus** and acknowledge **His Deity** and **Lordship**.

**Psalm 86:9-10** - 9 **All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; And they shall glorify Thy name.** 10 For Thou art great and doest wondrous deeds; Thou alone art God. NASB

**Psalm 22:27-28** - 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, **And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee.** 28 **For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.** NASB

**Psalm 102:21-22** - 21 That men may tell of the name of the Lord in Zion, **And His praise in Jerusalem; 22 When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.** NASB

**Isaiah 2:2-4** - 2 Now it will come about that In the last days, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; **And all the nations will stream to it.** 3 **And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths. "For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples;** And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

**Zechariah 14:16-20** - 16 Then it will come about that **any who are left of all the nations** that went against Jerusalem **will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** 17 And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 **This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

**Revelation 15:1** - 4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; **For all the nations will come and worship before Thee.** For Thy righteous acts have been revealed." NASB

This will happen during the Millennium, **after the Second Coming** and **salvation of Israel**, when Christ is **physically present**. This is obviously **not** something that happens during the **Church Age**, because the **nations** are in **rebellion** and the **people of God** are under **violent persecution**. This has **characterized** the Church Age since it began. But Christ will come in power and glory and bring judgment upon all nations and establish His powerful Kingdom at which time **both Israel** and the **Church** will be **exalted** and **privileged**. The kings of the earth will fear the Lord after He has **"appeared in His glory."**

**Psalm 102:15-16** - 15 So **the nations will fear the name of the Lord, And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.** 16 For the Lord has built up Zion; **He has appeared in His glory.** NASB

**Christ** also promised His **Church** (when writing to the seven churches of Revelation) that they would **rule the nations** with a forceful reign with Him when He comes.

**Revelation 2:26-27** - 26 'And **he who overcomes**, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, **to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces**, as I also have received authority from My Father; NASB

**Revelation 5:9-10** - 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and **didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and**

people and nation. 10 "And Thou hast **made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.** NASB

The fulfilment of that **promise** for the **saints** to **reign** comes in **Revelation 20** at the Second Coming of Christ during the **Millennium** (1000 years).

**Revelation 20:4-6** - 4 And **I saw thrones, and they sat upon them**, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and **they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 **Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.** NASB

It was a **specific promise** to His **disciples** (the Twelve) that they would eventually sit on **thrones** ruling the **twelve tribes** of **Israel**. This means they must be **resurrected** from the **dead** to **reign** over Israel, just like Revelation 20 says they will.

**Matthew 19:28** - 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that **you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** NASB

**Luke 22:28-30** - 28 "And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, **I grant you 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** NASB

This **reign** of the **saints** and **authority** over the **nations** to **judge** is familiar in the New Testament.

**1 Corinthians 6:2-3** - 2 Or **do you not know that the saints will judge the world?** And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? 3 **Do you not know that we shall judge angels?** How much more, matters of this life? NASB

**2 Timothy 2:12** - 12 If we endure, **we shall also reign with Him;** If we deny Him, He also will deny us; NASB

This **reign** of the **saints** is clearly **predicted** in the Old Testament **prophecy** of **Daniel**. He spoke of the time when the **Messiah** would finally receive the **Kingdoms** of all the nations in chapter 7. Just before this happens, the **Antichrist** (the little horn) will come and **wage war** on **God's Saints**, for **3.5 years** (v-25 the time of the great tribulation), **until** the time comes for them to possess the Kingdom v-21-22. Then **Antichrist** is **destroyed** v-26, and the **Saints receive the Kingdom** with the Messianic King Jesus and **authority** over the **nations**. The reign of the saints over all the kingdoms of the world is spoken of with specific precision in v-27 as "**Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One.**" See here in Daniel's prophecy the **reign** of the **saints** after the Second Coming, which is also clearly portrayed in the narrative of the **Second Coming** in **Revelation 19** where the **Antichrist** is **destroyed** v-19:20 and in Revelation 20:4-6 wherein the "**come to life and reign with Him for 1000 years.**" It is at this time that the **saints** will **judge the world** as Paul said (1 Cor 6:2) and will "**rule the nations with a rod of iron**" just as Jesus promised them (Rev 2:26-27).

**Daniel 7:21-28** - 21 "I kept looking, and **that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.** 23 "Thus he said: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 **'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.** 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and **his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.** 27 **'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One;** His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

See in all these **prophetic texts** several clear realities which have **yet to happen** in **history**. In the last days Israel will be saved and restored by God, and Jesus will rule them and the nations in the land.

## Revelation 20 and the Millennium in the New Testament

When we come to the text of Revelation 20, the astounding and vivid revelations of the **close** of this **age** of humanity comes to its **final consummation**, and the **New Age of Messianic Rule** upon the **earth** begins. Christ has left His heavenly abode at the right hand of God and has **descended** victoriously **upon the earth** to **reign** as He conquers the world by force. Chapters **6-19** is the Revelation of the scroll opened by the **victorious Lion** of the **Tribe of Judah**, that **Lamb** that was **slain**, even the **Lord Jesus Christ**. These 14 chapters reveal the intense conflict taking place in this fallen world as seen from God's throne and from His heavenly perspective in the **years just prior** to the glorious **Second Coming of Christ** which is portrayed at the **end of chapter 19**. As the **Seven Seal judgments** are opened (ch-6), they unfold in succession until the seventh, from which usher forth **Seven Trumpet judgments** (chs-8-11). As with the Seals, these Seven Trumpets unfold in succession until the seventh, from which ushers forth **Seven Bowl judgments** (ch-16). As each of these **Seals, Trumpets** and **Bowls** come forth, with them comes powerful and earth shattering judgments from God upon the creation, mankind and angels, and at the seventh of each there is a great storm recorded (called storm *theophanies*) as at the Seventh Trumpet.....

**Revelation 11:19** - here were **flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder** and an **earthquake and a great hailstorm.**" NASB

As these progress, they also **intensify** in **strength** and **scope**, ultimately bringing **unbearable pressure** upon the **rebel world**. Yet the world of sinners **refuses** to **repent** of its **evil** and even at the height of intensity of these judgments from God, mankind still will not repent as the Scripture reads.....

**Revelation 16:10-11, 21** - And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and **they gnawed their tongues because of pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.....** 21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; **and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.** NASB

In the progression of judgments, it all leads to the whole world being deceived by the **Antichrist** and the **false prophet** (13:7-8), who implement a **religious** and **economic system** by which people will take the mark of the beast in order to buy sell and trade, and **worship** an **idolatrous image** of the Antichrist who blasphemes God and demands the worship of himself or they are **threatened** with **death** (Rev 13:11-18). As God's judgments grow increasingly worse against all of these false deceptions and deceiving **signs** and **wonders** performed by these two deceivers, it all comes apart at the seams as the entire world religious and economic systems come crashing to the ground under the fearful **Seven Bowl judgments** from **God** (ch-16). These **false religious** and **economic** systems are pictured as **harlot** riding upon a beast and drunk with the blood of God's saints (ch-17), and also as **Babylon** the **great city of commerce** and **trade** (ch-18), who led the whole world astray by her great **idolatrous** materialism and commerce. As the entire world system collapses, that great announcement is made, that these **false systems** of **idolatry** have been destroyed, crushed under the **wrath of God**.

