

Invader, or Messiah?

An Annotated Outline of the Last days for Those Left Behind at the Rapture

Phone Edition

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Imagine for a Minute

Imagine for just a minute that you are not a Christian. Oh, you have heard “the gospel” as they called it, about Jesus paying the price for our ticket to Heaven by dying on the cross for our sins, then being raised from the dead to prove He succeeded, then ascending into Heaven until His return. Some even *begged* you accept this free ticket, trusting God to bring you to Heaven when you die, just as the Bible says.

Now, sometimes that simple message got foggy when they added conditions like “repentance” (which sounded like you had to *stop sinning* as part of the salvation package) or a special prayer (which had to be done just right), or some religious ritual. BTW, Dear Reader, biblically speaking, the term “repentance” refers to a *change of mind*, a *turning* (not a stopping)—a *turning to God from idols* like self, money, pleasure, power, or politicians. It is a *synonym for faith, not cleaning up your life*. Sin has polluted every soul so badly that only a gracious God can fix it, and at great price. ((See John 5:24-25: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly,

truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” Also, Romans 8:1-4!))

So, you put it off a few times with some excuse or other, like “If there is a good God, then why is there all this suffering in the world?” or “What about the person who never heard this gospel?” or “I am not a big sinner like [insert name], so God should let me into Heaven without all that.” Baloney! We are ALL infected with sin—Rom 3:21-28. Even when they began to make sense you avoided embracing the message. And now they are gone. Every Christian you ever knew—even the *dead* ones—gone! What?! They were right all along?!

And this Rapture thing—what does it mean, *really*? Is the world going to be destroyed or something? Am I doomed forever? Is it *too late* to become a Christian? Are they going to torture me if I become a Christian? What *will* happen if I turn to Jesus Christ now? I don’t *know* anything!

This paper was written for millions like you—to help you in the confusion—to understand the various attempts to “explain” the Rapture and who Jesus really is and to provide you biblical counsel throughout the Great Tribulation just ahead.

Preface

Please keep in mind that this is but an annotated outline by one Bible student, written before the Rapture. My intent is to help those left behind who want to do their own biblical investigation of that event and the subsequent era, in the hope of their personal salvation and/or encouragement in the dark period immediately ahead. If you work through this study diligently, I expect you will find that it accurately portrays the biblical literature. If, on the other hand, you at first doubt or reject the biblical data itself, then please watch carefully as events unfold. (See Rev 1:3, 22:10-21.)

The Book of Job is the oldest of the 66 books of the Bible, and it has the first reference to Jesus' Second Coming. Job 19:25 reads, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth." Considering Job's suffering and what you are about to endure, I pray you will one day soon find this verse deeply comforting. Others will view His imminent return as threatening and even terrifying. But make no mistake—Jesus is coming again. And you will have to make some big decisions between now and then. In particular, whether he is Invader, or Messiah.

Whatever you do, no matter the pressure and temporal cost to you and your loved ones, do not choose to get the "mark of the beast", which is related to the number six hundred and sixty-six and to the Antichrist (Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20-21; 20:4). ***It will become harder and harder to resist the mark because without it you will not be able to buy or sell.*** (See Page 27.7.b.2).)

Note to readers before the Rapture or in areas where it is not yet dangerous to be a Christian: If you can, please send this document along to everyone you know. It is designed to be easily distributed via email. Importantly, if you have a "smart device" (such as an iPod, iPhone, Android, tablet, etc.) that can email documents, you can save this study into your iBooks app or, in the case of non-Apple devices, to your documents folder. This will allow you to read and "share" or email it from there and delete the email you received with this attachment.

Note to readers after the Rapture or in areas where it is now dangerous to be a Christian: If you are viewing this document on a "smart device," please set your device to "Airplane Mode" immediately, in order to lessen easy detection and location by those searching for people using Christian content. Remember, it is possible that they can still see your location even in airplane mode, as long as your

smart device is powered on. When sharing the file with others, do NOT use email or text, since these methods use your very insecure cellular network. It is sometimes possible to use WIFI to share this study on a public network, although a direct Bluetooth phone-to-phone transfer may be the best way to send a file if a flash drive, etc. on a very secure PC is unavailable. In all situations, please ensure that both ends of your communication are secure. See the *Sharing Files* appendix.

In case you are unfamiliar with biblical references, "Rev 14:9-11; 16:11-16," for example, means the Book of Revelation, the 14th chapter, verses 9 through 11 and the 16th chapter, verses 11 through 16. You will most certainly want to have some version of the Bible resident on your smart device (rather than using an online Bible, which requires you to use a network to access the data). On the other hand, it will at some point be dangerous to be caught with a Bible OR this study in your possession, should you be singled out and examined by anti-Christian authorities.

May God bless you in your study! Check out Romans 8:18-23 before you begin.

Bob Della Valle

There is a period near the end of history as we know it which theologians call the eschaton (the end thing). The Bible commonly refers to this era as the “last days.” Properly, eschatology labors to understand the biblical data on the last days. Here is one attempt, basically in outline form, to better comprehend the eschaton and to communicate vital information and the precious hope you will need.

When do or did the “last days” begin? Some New Testament passages strongly infer that we are already in the last days (1 Pet 1:20; 4:7; 1 Jn 2:18; Jude 1:18), while others point to a period near the end of this age (2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3). Perhaps it is safe to say that we are in the last days, with a culmination period still to come (cf. Dan 2:28; 8:17; 1 Pet 1:5). The Last Days were initiated by the First Coming of Jesus, so this is where we will begin our outline (cf. Heb 1:2).

Since the earliest days of human history (i.e., Garden of Eden), Satan has said, "God is not your friend, I am your friend." In these last days, expect that same message, but in a slightly different form. Because of his need to "explain" the Rapture and (later) the Second Coming and to fool the people of Earth, the father of lies will say (through his agents), "Jesus is a half-breed bad-guy extraterrestrial,

an evil invader coming back to take over Earth and to enslave or kill you. But I am your ally, I am your friend. I will help you save humanity and your planet from extinction."

However, you will discover (I hope not too late) that Satan and his Antichrist actually hate you and intend only your ruin. The eternal reality is that Jesus loves His creation and each member of the human race. Remember, there are two comings of Christ—first, as the incarnate Word of God who came to enlighten us all and to save us all from our sins; second, as the finally revealed King of Kings who will completely rescue this populous planet from the true enemy and his plan of utter destruction.

I. Introduction: Pre-Tribulational Events.

A. The “Christ Event”: The King Visits the Earth (Mt 1-Acts 1).

1. Incarnation: The King Comes in the Flesh (Gen 3:15; 49:10; Isa 7:14; 9:6; Dan 9:25-26; Mic 5:2; Mt 1; Lk 1; Jn 1:14). It is not that the infinite becomes finite, but that the 2nd Person of the Trinity

takes on an additional nature, fully human, leaving the singular Divine Nature unchanged. Huh?! Please visit the *Hypostatic Union* appendix. (**SONG:** “*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*”)

2. Earthly Ministry: The King Reveals Himself and the Sender (Jn 1:18; Mt 1-Acts 1). Want to know better the character of God? Just study the life and teachings of Jesus.
3. Crucifixion: The King Is Rejected (Isa 53; Dan 9:26; Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 24; Jn 19; Jn 1:12). This was not unexpected in Heaven. Knowing the depth of man's fall, the Trinity had a plan all along—for Christ to pay our sin debt and to transfer us from the darkness to the light (Mt 16:13-23; Mk 8:31-33; Lk 9:22; 24:7; Col 1:13-14; 2 Tim 1:8-10; 1 Pet 1:20-22; Rev 13:8).
4. Resurrection: The King's Right to Rule Is Vindicated (Mt 28:1-7; Mk 16:1-16; Lk 24:1-53; Jn 20; 1 Cor 15:3-8, 14, 17-26; Phil 3:9-11; Col 1:13-14; 2:12-14). The payment for our sin debt and our

citizenship transfer out of the kingdom of darkness are complete and official in Heaven.

5. Ascension: The King Is Glorified (Lk 24:26, 45-53; Jn 20:17; Acts 1:9; 2:33-35; Eph 1:20-23; 4:8-11; Phil 2:9-10; Heb 1:1-3; 2:9; 12:2). He sits down at the right hand of the Father until the time for His Second Coming arrives (Mt 23:37-39; Mk 14:62; 16:19; Lk 20:42-43; Acts 3:19, 21-23; Rom 11:25-27; 1 Cor 4:5; 11:26; Heb 10:12-13; Jas 5:7; Rev 2:25; 11:15-19).

B. Church Age: The “Mystery” Form of the Kingdom (Acts 2-Rev 3).

1. Pentecost: The Church Begins—Acts 2. This was originally a Jewish holiday called the “Feast of Weeks,” 50 days after Passover—a day of rejoicing, celebrating God’s faithful provision to Israel in a bountiful harvest. In this sending of the Holy Spirit, the holiday message was expanded both demographically and spiritually: God has provided a bountiful salvation through the Christ to all peoples of the world, just as Peter preached (Acts 2:14-40). With this event, the

Holy Spirit (the Third Person of the One Godhead) began to indwell believers—see Jn 14:16-17.

NOTE: The Bible does not say that the Holy Spirit does not *indwell* Tribulation (“Trib”) Saints, but He is certainly *with* all believers just as He was with Joshua, David, Samson, and all the Old Testament Saints.

2. By “the Church,” the apostles are not referring to some religious organization, but rather to the entire “body of Christ.” (John 14:17; Acts 1:5, 8; Rom 8:9-11; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; Col 1:27b; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22).
3. The Church Age Proper (Acts 2-Rev 3).

In the strictest theological sense, the Church Age continues until what Jesus called the “age to come,” which is the Millennial (1,000-year) Kingdom that begins after His return following the Great Tribulation detailed in Rev 4-19—Section II of this study, Pages 16-49. However, since the Church is gone from Earth during Rev 4-19, the term “Church Age Proper” is used, denoting the time

from the inception of the Church (Pentecost) until its members are taken up in the Rapture.

- a. The Church grows, but there is some apostasy (Mt 16:18; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 4:1-4) and much suffering (Jn 16:33; James 1:2; 1 Pet 2:19-21; 3:14; 4:12-19).
- b. Christ intercedes for the brethren who sin (i.e., all) (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1), as does the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27).
- c. The Mystery of Lawlessness is at work (2 Ths 2:7). It did not cease with the arrival of the Church Age, and it will certainly snowball immediately after the onset of the Tribulation Period—see Pages 14.b and 18.1.b below.
- d. Jerusalem & Temple Destroyed: Israel's centerstage role is set aside until the Tribulation (Dan 9:26; Mt 24:2; Lk 19:43-44).