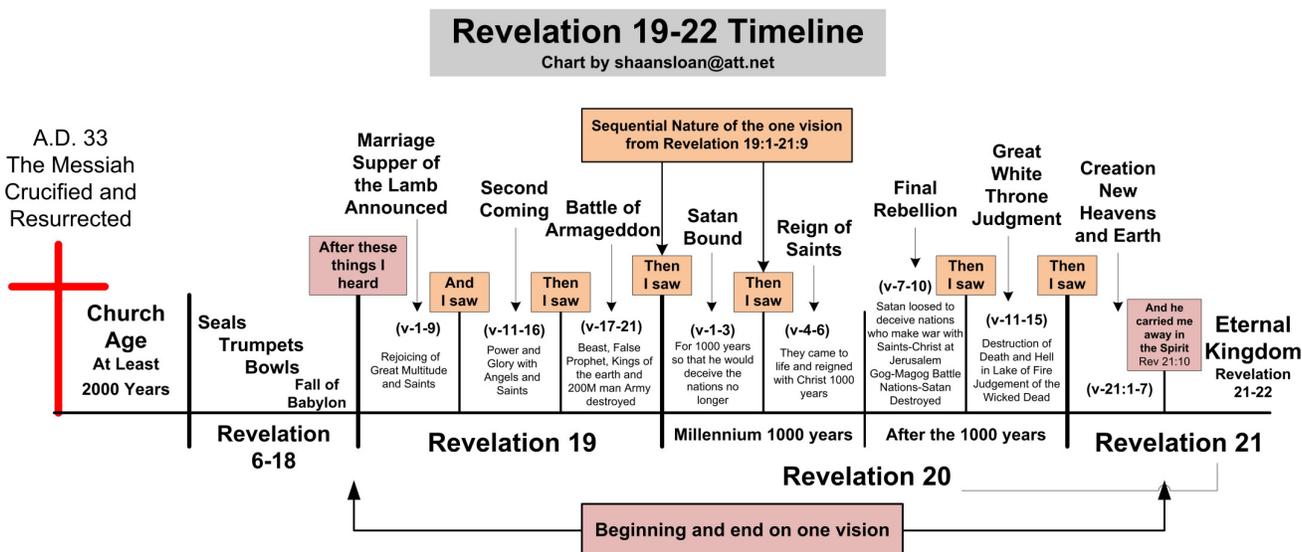
**Revelation 18:2-3** - 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!** And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 "**For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.**" NASB

As **chapter 19** unfolds, there is a thanksgiving given for the judgment of Babylon and the long awaited glorious **Second Coming of Christ** dawns upon the rebel world (19:11-21). The **Antichrist**, the **False Prophet** have **gathered** with the **kings** of the **earth** with their vast armies to **make war** against the **Lamb of God** in the valley of **Megiddo**, just to the north of **Jerusalem**. Then in stunning victorious power **Jesus Christ**, who is the **Word of God**, appears with the armies of heaven and slays them with the **sword** that proceeds from His **mouth**.

**Revelation 19:15-21** - 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; 18 in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. 20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. NASB

Now the entire **power structure** and **economic systems** of the world have been deluged under the fearful judgment of God, and the **world's authorities** have been **slain** by **Christ** and the stage has been set for **Christ** to implement His government of righteousness, justice and peace. This brings us to the text of **chapter 20** which describes the implementation of Christ's earthly reign for the man Christ Jesus, the promised **seed of David**, must **reign** upon **His throne** from **Jerusalem** at His coming. After He has fulfilled the golden age of His Millennial rule, which was clearly promised in the Scriptures cited above, He shall utterly and **finally destroy** all His **enemies**, including death and the devil (1 Cor 15:23-28, Rev 20:11-15). At this great end He will also destroy the present heavens and earth and create a new heavens and earth where His people shall lie down in peace forever. In that place God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more dying or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away (Rev 21:1-7).

Now it is important to understand the **progression of events** that have taken place in this **last vision** that John has been shown. **It begins in chapter 19:1 and it ends in chapter 21:10**. This is a very significant point in understanding **Revelation 20** in its **context**. Many times in Revelation John is given different visions that start and end and give a new panorama or angle or perspective about the events which are unfolding. Sometimes these visions are connected and sometimes they are disconnected, but events within any given in vision are always connected as they reveal some new events, or characters, or some important details about how the **Tribulation** (chs 6-19) is **progressing** toward its **great end** at the **Second Coming**. The chart below depicts John's vision in 19:1-21:10.



Notice how the language in verse **19:1** starts with, “**After these things I saw,**” and then the vision has **progressing intervals** all the way to **21:9** that are indicated by the words “**Then I saw.**” Then in 21:10 the visions switched to a new panorama indicated by the words, “**And he carried me away in the Spirit.**” Robert Duncan **Culver** comments in his Systematic Theology pgs 1038-1039;

*“At this point I propose simply that we read Rev 20 continuously with chapter 19. The vision of chapter 19 begins with 'After this [Gr. meta tauta, literally, after these things] I heard' and continues with 'Then I heard' (v. 6) and 'Then I saw' (v. 11), 'Then I saw' (v. 17) and 'Then I saw' (20:1) followed by 'Then I saw' (20:4). This successions of events John heard and saw are set off from John's previous narrative and visions by 'After this' (meta tauta) at the beginning of chapter 19. They seem therefore all to be connected with the beginning of chapter 20, each a successive event in one vision... It should be apparent that the natural (normal) sense of this passage is that the predicted future events of chapter 20 are subsequent in time to those of chapter 19.”* What you have then in this **entire vision** is the **clearest chronology** in all of Scripture concerning the **progression of events** at the **Second Coming** which reveal all the major elements of how the **Age to come** will **unfold** in history. When one reads this vision at **face value**, not trying to add any **undue complexity** created by some **perceived symbolism** or **figurative language**, the progression of events comes through with bright clarity. This **progression** therefore shows the **transition** into the **Age to come** as the **Tribulation** is **ended by Christ**, the religious and economic powers of the world have **fallen (Babylon)**, and the **kings of the earth** have been **defeated** by Christ at **Armageddon**. Then those two characters that deceived the world, the **Beast (Antichrist)** and the **False Prophet** are thrown into the Lake of Fire and destroyed. This leaves open the **fate** of that third member of the **unholy trinity, Satan**. Now that the first two are destroyed at the close of chapter 19, what shall come of the leader of the pack of three (Rev 13:2-4, 11-18 describes the threefold nature of this group), **Satan himself?** That is the subject in the very next verses in **Revelation 20:1-3**, where the **1000 years** are **introduced**. This **1000 year period** which we refer to as the **Millennium** is **repeated six times** in verses **2-7** and clearly **reveals a period in history** that follows directly **after the Second Coming** of Christ. God’s purpose is for that 1000 year golden age of **Messianic Rule upon the earth** which was **promised** in the **Old Testament**, but not yet had its fulfilment in history. Because God has a **final purpose** for Satan’s deception “**after the thousand years are completed**” (Rev 20:7), he will temporarily lock him up in prison, and release him later to deceive the nations once more leading to the **final end** of **sin** and **death** in history. The plain reading of the narrative reveals this very clearly.