In the days of Noah, people lived for many centuries because ultraviolet rays and diseases were not as rampant as in our day. Before the Global Flood, in which

God judged the world of men, He warned them of the coming judgment. Noah (though not a perfect man by any means) responded to the message in faith (Heb 11:7). It took Noah 120 years to build the ark, and all the while he preached the same warning to which he had responded (Gen 6:3; 2 Pet 2:5-6). But his neighbors all kept going with their daily lives, ignoring his message, just as you "dissed" the Christians you knew before the Rapture took place, even when they told you about the coming Rapture and the terrible Tribulation to follow. As Jesus said, "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah . . . and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away" (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-30). Just as God shut the door behind Noah (Gen 6:16), He has shut the door behind those Christians after the Rapture. Reader, you have missed the bus. What now? Read on!

4. Rapture: The Church is Removed to Heaven (Jn 14:1-3; 1 Ths 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Rev 3:10; Mt 25:1-13?).
 - a. In the twinkling of an eye, the dead in Christ are resurrected into their eternal bodies; the alive in Christ are translated into their

eternal bodies; and all are caught up and taken by Jesus into Heaven (1 Cor 15:51-55; Phil 3:20; 1 Ths 4:13-18).

- b. Simultaneously, the evil-restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit, accomplished largely through the Church (i.e., the community of biblical Christians) is removed (2 Ths 2:3, 6-7).
5. The Bema Judgment: Church believers are rewarded for earthly deeds (Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 1 Cor 3:12-15; 4:4-5; 9:24-27; 2 Cor 5:6-10; Gal 6:7-10; 1 Tim 6:18-19; 2 Tim 4:6-8; 2 Pet 1:10-11; Rev 3:11-12). Tribulation Saints (this could be you) will be rewarded later (Rev 22:12).

NOTE: The term "*saints*" does not refer to religious or spiritual superheroes, but simply to believers in Christ, i.e., biblical believers in all periods (in ours, "Christians")—see Psa 16:3; 34:9; Dan 7:18, 21-22, Dan 7:25, 27; Matt 27:52; Acts 9:13, 32, 41; Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25-26, and many other passages.

Why a "pre-millennial, pre-tribulational" Rapture? There are numerous reasons, but some are found in the literature of Revelation itself: **First**, one observes repeated mention of the Church in Revelation 1-3, which addresses the [pre-Rapture] Church, but a sudden cessation of its mention at the end of Rev 3. **Second**, Rev 4:1 makes a sudden shift in focus from the present to the future—"Come up here, and I (Jesus) will show you (Apostle John) what must take place after these things." **Third**, the scene shifts from Earth to Heaven and the opening of the scroll (Rev 5:1f), which contains the judgments of the Tribulation, to be rolled out in seven major phases (Rev 6ff). Circumstantial evidence, perhaps, but substantial in light of other factors.

Please give careful literary study also to Rev 3:10; 1 Ths 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:1-11; and 2 Ths 2:1-7, at least. Note from these passages that ***the purpose of the Tribulation is to test the people of the world, not the believers in Jesus Christ per se***. As in the days of Noah, the patience of God has its limits, and His plan for the earth always includes a period of judgment before it rolls on to the next economy. The Tribulation is just such a period and precedes the coming Kingdom or Millennial period.

II. The Tribulation: The King Defeats His Enemies (Isa 24; Dan 7:27; 12:10; Rev 4-19).

NOTE: Although many of the events of the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments seem to be of natural or human origin, they are really earthly results of forces unleashed by Heaven, much like the ten plagues in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. God has no trouble orchestrating natural events and even human decisions in His plan for the ages. God either allows men to make certain decisions (sometimes even under the influence of demons) or sends "natural" phenomena to demonstrate His power, all to get the attention of men and to warn them of impending judgment before they enter eternity. As the Tribulation unfolds, it will become more and more obvious that these frightening events are truly sent forth from Heaven as warning signs. Keep in mind, Jesus Christ will rule Earth, but only believers will enter into that kingdom—more on this later.

A. *Only Jesus Christ (as Judge [“Lion”], King [“Root”], and Savior [“Lamb”]) Is Qualified to Open the Judgments Scroll (Rev 5:1-14). See also John 5:22-24. (SONG: “Is He Worthy?”)*

NOTE: A few words about scrolls and seals. Books and large documents in our day are *bound*—usually in the form of paperbacks, hard-bound books, etc. Centuries ago, however, documents (especially longer ones) were rolled up in scroll form on one large page. Official scrolls were sealed at the top edge with wax and impressed with the [signet ring] of the sender. The intended recipient would break the seal and unroll the scroll to read the document. After a longer scroll was written, it could be rolled from the bottom up and sealed with wax section by section to control access to the next section of the document. The scroll mentioned in Revelation 5:1 and following had seven such seals. A seal would be broken and that section of the scroll was unrolled and read until it came to the next seal. (Examples: 1 Kgs 21:8; Esth 1:8; Isa 29:11; Dan 6:17, 12:9.)

The Bible also speaks of another kind of seal. It was more of a permanent branding to mark the sealed entity as belonging to its owner. (See 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13, 4:30; Rev 7:3-8.)

B. First Half of the Tribulation—The Beginning of Sorrows (Mt 24:3-8; Mk 13:5-8)—*The Seven Seals* (Rev 6:1-8:1).

The judgments of the Tribulation should be seen as *cumulative*, rather than simply *consecutive*. The effects of a given seal, for instance, probably continue on long after the next one has been opened.

1. First Seal (White Horse)—A Conquering Hero (Rev 6:1-2).
 - a. The Beast (“the Antichrist”) rises to prominence by establishing a mighty federation of ten national or multi-national entities, and seems, for a while, to be the hero of the world (Dan 2:40-43; 7:7-8, 23-24; Rev 6:1-2; 13:1-4). He is aided by a “foreign god” (ET?) (Dan 11:36-39), who is really Satan (Rev 12:1-9). However, the Beast is not dictator yet.
 - b. The Beast is “revealed” (2 Ths 2:3, 8) by making a “firm covenant” with Israel for seven years (Dan 9:27). (*The Tribulation begins not with the Rapture, but with the opening of the First Seal in Heaven.* Still, this "covenant" may be inked just as the First Seal is broken.) Now the 7-Year Tribulation officially begins.

2. Second Seal (Red Horse)—War Everywhere (Rev 6:3-4).

This seal seems to be opened near the middle of the Tribulation, as far as I can deduce from the subsequent data. Much of the fighting that begins now will probably continue far into the second half of the Tribulation.

NOTE: This seal reminds me of the *Star Wars* saga, in which the evil Emperor Palpatine engineers a series of wars (playing both sides) in order to weaken the republic and seize power by popular demand. Satan may well make this kind of play through his Antichrist, but never forget, Dear Reader, that God is the one who is ultimately in control. History is going somewhere!

- a. The King of the South (an Afro-Arabic Bloc, possibly including non-Arabic Iran/Persia, since the Muslim world hates Jews) attacks Israel and the Beast (Dan 11:40a).
- b. The King of the North (a Russian Bloc) attacks (perhaps simultaneously?) Israel and the Beast (Dan 11:40b, 41; Ezek 38:1-17; 39:2?).

Some scholars believe Ezek 38-39 refers to the post-millennial rebellion mentioned in Rev 20:8-9, but, since these chapters come just before the section in Ezekiel about the Millennial Temple, I (without better clarification) prefer to place them for now in the pre-millennial Tribulation.

- c. The Beast takes credit for defeating them all and occupies Israel and northern Africa (Dan 11:40c-43; Ezek 38:18-23; 39:4-16?). (Probably near Mid-Trib—see Page 25.4.)
- d. The Beast hears “rumors from the East and from the North” and launches an all-out war (Dan 11:44), which probably continues well into latter half of the Trib.
- e. The Beast sets up his headquarters west of Jerusalem, which remains under his control and oppression until the end (Isa 63:18; Dan 8:13-14; 11:45; Zech 14:2; Lk 21:24; Rev 11:2).

3. Third Seal (Black Horse)—Economic Disaster, especially relative to staples (Rev 6:5-6).
4. Fourth Seal (Ashen Horse)—Widespread Death from War, Famine, Pestilence, and Animals (Rev 6:7-8; Ezek 38:21-23; 39:6?).
5. Fifth Seal—Martyrdom for the Word (Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-17). (The Beast partly blames Christians for Seals 3 & 4?) This is a test, Trib Saints. (You were not a believer when the Rapture took place, so many of the tests of the Tribulation apply to you.) You missed the Rapture, preferring then (if anything) a cross-less gospel, a moralizing Jesus, and your own self-righteousness. Even now, however, *holding onto the Savior-King the way He holds onto you will pay off* (eternally speaking), though it will probably (as the Great Tribulation proceeds) cost you your temporal life. But Jesus says this: "*I will never leave you or forsake you*" (Deut 31:6; Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5-6). (**SONG:** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!")

6. Sixth Seal—Terrible geophysical upheaval, including a great earthquake (with severe volcanic eruptions?), meteor showers, and a partial reshaping of Earth's topography. The sun will be blackened, and the moon will turn red (Rev 6:12-17; Ezek 38:19-20). ***Both the wise and the empire leadership know by now that God and the Lamb are the ones behind all these events***—see Rev 6:16.
7. Seventh Seal—The first half of the Tribulation began with a Seal {the First}, and now the second half begins with a seal, the Seventh. More right below.

C. Middle of the Tribulation: A Series of Events

Heaven is normally a joyous place, filled with sounds of worship. Never silent. But when the Seventh Seal is broken, there is ***silence in Heaven for half an hour*** (in mourning for what is about to happen on Earth?) (Rev 8:1).

Before the surface-harming judgments of the Seven Trumpets are allowed to begin, the sealing of the 144,000 Jewish [new] believers must take place (Rev 7:3).

This sealing probably occurs just before any of the many Tribulation judgments begin—if not before even the First Seal is broken. The breaking of the Seventh Seal is what actually initiates the second half of the Tribulation, with its Seven Trumpets, Seven Bowls, etc. See Point 1, below.

Around the middle of the Tribulation, however, a number of events and processes come together, so now seems to be a good time to insert them into our outline. You will notice that some of these items seem to tie back to the Second Seal, while others will continue on well into the second half of the Tribulation (if not to the end). Furthermore, you will feel the growing pressure of the both *overlapping and accumulating of effects* mentioned on Pages 18, top and 32.D.