**Revelation 20:1-3** - 1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having **the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.** 2 **And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,** 3 **and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed:** after these things he must be released for a short time.

Rather than destroy Satan, God **locks him up** in the **abyss** for the **1000 years**. During this **first phase** of the **Age to come**, Satan will not be able to “**deceive the nations,**” which has been his work during the entire **Church Age** (2 Cor 2:11, 4:3-3, Eph 6:12, 1 Pet 5:8), but **especially** in the **Great Tribulation** period (Rev 12:9, 13:1-18, 18:23, 19:20). It is during this time that we are told that period of **Messianic Rule** now happens and the **rule of Christ’s saints with Him** comes to pass during this Millennium. This is the fulfillment of **promises** to the **church** in the **context of Revelation**, and also other passages (Rev 2:26-27, 3:12, 5:10, Dan 7:21-27, Matt 19:28, Luke 22:22-28, 1 Cor 6:2, 2 Tim 2:12). This **reign of saints** follows the **resurrection of all the saints** which is a fulfillment of Christ’s **promise** to gather His elect as He descends from Heaven in judgment on the world to establish His

Kingdom with them (Matt 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 17:22-37, 1 Cor 15:51-54, 1 Thes 4:15-5:4, 2 Thes 2:1-3, Dan 12:1-3).

**Revelation 20:4-6** - 4 And **I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.** And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and **they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** 5 **The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.** 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but **they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.**

Notice also that this **1000 years** separates this **First Resurrection** (v-5) from the **another resurrection** that happens later when “**rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.**” The rest of the dead do come to life when the **1000 years** are **completed** and they are judged before the Great White Throne according to their deeds and thrown in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). These **two physical resurrections** of **dead** people are commonly spoken of in the Bible as the **two resurrections**, one for the **righteous** and one for the **wicked** (Dan 12:1-3, John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15). Here is the fulfilment of those passages, now seen clearly in Revelation **separated** by a **1000 years period** at the dawn of the **Age to come**. This 1000 years has several **features** that describe the **nature and activity** of this **Millennium**;

- **Satan is bound** in the abyss so he won't deceive the nations until after the 1000 years (v-1-3)
- **Christ reigns** for 1000 years (v-4,6), described in the Old Testament passages above
- **Saints are resurrected** and given thrones of judgment and **reign** with Him (v-4,6)
- **Two Resurrections** separated by 1000 years of the righteous and the wicked (v-5)

Then in verses 7-10 this **specific** time period of **1000 years** is said to be “**completed**” and followed by very **specific events**. All of this is still in the **chronology** of **John's one vision**, which started back in chapter 19:1 and continuing all the way to 21:9.

**Revelation 20:7-10** - 7 And when the **thousand years** are completed, **Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, **to gather them together for the war;** the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and **surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.** 10 **And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are** also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASB

These events that **follow the 1000 years** include the final **destruction** of **Satan** (v-10) and all the **rebel nations** whom he has **deceived** to gather for **war against Christ** and His saints at **Jerusalem** (v-9).

The vision continues with the **Great White Throne judgment**, which is the **final judgment** of all the **wicked**, the **Second Resurrection**.

**Revelation 20:11-15** - 11 And I saw a **great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away**, and no place was found for them. 12 **And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.** 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and **they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.** 14 **And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.** 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. NASB

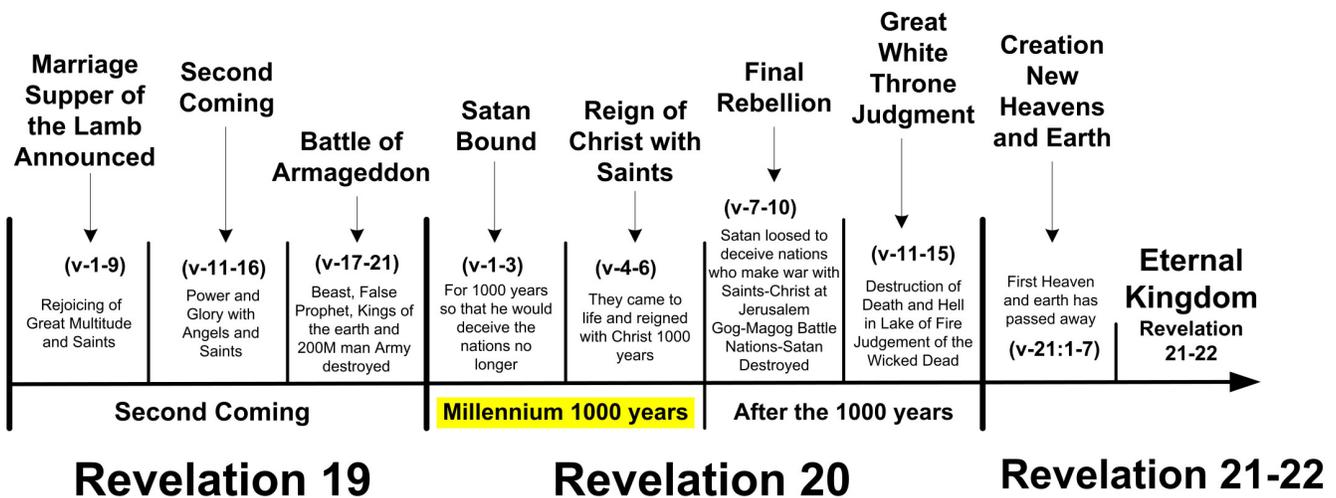
At the **close** of this **first phase** of the **Age to come**, Satan, Death and Hades, and all the wicked have met their **final judgment** and banished into the **Lake of Fire forever**. Here is the **end of evil forever** as “**He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away**” (Rev 21:4). It is at this time that the **old heaven and earth pass away** (21:1) and **God creates a New Heaven and Earth** (21:1), which is the **eternal state** from this time forward, and only the redeemed of

the Lord live in this state forever in an endless Day in His presence, privilege, and blessing, world without end (Rev 21:1-22:9).