Although the exact order of these events is difficult, if not impossible, to establish at the time of this writing, Trib Saints will likely be able to see how they all fit together. So, the order given below is only suggested.

1. The Sealing of the 144,000 Jewish Saints—12,000 from each of 12 Jewish tribes (Rev 7:1-8). As noted above, this may well take place at the beginning of the Tribulation—before any of the judgments are

unleashed—but certainly no later than Mid-Trib (compare Rev 7:3 with 8:7). No matter, though, since the sealing itself is invisible on Earth, and endurance is the challenge (Mt 24:13; Rev 21:1-8), just as it was in the Church Age (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). All believers are to hold on to the Cross and King for ultimate blessing—position and reward in the coming Kingdom—while unbelieving rejecters of Christ, embracers of sin, will reap the opposite.

2. The Sending of the Two Witnesses to Minister in Jerusalem for 1,260 Days (Rev 11:1-14).

These two men will quickly be recognized by the world as agents of Jesus and will be considered to be the ones who have been causing the plagues for the second half of the Tribulation, much as the Egyptians blamed Moses for the ten plagues of the Exodus. The six Seal Judgments will probably have been attributed by most on Earth to natural and/or human-caused disasters. But with the miracle-working Two Witnesses of God preaching repentance to Israel (and to the rest of the planet as well), and calling down fire from Heaven, etc. (Rev 11:6), the whole world will realize that something else is going on.

Thus, when near the end of the Tribulation the Two Witnesses are killed, the unbelieving world rejoices greatly, thinking that the plagues will now cease (Rev 11:10). Instead, after a few days, things get much worse. The Two Witnesses will be restored to life and caught up to Heaven—see Page 34.2).

3. Satan is "thrown down"—Michael the Archangel and his army celestially defeat Satan and his angels, who are forced to retreat to Earth for their last stand (Rev 12:7-9). Now confined to Earth, Satan (and his Antichrist) will become ever more vicious, shameless, and oppressive—"having great wrath, knowing he has only a short time" (Rev 12:12).
4. The Beast defeats the Russian (?) and Afro-Arabic Blocs (or at least takes credit) (Dan 11:40-45; Ezek 38:18-23) and his base of operations remains in or near Jerusalem.
5. The Beast is apparently slain and restored to life (Rev 13:3, 12, 14). This will validate for his followers both his claim to deity and his support from the "foreign god" backing him (and now indwelling

him?)—the *actual* evil ET, Satan (cf. Dan 11:36-39). (It is *possible* that misguided Jews and/or Christians at the time will be responsible for the "assassination". It is more likely, however, that they will be conveniently *blamed* for it, creating one more excuse for the subsequent hot pursuit and persecution of Jews and Christians—more in Page 30.9.)

6. The Beast breaks the covenant with Israel:

- a. The Beast sets up the **Abomination of Desolation**, in which the Antichrist interposes himself as God in the in the Holy of Holies in the [sufficiently restored] Temple of Jerusalem (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; especially 2 Ths 2:4).
- b. The Beast stops Israeli temple sacrifices, which had apparently begun again (Dan 9:27; 12:11; Isa 63:18). ("Why sacrifice animals? I, your Messiah, am here!" the Beast will say.)

7. The Beast is worshipped (Rev 13:4, 8). This is tied together with his being made dictator, #10, below; cf. Rev 13:1-9: Here is the Antichrist, Satan's counterfeit of the True Messiah of the planet, the God-King Jesus Christ. (The Beast is far, far worse than Emperor Palpatine!) An old plan of Satan—tied to the **A of D**, above.
 - a. Because of his apparent victory over the Russian (?) and Afro-Arabic blocs and because of his “miraculous” restoration to life after being assassinated, the world worships the Beast (Rev 13:4).
 - b. The False Prophet (the Second Beast, the Little Beast) deceives the people of the world and *forces* them to worship the Beast or Antichrist.
 - 1) The Little Beast works miracles to persuade the people of Earth to worship the Beast (2 Ths 2:9-12; Rev 13:11-15).
 - 2) The Little Beast makes the people get the number of the Beast (666—though some say 616) or the name of the Beast as a

mark on their forehead or hand (or lower wrist). Before now, getting the mark was possibly a voluntary demonstration of solidarity with the Beast. Now it becomes mandatory in order to buy or sell things, so that people are coerced into worshipping the Beast (Rev 13:16-18). *All who choose to get the mark will be damned* (Rev 14:9-13; see Page 40 near the top).

Who knows what artful torments await the Tribulation Saint? Please, just keep in mind that NOTHING can separate the believer from the love of God (Rom 8:38-39)—not superpowered aliens, not high-tech hallucinations of falling or flying or drowning, not even so-called time travel, all conjured up by the darkened ones in attempt to *flip Trib Saints* into denying Christ and to *fool borderline pre-believers* into getting the mark. All this will be done in the name of humanity, of course, and “for their own good and the good of their children.”

8. The Beast turns against Babylon (Rev 17:15-18).

I believe “*Babylon*” aka “*the Harlot*” (cf. Rev 17-18) refers to *the anti-God world culture*, especially Western Civilization (minus biblical Christianity),

embracing all the false religions and anti-God philosophies of the world, along with its politico-economic and cultural structures generated by humanism on *all seven continents ever since the early days of human history* (Gen 11:4-9). It is what the New Testament sometimes calls “*the world*” (Jn 7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14-18 [in John 17 “world” is mentioned 13 times in 26 verses]; Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 1:20-21; 7:31; 2 Cor 4:4; 7:10; Gal 6:14; Eph 2:2; 6:11-13; Col 2:8; Jas 1:27; 4:4; 2 Pet 2:20; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 3:13; 4:4-6; 5:4, 19). God loves the world of *humans* (John 3:16), not the humanistic world *system*.