A **face value** reading of this passage reveals a **very specific chronology** of **events** that God has laid out for the **Age to come**. In these pages is marked out the **final** and **last days** of the fallen world of **sinners in rebellion** against God, and the ushering in of the age of **God's Kingdom upon the earth**, for **the man Christ Jesus**, the promised seed of David, **must reign** upon His throne from Jerusalem at His coming. After He has fulfilled the golden age of His Millennial rule, He shall utterly and finally **destroy** all His **enemies**, including **death** and **Satan**.

## Revelation 19-22 Timeline

Chart by shaansloan@att.net



Paul speaks clearly of this **reign after the Second Coming** and includes language about **Christ** conquering **all His enemies** during His reign, including **death**.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-28** - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet, 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27** For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. NASB

At this great end of His enemies He will also **destroy** the **present heavens** and **earth** and create a **new heavens and earth** where His people shall lie down in peace forever in the presence of God. Peter also refers to this destruction of the heavens and earth, at its **final end** which is pictured in Rev 20:11-15.

**2 Peter 3:10-13** - 10 But **the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 **looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth,** in which righteousness dwells. NASB

Now therefore this passage in Revelation holds out a **clear chronology** of **events** to **unfold** at the **Second Coming**. This includes an obvious **1000 year reign** of **Christ** upon the earth with His Saints.

## The Millennium in the Old Testament

As the chronology of events in Revelation 19-21 clearly shows a **1000 year earthly reign of Christ** with His saints upon the earth while **Satan is bound**, surely we would expect this to be reflected in the many passages in the **Old Testament prophets**. Indeed there is clear evidence for this **“intermediate kingdom”** between the time of Christ’s Second Coming and the Eternal State. This is the discussion of Matt Waymeyer in chapters 2-5 of his book “Amillennialism and the Age to Come – A Premillennial Critique of the Two Age Model.” In it he presents many of these passages and argues that the **“age to come”** spoken of in the New Testament unfolds in **two phases**. **Phase one** is the **1000 years of Messianic Rule** over a **yet imperfect world**, and **phase two** is the **eternal state** in that **perfection** where God’s presence has come to dwell with men and **sin** and **death** have been **destroyed forever after** the Millennium in the New Heavens and Earth, just as Revelation 19-22 has made clear. As the Old Testament passages look forward to the Messianic Age, they do indeed speak of a time **distinct** from **both** the current **Church Age**, and the final consummation in the **Eternal State**. Because these passages describe **conditions** which **do not fit** either time period, they appear to indicate some **future stage** in redemptive history which is far greater than the present Church Age and but which still does not see the removal of all sin and rebellion and death from the earth. This **“intermediate kingdom”** is characterized by peace, righteousness, eternal blessing, and **immortality**, and **yet at the same time** in some passages includes the presence of **sin**, rebellion, and **human death**. These passages portray the righteous **rule** of the **Messiah** in a yet **imperfect world**, with conditions not compatible with the Eternal State, therefore they indeed do speak of that intermediate kingdom which **Revelation 20** has **clarified** and **made explicit**, explaining that there is a yet **imperfect period after** the Second Coming **yet before** the Eternal State which lasts for at 1000 years. Wayne Grudem comments on page 1129 of his Systematic Theology; *“several Old Testament passages seem to fit neither in the present age or in the eternal state.”* With this idea in mind, let us examine some of these passages in the Old Testament and see if they do indeed reveal such a time in redemptive history. The first is that Messianic Psalm 72.

**Psalm 72:1-20** - 1 Give the king Thy judgments, O God, And Thy righteousness to the king's son. 2 May he **judge Thy people with righteousness, And Thine afflicted with justice.** 3 **Let the mountains bring peace to the people, And the hills in righteousness.** 4 **May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, Save the children of the needy, And crush the oppressor.** 5 Let them fear Thee while the sun endures, And as long as the moon, throughout all generations. 6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, Like showers that water the earth. 7 In his days may the righteous flourish, And abundance of peace till the moon is no more. 8 **May he also rule from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.** 9 **Let the nomads of the desert bow before him; And his enemies lick the dust.** 10 **Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.** 11 **And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him.** 12 **For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, The afflicted also, and him who has no helper.** 13 **He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save.** 14 **He will rescue their life from oppression and violence;** And their blood will be precious in his sight; 15 So may he live; and may the gold of Sheba be given to him; And let them pray for him continually; Let them bless him all day long. 16 May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; Its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; And may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth. 17 **May his name endure forever; May his name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him; Let all nations call him blessed.** 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. NASB

See here that very time when the **“king’s son”** will rule the world from **“sea to sea”** and yet He **“will judge with righteousness and peace, save the needy and crush the oppressor.”** During this time His enemies will **“lick the dust and all kings will bow down before Him and all nations serve Him”** while He **“has compassion on the poor and needy and rescues their life from oppression**

**and violence.”** Clearly this time period is **not like the present age** for world goes on with none to save the needy and the poor as they are crushed by oppression and violence, and neither is the king’s son **ruling and all nations** calling him blessed, or **all kings and nations bowing down before Him** and serving Him. This is indeed a period in redemptive history that will happen **after the Second Coming** but falls short of that **perfect world** of the **Eternal State**. Revelation 20 shows this to be the Millennial Rule of Christ for 1000 years with His saints. Isaiah speaks of a similar time.

**Isaiah 2:2-4** - 2 Now it will come about that **In the last days**, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And **all the nations will stream to it.** **3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths. "For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples;** And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. NASB

Again we see a period yet to happen in history where **“all the nations stream to Jerusalem to learn His ways and sit before His seat of judgment where he renders decisions for many peoples.”**

Micah repeats this prophecy.

**Micah 4:1-4** – 1 And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, **And the peoples will stream to it. 2 And many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks;** Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. 4 And each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. NASB

Isaiah speaks in other places of such a time, but yet includes the feature of **prophetic perspective (prophetic conflation)** so that the features of **both phases** of the **age to come** are **included**. So the prophet sees a time when the **righteous rule** of **Messiah** is present, yet in an imperfect world of sin, and then **looks beyond** to that time when all creation will be restored and **no sin** or **imperfection** is present any longer.

**Isaiah 11:1-9** - 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; **4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.** 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. **6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze; Their young will lie down together; And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.** NASB

And this is not the only time that **Isaiah** uses **prophetic perspective** or **conflation** to see **both phases** of the **age to come**. That famous passage in chapter 65 where the prophet sees the **New Heavens** and **Earth**, mentioned also in Revelation 21 after the Millennium (which we commonly call the eternal state), and yet describes it with features of that time in a **yet imperfect world** where the **curse of human death** yet remains.

**Isaiah 65:17-25** - 17 **"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, And her people for gladness. 19 "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20 "No longer**

will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Shall be thought accursed. 21 "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 "They shall not build, and another inhabit, They shall not plant, and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands. 23 "They shall not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, And their descendants with them. 24 "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the Lord. NASB

How can we **harmonize** a passage like this without the **clear chronology** of events shown in the **book of Revelation** chapter 19-21? What would seem **very obscure** and impossible to figure out becomes very clear and easy to understand in light of the fact that **Revelation 20** portrays a **time period** just like this, which is the **first phase** of the **age to come** where the Messiah rules in a yet **imperfect world** (Rev 20:1-10), but which ends and then continues in the Eternal State of **perfection** (Rev 21-22) **after** He has put all His **enemies under His feet**, including Satan, sin and death (1 Cor 15:22-28, Rev 20:11-15). This **righteous rule** of **Messiah** over a **yet imperfect world** we have also seen in that passage in Zechariah 14 which clearly shows a period of history that has **yet** to happen in **history** and must happen **after** the **Second Coming**, and yet **falls short** of the glory of the **perfect** Eternal State.

**Zechariah 14:16-20** - 16 Then it will come about that **any who are left of all the nations** that went against Jerusalem **will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** 17 And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 **This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

Here again notice that presence of **nations rebelling** against the **righteous rule** of **Messiah** and being **punished** by Him with His Sovereign power over the weather, sending **“no rain on them.”** And yet it is a time when **“all the families of the earth”** are going up to **“Jerusalem to worship the King.”** Hardly anything like the present **church age**, yet a time that **falls short** of the **Eternal State** because **sin** and **rebellion** are still present. This passage would be impossible to harmonize in Scripture without what Revelation’s timeline has clearly revealed. Chapters 6-18 of Revelation show **cataclysmic judgments** from God upon the sinful rebellion of the world that precedes the Second Coming of Christ which happens at the end of chapter 19, at which time Christ destroys the kings of the earth. Then Satan is bound for 1000 years so that Christ will rule the world in a time of peace with His Saints, but yet sin is not eradicated for His rule will be one of force over the nations who still will finally rebel. After this, He will finally destroy Satan, sin and death, and all the wicked dead will be judged and destroyed forever in Revelation 20:11-15 at the Great White Throne judgment. This sequence of events is also **revealed** by **Isaiah** in his **prophecy** of God’s judgment upon the nations of the world in chapter 24. Verses 1-20 speaks of **cataclysmic judgments** from God directed upon the nations of the world, and then in verses 21-23 the host of heaven are imprisoned for many days until they are finally punished.

**Isaiah 24:21-23** - 21 So it will happen in that day, **That the Lord will punish the host of heaven, on high, And the kings of the earth, on earth. 22 And they will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished.** 23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders. NASB

Passages like this in the Old Testament that don’t contain the **clarity** of **New Testament** revelation would be very difficult to understand without the **clarity** and light that we have from the **Apostles**. But when compared to the **timeline** of Revelation 19-21 they make perfect sense. See in these few

passages from the Old Testament that intermediate kingdom of the Millennial Rule of Christ portrayed in the visions of these prophets. I want to wholeheartedly recommend that you study this further and the book by Matt Waymeyer, “Amillennialism and the Age to Come – A Premillennial Critique of the Two Age Model.” contains a lengthy bible study of these passages interacting with arguments from those who use the **Two Age** model as an **interpretive grid** to understand the **end time chronology**. In summing up this brief section of our study, let me quote from Matt’s book page 82-83; *“In the Old Testament passages considered in chapters 2 -5, the prophets looked ahead to the glorious reign of the coming Messiah. During this time, the Messiah will reign as king over the entire world, all the kings of the earth will bow down before him, all the nations of the earth will serve him, and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed by the exercise of his rule. Knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth, and the whole world will be filled with his glory. He will reign in peace, justice, righteousness, and faithfulness, resulting in longevity of life and lasting peace and harmony among the nations of the world. The kingdom reign of the messiah portrayed in these passages clearly transcends what takes place in the present age and will not be ushered in until the second coming of Jesus Christ. But these passages also contain features of the coming kingdom which are incompatible with the perfection of the Eternal state. For example, this kingdom reign of Messiah will include the existence of the poor, the wicked, the needy, the afflicted, enemies of God, and victims of violence and oppression. It will include physical birth and physical death, distinctions between the young and the elderly, the physical weakness due to old age. The nations will learn the ways of the Lord; disputes will continue to arise between them; and those who refuse to worship the king will be punished by the Lord. This portrayal of the coming kingdom reveals a certain amount of tension. The reign of Messiah will be characterized by peace, righteousness, and universal blessing, and yet human sin will continue to exist, sometimes requiring divine intervention to bring deliverance to the afflicted and judgment to the rebellious. These kingdom prophecies are not being presently fulfilled, and they are not compatible with the Eternal state. For this reason they necessitate a future stage in the history of redemption which is far greater than the present age but which does not see the removal of all sin and death from the earth. .... The key that brings all of these features together is the explicit New Testament revelation of a millennial kingdom between the second coming and the final judgment. In other words, what is strongly implied in the Old Testament prophets is clarified and made explicit in the book of Revelation, where the apostle John reveals 1000 year earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This intermediate kingdom in Revelation 20 separates the second coming of Revelation 19 and the internal state of Revelation 21-22... In contrast to the two age model of Amillennialism, the Old Testament provides clear evidence of an intermediate kingdom in which Jesus will reign upon the earth between the present age and the internal state.”*

See in these passages that the **“age to come”** spoken of in the New Testament unfolds in **two phases**. **Phase one** is the **1000 years** of Messianic Rule over a **yet imperfect world**, and **phase two** is the **eternal state** in that **perfection** where God’s presence has come to dwell with men and **sin** and **death** have been **destroyed forever after** the Millennium in the New Heavens and Earth, just as Revelation 19-22 has made clear. As the Old Testament passages look forward to the Messianic Age, they do indeed speak of a time **distinct** from **both** the current **Church Age**, and the final consummation in the **Eternal State**. Because these passages describe **conditions** which **do not fit** either time period, they appear to indicate some **future stage** in redemptive history which is **far greater** than the present **Church Age** and yet still does not see the **removal** of all **sin** and rebellion and **death** from the earth, like that which is portrayed in the Eternal State. What is in the Old Testament prophets, is **explicitly clarified** in the book of Revelation, that is, a **1000 year reign** of Messiah over a yet **imperfect world**.