The Harlot pretends to be religious, but is actually hostile to the biblical God and uses religion for her own purposes. The term denotes a parallel to a human prostitute, who uses sex (which God created for holy matrimony and for mankind's blessing) for her own gain. God-loving/Bible-believing saints have always been the enemy of the Harlot and subject to persecution on many levels.

Ironically, “Babylon” had been built and coached for thousands of years by Satan for his evil purposes (especially in recent centuries). Hence, while the Harlot/Babylon initially rides the Beast, he finally turns on her. Now, *all pretense*

is removed, and the Satan-possessed Beast demands universal allegiance and worship for himself. (See also Page 44.c) and following.)

9. The Beast/Satan begin(s) *intense* persecution of Jews and Gentiles turning to Christ.
 - a. Jews had been generally protected during first half of the Tribulation (Rev 12:1-6). (More on this in the **LITERARY PAUSE** section below.)
 - b. The Beast/Satan begin(s) mass genocide of Jews, because he knows he has only short time, but God saves them again, protects them *as a race*, particularly the believing remnant, during the second half of the Tribulation (Mt 24:16-22; Rev 12:12-16). Here the 144,000 Sealed Ones (Israel's protected remnant, whose identities are known only the courts of Heaven) continually serve as a living guarantee of God's promises to the nation of Israel until the day they meet their Messiah face to face on the Mount of

Olives at His return (Rev 14:1-5; 1 Kgs 19:18; Rom 11:4).
Doesn't Satan wish he could hack into Heaven!

- c. Many Jews now begin to turn to God (Deut 4:30), though the repentance of Israel will not reach national proportions until near the very end, after the latter 1,260-day period, which terminates the “fullness of the Gentiles” (Rom 11:25-27). (The two Jewish Witnesses will have been at work during those latter 1,260 days—see Pages 24.2. and 34.2).)
 - d. Christians (Jewish and Gentile believers) now suffer severe persecution (Mt 24:21-22) under Satan (Rev 12:17) and the Beast (Dan 7:21-22; Rev 13:7; 20:4), including beheading.
10. The Beast is made dictator and allowed by God to rule for the remaining 42 months of the Tribulation (Dan 7:24-25; 11:36-39; Rev 13:5; 17:12-13). (See also #7, above.)

D. Second Half of the Tribulation—"Jacob's Trouble" (Jer 30:1-11; Mt 24:9-31; Mk 13:9-37; Rev 8:1-19:21).

When the Seventh Seal is broken, as noted earlier, there is half an hour of silence in Heaven (Rev 8:1), denoting (I think) a period of mourning over the excruciating judgments about to come upon Earth. This Seal opens the Trumpet Judgments of the second half of the Tribulation. The ever-accelerating pace and severity of troubles will plateau only near the very end.

1. The First Six of the Seven Trumpets (Rev 8:7-9:21).

- a. ***First Trumpet***—Hail, fire, and "blood" destroy a third of Earth's vegetation (Rev 8:7).
- b. ***Second Trumpet***—A burning "mountain" (a meteor?) falls into the sea, destroying a third of everything in and on it (Rev 8:8-9).

- c. *Third Trumpet*—A giant “star” (an even bigger meteor?) falls to Earth and poisons a third of all fresh water, resulting in the death of many men (Rev 8:10-11).
- d. *Fourth Trumpet*—Darkness obscures a third of the sun, moon, and stars for a third of a day and a third of a night (Rev 8:12). The precise control here shows God is clearly behind all this! The God of grace measures His wrath in order to win souls and to encourage the saints.
- e. *Fifth Trumpet* (FIRST “WOE”)—Apollyon’s locusts come [out of a “worm hole”?] and torment for five months those not sealed by God (Rev 9:1-12). Those tormented are either all the unbelievers of the world or all humanity except the 144,000. This is a test (Rev 3:10).

By the way, have you noticed that many of these judgments seem to happen in or originate from outer space, Satan's old stomping grounds?

f. *Sixth Trumpet* (SECOND “WOE”). Closing in on the end now.

- 1) A mounted army of 200,000,000 (more ET's?) led by four demonic angels are released and kill a third of mankind (Rev 9:13-21). These “soldiers” are demons too.

NOTE: Don't be surprised if they try to blame these two woes/invasions on Jesus both to persuade the world's armies to gather against Him at His return on Day 1,290 (Armageddon) and to intensify persecution of Christians.

- 2) The Two Witnesses are killed. Minions of the Beast party and dance over their decaying corpses for three days, exchanging gifts as if to mock Christmas (or the Jewish holiday of Purim?), but then the Two Witnesses are raised and taken up to Heaven as their shocked enemies look on (Esther 9:20-22; Rev 11:7-12).

Opportunity to repent (turn to God's real Messiah, Jesus) is almost gone.