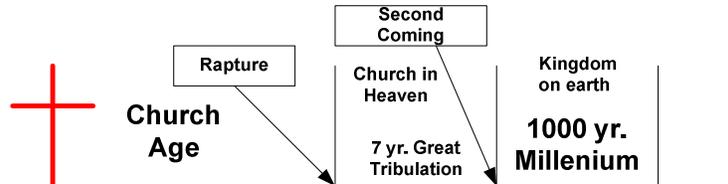
## The Timing of the Rapture

One of the hotly contested issues in **Premillennialism** is the timing of the **rapture** (First Resurrection) in regard to the **Great Tribulation period**, an intense period of **deception** and **judgment** just **prior** to the **Second Coming** of **Christ**. Thus we have the varying positions on this; Pre-Trib, Mid-Trib, Post-Trib, Pre-Wrath. These are the main four positions that are held. Let me say at the outset that this can be a very difficult matter to get to the exact details as I will try and explain. Yet I would also say that **Scripture does make some very clear statements about it that are not hard to grasp at all**. Also, **my position** is definitely that the **Rapture happens after the Tribulation** (which I distinguish from the wrath of God). Thus in my position believers do go through the Great tribulation, but not through the wrath of God. Also, I believe that the **Rapture happens at the Second Coming**, and then is **followed** by a **short and intense** time of judgment (**Trumpet and Bowl Judgments**). This really is very much like the Pre-wrath interpretation, and it seems to **harmonize** with all the Scriptures the **best**, and seems most **plausible** to me.

I will first **define** these **4 positions** and then look at the Scriptures and try to give reason for my own position.

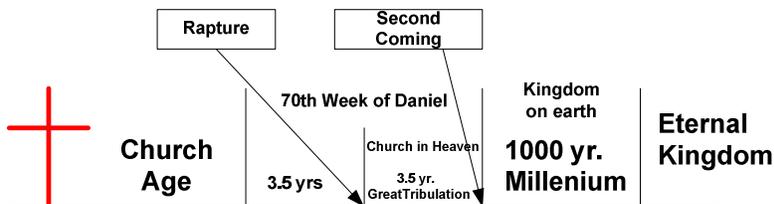
**Pretribulational View** – In the Pretribulational view, the Rapture happens **before** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation. Also, they make a sharp distinction between Israel and the church and insist that God cannot be dealing with both groups during Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Believers in Revelation 6-19 during Tribulation are Tribulation Saints.

### Pretribulational View



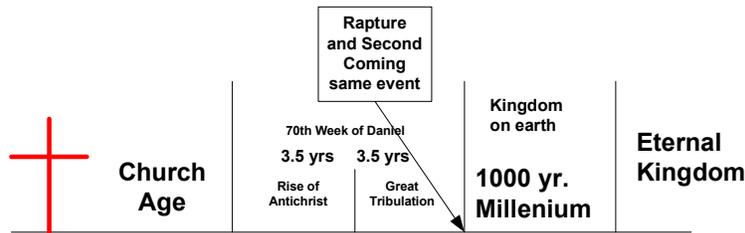
**Midtribulational View** – In the Midtribulational view, the Rapture happens at the **mid-point** of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and before the Great Tribulation which is defined as the last 3.5 years of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Thus the church does not go through the Great Tribulation.

### Midtribulational View



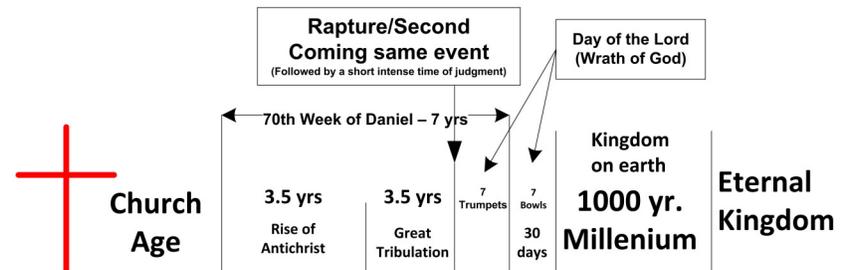
**Posttribulational View** - In the Posttribulational view, the Rapture happens **after** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Thus the church will go through the Great Tribulation. In this view the **rapture and the second coming are the same event**.

### Posttribulational View



**PreWrath View** - In the PreWrath view, the **Rapture** happens **during** the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel and after the Great Tribulation which is distinguished from the Day of the Lord, God’s wrath on the unbelieving world. Thus *the church will go through the Great Tribulation, but not through the wrath of God*. In this view the **Rapture** and the **Second Coming** are the **same event, but separated by a short and intense time of judgment (Trumpet and Bowl judgments)**.

### Pre-Wrath View



### Pre-Tribulation Rapture

The reasoning for the **Pre-Tribulational Rapture** view is based on the **Dispensational** framework of Israel and the Church, being two distinct entities which have different roles and time spans in redemptive history. It was first **introduced** in the early **19<sup>th</sup> Century**. In this view, the current Church Age is the Dispensation of Grace, which is also referring to as the “**times of the Gentiles**” (Rom 11:25-26), and is distinct from the “time of Jacob’s Trouble,” (Jer 30:7) when God will **save Israel** during the **Tribulation** and after that **Christ** will return **with His Church** to reign in the Millennium.

**Romans 11:25-26** - 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that **a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved;** just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." NASB

Thus they believe that these two time periods do not overlap and **when** the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, **then** begins the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, that 7 year period when God will again deal with Jews during the Tribulation. Thus **Pre-Tribbers** see **two comings** of **Christ**, one before the Tribulation (70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel) **for His Church**, and then after the Tribulation to establish the Millennium **with His Church**. They believe the language in 1 Thess 4:15-17 speaks of Christ coming “**for His Church**” and then the language for the Second Coming speaks of Christ coming “**with His Church**” (1 Thess 3:13, 2 Thess 2:10). Also, this view does not see **continuity** between **Jesus** teaching in **Matthew 24** and **Paul’s** in **1 Thess 4:15-5:4**. The Rapture is not pictured in Matthew 24 and can only be seen in the Thessalonian passages and also in Revelation 3:15, 4:1. The presence of believers in the Tribulation are Christian converts during the Tribulation by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

The **arguments** for the **Pretribulation Rapture** are as follows; (from Grudem's Systematic Theology)

1. The **entire period** of the **tribulation** will be a time of the **outpouring of God's wrath** on all the earth. Therefore it would not be appropriate for Christians to be on the earth at that time.

2. Jesus promises in **Rev 3:10**, "I will **keep you from the hour of trial** which is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell upon the earth." This passage indicates that **the church will be taken out of the world** before that hour of trial comes.

3. If Christ returns after the tribulation and defeats all his enemies, then **where will the unbelievers come from who are necessary to populate the millennial kingdom?** The pretribulation position, however, envisages thousands of Jewish believers who have become Christians during the tribulation and who will go into the millennial kingdom in non-glorified bodies.

4. This view makes it **possible to believe that Christ could come at any moment (his coming before the tribulation)** and yet that many signs must be fulfilled **before he comes (his coming after the tribulation)**, when the signs will be fulfilled).