- 3) Jerusalem experiences an earthquake that crumbles 10% of the city and kills 7,000 people (Rev 11:13-14). Many Israelis and Jews all over the world finally turn to Jesus. (Question: Does the Beast feel the tremors at his HQ west of Jerusalem? Does he smile, or *tremble*?)
2. The Seventh Trumpet (THIRD “WOE”)—The end is near, truly doomsday for the anti-God world system (Rev 11:15-19). The Seventh Trumpet announces the Seven Bowl judgments, followed in about 30 days by the arrival of Jesus the King, which the world now fully expects.

LITERARY PAUSE IN REVELATION

As you may have noticed, the Book of Revelation is chronological in an overall sense, but it is not entirely chronological in all its parts. That is, there are flashbacks and fast forwards in places. This is especially true for Rev 12-15, which provides a large literary pause, marked by two heavenly signs in Ch 12—a woman (Israel) and a red dragon (Satan)—and a final sign in Ch 15, inserted

between the blast of the Seventh Trumpet in 11:15 and the actual rolling out of its Seven Bowl Judgments near the very end of the Tribulation in Ch 16.

Revelation 12 tells the story of Satan and Israel since the time of Christ. It may seem like just an earthly story, but, like the life of Job, the big story is about a deeper conflict far above this planet. It is about the cosmic war between Satan and God and is marked on Earth by the Dragon's hatred of Israel, her God, her Messiah, and her people. We may get the impression that "the rest of the story" goes back much further than just the woman / Israel, certainly further back than the birth of her son, the Christ. But this segment of history is the one most relevant to the present experience of John's readers, who are being called upon to make a decision about this Christ. Note some parallels in Ephesians 6:10-12 and John 12:31, along with additional insights from Acts 26:18, Ephesians 2:2, and Colossians 1:13.

Revelation 13 goes even deeper, describing the worldly humanistic and Satanic origins of the Beast /Antichrist, his utterly anti-God attitude, and his deeply hostile agenda toward all of God's saints (i.e., believers made holy by the cross work of the Lamb) and, ultimately, all humankind. After the Beast's meteoric rise to power, he will gain dictatorial authority for the latter half (42 months) of the

Tribulation—see Page 31.10. His agenda concerns the minds, bodies, and future of mankind—to destroy them all.

Today, men and women are pressured to be politically correct or suffer consequences in their careers and social lives. However, after Mid-Trib, they will be required to get the 666 (or 616) mark and worship the Beast and the Dragon behind him or starve (being unable to buy or sell) and die (by execution) (Rev 13:15-17; see also Page 27.7.b.2)). With signs and wonders performed by his assistant (the False Prophet or Little Beast), the masses of the earth (who believe anything but the truth) will be deceived into thinking he is the one they have been looking for all their lives. Like der Führer in the Germany of 1933-1945, however, the Antichrist will show himself to be their ultimate enemy.

Revelation 14 goes deeper still and summarizes the coming end and the destiny of those who dwell upon Earth. There are decisions to be made and established by John's readers in advance of this end. Hearts are turning into concrete as people become so terribly desperate to stay alive, with human pride and demonic lies acting as hardening agents. However, honest fear leads one to embrace the truth and turn toward God.

John portrays two events involving "the 144,000" as literary bookends—their sealing in Rev 7 and their meeting the Returned Messiah in Rev 14:1-5. Here is the culmination of the "righteous remnant principle" concerning Israel—see 1 Kings 19:18 and Rom 11:4. ***The partial hardening of the Jewish nation will be removed by the time Jesus touches down.*** "And thus all Israel will be saved . . . for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:25-29). All those hundreds of promises to Israel that permeate so much of the Old Testament will now be validated and fulfilled. (Here is also the vindication of the literal-grammatical-historical approach to Scripture, along with all the theology that grew out of that method of interpretation.) The Messiah has come to reign (Zech 14).

Revelation 14 contains two sets of obvious warnings from Heaven. ***First***, there are three angels who each bring a message to those who dwell on Earth (Rev 14:6-13). ***Second***, there is a summary vision depicting the dual reaping of Planet Earth (Rev 14:14-20).

These warnings probably occur near the end of the Tribulation. Here they also serve as a literary device to summarize the Tribulation and to preview “coming attractions” in order to 1) plead with unbelievers to turn to God while they still can,

and 2) admonish the saints living at that time to hold on and to preach the Word with all-the-more fervency. In pre-Rapture days the chapter served a similar purpose, although at a seemingly less intense level of urgency.

The three-angel advertisement is found in Rev 14:6-13. The *first angel* preaches repentance to all people: Turn to God, not to the lies of the Beast, nor to your sinful heart. You cannot say later that you did not hear (14:6-7). The *second angel* announces Babylon's destruction, which, we will see later, comes with the last Bowl Judgment. Those who place their hope in Babylon will find themselves losers (14:8). The *third angel* warns Earth-dwellers that receiving the mark of the Beast (in order to buy or sell anything) damns them forever—a key test for trusting in God's power, character, and purpose, which are now revealed to everyone (Rev 14:9-11). All who choose to get the Beast's mark—whether out of faithless survivalism or passionate (or even lukewarm) support for the Antichrist—align themselves against Jesus, the Christ of God.

Rev 14:13: And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them." (**SONG:** "*In Christ Alone*")

It is my opinion that not that everyone who *has* the mark will be damned, but everyone who *receives* the mark (14:11). By this I mean it is not the mark itself that damns, but it is *choosing to receive it* that damns. Therefore, an infant or other person who is given the mark with absolutely no choice in the matter will not be damned. But such cases will be exceptional, for *the whole idea of the mark is to demonstrate willing support for the Beast and his program*—see Page 27.7.b.2).