Although it is not specifically an argument in favor of a pretribulation position, it must also be noted that **pretribulationists** then view the teaching about the **tribulation in Matt 24** and the warnings and encouragements given to believers in that situation **as applying to Jewish believers during the tribulation, and not to the church generally.**

The **arguments against this Pre-Tribulational** view are;

1. Scripture **nowhere** clearly portrays this or speaks of **two comings of Christ**. The Second Coming is always spoken of as **one event**. There simply is no Scripture passage that clearly says it is **two events separated by 7 years**.
2. Scripture **nowhere** clearly says that the **Church** will be **taken out of the world before the Tribulation** in a secret rapture, but on the contrary in those passages that speak of the Second Coming it has been understood by believers throughout history to be a very **visible, cataclysmic, public rapture** just a few moments prior to His Coming to the earth with them. (Matt 24:29-31, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 17:22-37, 1 Cor 15:51-54, 1 Thes 4:15-5:4, 2 Thes 2:1-3, Dan 12:1-3). Grudem comments; *"Moreover, it is very difficult to understand 1 Thess 4:17, the only passage that explicitly speaks of the fact that the church will be "caught up" (or "raptured"), to speak of the idea of a secret coming. It says, "The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God" (1 Thess 4:16). Of these words Leon Morris rightly says, "It may be that from this he intends us to understand that the rapture will take place secretly, and that no one except the saints themselves will know what is going on. But one would hardly gather this from his words. It is difficult to see how he could more plainly describe something that is open and public." The doctrine of a pretribulation rapture is an inference from several passages, all of which are disputed. Moreover, even if one believes this doctrine to be in Scripture, it is taught with such little clarity that it was not discovered until the nineteenth century. This does not make it seem likely."*
3. It is **incompatible** with **Jesus teaching** about His **return** in the **Parable of the Ten Virgins**. The Lord is teaching about **being ready** for His Coming in this parable and the **main point** of the parable is that **if you are not ready that you cannot be saved after He comes.**

**Matthew 25:1-13** - Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "And **five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.** 3 "**For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.** 5 "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 "But at midnight there was a shout, '**Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.**' 7 "Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough

for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 "And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 "But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. NASB

This clearly contradicts one of the main tenets of Pretribulationism because they teach that there will be **thousands saved in the Tribulation** (after the return of Christ) by the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (of which the text of Revelation 7 does not say anything about these being evangelists). Jesus also taught in Luke 13 that only the faithful could enter His Kingdom and no one could be saved after His return.

**Luke 13:24-30** - 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; **for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** 25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, all you evildoers.' 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. 29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last." NASB

It is clear that the **Lord emphasizes** that if you are **not faithful and ready** for Him and living in **saving relation to Him** at His return, the **“door will be shut”** and no else will be let in. He emphasizes being ready and faithful for His return therefore.

4. Paul could have easily reasoned for a Pre-Trib Rapture in his discourse to the Thessalonians. This is because Paul was answering the question in 2 Thessalonians that they thought that the **Lord had come already** and they were in the Tribulation period because of the **intense persecution** they were undergoing. But Paul told them that **the Lord had not returned** and will not return and gather them until **two things happen first**. Those two things being the **revealing of the Anti-Christ** and the **great apostasy** caused by him (2 Thes 2:1-4). If Paul had been a Pre-tribber he could have simply said, the Lord hasn't come because you haven't been raptured. Instead he told them of signs that must precede the Second Coming, which he says is the same event as the Rapture (2 Thess 2:1). John Piper comments on this in his morning sermon of 8-30-87. <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/definitionsand-observations-concerning-the-second-coming-of-christ> "If Paul were a pre-tribulationist why did he not simply say in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 that the Christians don't need to worry that the day of the Lord is here because all the Christians are still here? Instead he talks just the way you would expect a post-tribulation person to do. He tells them that they should not think that the day of the Lord is here because the apostasy and the man of lawlessness have not appeared." He described **signs that must take place** before the **“coming of the Lord,”** [Second Coming] which he called **“our gathering together to him”** [Rapture] (verse 2:1). These **signs** he said were

1) The apostasy ... v-2:3

2) The man of lawlessness revealed (the Antichrist).... v-2:3

**2 Thess 2:1-3** – 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with **regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [Second Coming], and our gathering together to Him [Rapture]**, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, NASB

**2 Thess 2:1-3** - 2 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,

2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed,** the son of destruction, NASB

SECOND  
COMING  
& RAPTURE  
Same event

These won't  
happen UNTIL  
1) Apostasy  
2) Antichrist

5. Pretribulationists **emphasize** that Christians will **never suffer** the **wrath** of **God** and rightly so (1 Thess 1:10, 5:9). Thus they say the **Church** will **not be present** in the **Tribulation** because it is a time of **wrath** from God. The problem with this is the Scripture nowhere clearly says that all **suffering** in the **Tribulation** is the result of the **wrath of God**. Grudem comments; *“It is inconsistent with the New Testament descriptions of the tribulation to say that all the suffering that occurs during that time is specifically the result of the wrath of God. Much of the suffering is due to the fact that “wickedness is multiplied” (Matt 24:12) and the fact that persecution of the church and opposition from Satan greatly increases during this period. Of course all Christians (whether Gentile or Jewish believers) will avoid the wrath of God at all times, but this does not mean they will avoid all suffering, even in times of intense hardship.”* End quote. In fact, much of the suffering in the Tribulation is the result of the Antichrist and his terrible career of deception and idolatrous rage against God. The Scripture speaks of the **“astounding devastation”** that he will cause (Dan 8:24-25) and Jesus said of that time (the Abomination of Desolation... Antichrist’s work Dan 9:24-27, Rev 13:1-18) that if those days were not cut short no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, (whom Antichrist will persecute severely) those days will be cut short.

**Matthew 24:21-22** - 21 for then **there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.** 22 **“And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.** NASB

This is resolved in the **Pre-wrath** view because the Second Coming/Rapture actually happens before the wrath of God in the Trumpet and Bowl judgments are poured out. Thus the **Church** will **go through the Tribulation**, but **not the wrath of God**.

## **Pre-wrath and/or Post-Trib Rapture**

Both the **Pre-Wrath** and **Post-Trib Rapture** views teach that the **church will go through the Tribulation** which makes the **Rapture** to be an event that happens **after the Tribulation**. Moreover, they see it as a **visible, public spectacular event** that is seen by the entire world of people (Matt 24:29-31, Rev 1:7). There are some differences in these two views, but both see the Church in the Great tribulation period. This is because the Scripture clearly teaches that the Church is focus of the Anti-Christ’s persecution, which results from the fact that he will **“cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed,”** and those who do not take his mark cannot **“buy or sell.”**

**Revelation 13:14-17** - 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, **telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast** who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that **the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of**

**the beast to be killed.** 16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, **to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark,** either the name of the beast or the number of his name. NASB

This is clearly **focused on the Church** because they will refuse to “**worship the image of the beast**” and they certainly will not take his “**mark on their right hand or their forehead.**” Daniel chapter 7 teaches that the **Anti-Christ** (the **little horn**) would **make war with God’s saints** who are alive when he is revealed and that he will “**overpower them until the Ancient of Days came,**” and “**the time arrived for the saints to receive the Kingdom.**” They are the focus of his destructive work.

**Daniel 7:21-22** - 21 "I kept looking, and **that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came,** and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and **the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom**." NASB

This is the **sequence of events** as **Revelation** unfolds from **chapter 13-20** when Christ has finally come, delivered the Church by cutting short Anti-Christ’s Tribulation by bringing judgments upon them and his followers, finally destroying them when He arrives. Then in chapter 20, they receive the Kingdom. In fact Revelation clearly says that He will “**make war with the saints and overcome them,**” an almost exact quote from Daniel 7:21.

**Revelation 13:5-7** - 5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and **authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.** 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 **And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them;** and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. NASB

But his time is limited and for a **God’s very specific purpose.** The Church will stand as a witness against this world ruling idolater, even as he and the world of **unbelievers persecute** her severely. This is exactly how Daniel describes this **sequence of events.** Notice that both Daniel and Revelation say that the **Antichrist** will have **power over the saints for 42 months** (3.5 years).

**Daniel 7:25-27** - 25 'And he will speak out against the Most High and **wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.** 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 '**Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One;** His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

Just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the King’s image and were thrown into the furnace of fire in Daniel chapter 3. This is the **Old Testament type of the Church’s last days persecution,** and **God glorifying witness** to the unbelieving and unrepentant world. This is remarkably consistent with what Jesus taught. He taught that the **Tribulation would begin** when the **Anti-Christ** was **revealed** by his **Abomination of Desolation.** Jesus said, when you see THAT, “**THEN there will be a time of great tribulation.**” It will be a time of such terrible deception and destruction that for “**the sake of God’s elect**” people it will be “**cut short.**” This is because they are the target of Anti-Christ’s destructive work, as we just saw in Revelation 13 and Daniel 7.

**Matthew 24:15-23** - 15 "Therefore **when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place** (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; 21 **for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.** 22 "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; **but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.** NASB

This **teaching of Jesus** is in fact the very **basis of Paul’s arguments in 1 & 2 Thessalonians.** In chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians Paul is clearly telling the Church that the Lord will not come [Second

Coming] and “gather us to Him” [Rapture] until the “apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed.”

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 - 2 Now we request you, brethren, **with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him**, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for **it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the son of destruction, NASB

Here Paul is saying virtually the same thing Jesus did in Matthew 24:15-22, when you see the **Abomination of Desolation**, then the whole world will be deceived and the Anti-Christ’s destructive career for **42 months** (3.5 years), the Tribulation will begin. Then you will know that “the Coming of the Lord and our gathering to Him” will be right at hand.

Paul goes on in verses 4-12 to teach that Anti-Christ will indeed deceive the entire world of unbelievers and that this will be the testing and trial of the whole world to see who would “**love the truth and be saved**” or reject it and perish through his “**lying signs and wonders**.” All of this Paul says will happen by the hand of God’s own Providence. So in these few passages concerning the Anti-Christ you clearly see that his focus is on “**making war with the saints**” who are his **target** in the **Tribulation period**. This is the witness of Daniel, Jesus, Paul and Revelation.

Now what is also true about both the **Pre-Wrath** and **Post-Trib Rapture** views is that they see the Second Coming of Christ AS the deliverance of the Church from that time of Tribulation by no less than a **visible, public spectacular event** that is seen by the entire world of people. Here then is the Rapture **after** the Tribulation. For the **Pre-Wrath** view it is **after** the **persecution** of the **Tribulation** but **BEFORE** the **wrath** of **God** in the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments. And for the Post-Trib view it is after both the Tribulation and the Wrath. Yet in both views the Rapture is **AFTER** the **Tribulation**. Now we maintain that this is also very clear in Scripture. You might remember from page 12 of this study the discussion and chart about Jesus Olivet Discourse. As we consider Matthew chapter 24, in the first 31 verses, Jesus gives a **clear chronology** of how **events will unfold leading up to His Second Coming**. This chronology is seen in the chart below.

### Chronology of Events in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24



It is the clearest place in all the Bible where these end time events and characters are seen in a **timing** and **sequence** which leads up to and culminates in His **sudden, visible, glorious**, return for **deliverance with powerful angels** for His disciples from a world in the midst of **Great Tribulation**. In fact **Jesus clearly tells us** that the “**coming of the Lord**,” [Second Coming] and “**our gathering together to him**” [Rapture] happens “**immediately after the Tribulation**” which He “**cuts short**.”

Matthew 24:29-31 - 29 "But **immediately after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30

and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.** 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. NASB

**Mark 13:24-27** - 24 "But in those days, **after that tribulation,** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "And then **they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.** 27 "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, **from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.** NASB

Notice also in the passage in Mark 13 He says the gathering of His elect will be **"from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven."** This sounds much like Paul in 1 Thess 4:15-17, **"the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air,"** for they are not just being gathered from earth but also from heaven. In fact, the language of Paul's famous "rapture passage" is strikingly similar to that of the Lord. Paul even tells us that his teaching "we say to you by the word of the Lord" v-15. Most commentators agree that Paul is making reference to Jesus teaching in the Olivet Discourse. Then Paul describes almost verbatim what Jesus said in Matthew 24:29-31.

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18** - 15 For this we say to you **by the word of the Lord,** that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 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.** 17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.** 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Notice in Matthew 24 and in 1 Thes 4:15-17 the presence of angels, trumpets, shouting and great glory, and His elect be gathered to Him where He is, **"in the clouds"** or **"in the air."** So what is clear in both passages is that at **Jesus Coming He gathers His elect saints** and this even includes **"the dead in Christ,"** thus we see this gathering also includes a **massive resurrection** of all **dead believers** of at least the last two thousand years. This is also how **Daniel described** the rescue of God's **saints** from the **Tribulation,** by a powerful resurrection.

**Daniel 12:1-3** - 12 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And **there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.** 2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. NASB

So this **Second Coming** is seen as that **same event** as the **gathering of the elect.** This is in fact exactly how Paul said it in 2 Thessalonians.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3** - 2 Now we request you, brethren, **with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him.**

Notice also when he comes He will be **glorified in His saints** and will **repay with affliction** those who afflict you. As we said, the **Second Coming** is the **deliverance** of His saints from a world **persecuting them** in the **Tribulation.** This of course is exactly how events unfold in the Revelation from chapter 13-20.

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-11** - 6 For after all it is only just **for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,** 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,** 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day,** and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

In these passages we have seen that the **Church** will go **through the Tribulation** which places the **Rapture AFTER** the **Tribulation.**