NOTE: This act-of-the-will idea parallels one's needed biblical response to the gospel itself—both during the Tribulation and before the Rapture. Personal salvation has never depended on your deeds or your external or forced associations, such as church membership, church attendance, or having undergone some ritual or experience. Rather, it has only to do with one's choice to receive/welcome/embrace Jesus Christ, His work on the Cross, and now His coming kingdom, all graciously provided by God. (See John 5:24; Eph 2:8-9; 2 Tim 4:7-8.)

The second section, Rev 14:14-20, summarizes the two-sided reaping of the earth that is about to take place when Jesus returns. First, Christ gathers the elect (i.e., those who have trusted in God instead of the Beast and the Devil) from the four corners of the planet (14:14-16). Then, an angel announces the order from the

Temple of God, (i.e., from God Himself), that all unbelievers on the earth be slain (cf. Mt 13:36-43). The reaper is Christ the King Himself (14:17-20; 19:21), and His victory is utterly complete, as we will see in Rev 19 and following. Hey, they had years of repeated chances! The flood of Noah's day and the cleansing of Canaan during its defeat by God's Israelites are obvious parallels. See also Page 50.B.2.

As I warned earlier, the extent and intensity of pressures exerted upon the unbelieving world will steadily accelerate during these final three and one-half years. God's purpose, as you saw in Rev 14, is not to destroy the planet, *as His enemies will continuously claim*, but to save as many people possible before He terminates the lying, evil world system that has been ruining Earth (Rev 11:18; Hos 4:1-3). (Yes, it has not been the human industriousness, but human sin that has been damaging the planet all these years.)

Revelation 15 serves as a transition chapter and seems to echo the throne room scene of Rev 4-5. It leads into the actual Bowl Judgments of Chapter 16 and the official conclusion of the Tribulation Scroll. The first six of the Seven Trumpets have all sounded; their judgments have all been set in motion.

Meanwhile, there are standing in the heavenly throne room a huge throng of [martyred] Tribulation Saints, victorious over the Beast's power, including the crushing compulsion to worship his image and to receive his mark. They are now without fear. Instead, they are making music and singing the "Song of Moses" and the "Song of the Lamb." The Almighty, they sing, has proven that He alone is worthy of the worship of the nations and His righteous judgments have been fully unveiled at last. But the very end is not yet—the Seventh Angel blows his Trumpet, and we jump from Rev 11:15 to 16:1.

BACK TO THE OUTLINE—THE 7TH TRUMPET

- a. *The Seven Bowls* (Rev 16). The 7th Trumpet sounds in Heaven and the 7 Bowls are dumped in quick succession, probably on Day 1,260 of the 2nd Half of the Tribulation.
 - 1) **First Bowl**—Sores come upon all 666's people (Rev 16:1-2).
 - 2) **Second Bowl**—All sea life dies (Rev 16:3).

- 3) **Third Bowl**—All fresh water is poisoned (Rev 16:4-7).
- 4) **Fourth Bowl**—People are scorched by sun (Rev 16:8-9).
- 5) **Fifth Bowl**—The Beast's kingdom is darkened in both an eco-political and a luminary sense (Rev 16:10-11; cf. Exo 10:21-23; Zech 14:6-7). The Beast cannot save.
- 6) **Sixth Bowl**—The Euphrates River dries up, opening the way for the Kings of the East to go to Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16). These had been stirring since before Mid-Trib (Dan 11:44). They now come to join the battle against Jesus, the "alien invader" (Rev 19:19).

NOTE: It may be that the Kings of the East have a secret agenda to take over the world, but that is secondary, because there won't be much of a world to take over if Jesus' "invasion" is successful. Clearly, their primary purpose is to go up against Jesus.

7) **Seventh Bowl:** the Climactic Judgment, a kind of *Grand Finale*.

- a) A superquake destroys cities, islands, and mountains (Rev 16:18-20).
- b) 100-lb hailstones do "extremely severe" damage to people (Rev 16:21).
- c) Babylon is destroyed (Rev 16:19) too. A graphic, judicial description is found in **Rev 17-18, a final literary pause** before Jesus the Christ of God returns in glory (Rev 19). (See also Page 28.8.)

Here, Revelation's author, John, spends more than two chapters on Babylon the Harlot and its destruction, so that we might **1)** better understand the monstrous world system that has dominated the planet; **2)** realize that faith in that system is foolish; and **3)** see that Babylon has been just a tool of Satan all along. Its

crumbling, like that of the Twin Towers of New York City on September 11, 2001, is sudden, devastating, and complete (cf. Rev 18:8, 10, 17-19).

This Seventh Trumpet not only contains the *Seven Bowls (a final set of warnings to the world)*, but also announces the actual coming of the King on Day 1,290 (Rev 11:15-19). The second half of the Tribulation will last 1,260 days (Dan 9:27; Rev 13:5), but Daniel says there are 1,290 days after the Abomination of Desolation before the Messiah touches down (Dan 12:11). So, there appear to be as many as *30 days of no new judgments* between Day 1,260 and Day 1,290. During those 30 days, *the Sign of the Son of Man* (probably a cross, maybe a fish?) appears in the sky. The Fifth Bowl includes global darkness (cf. Mt 24:29; Zech 14:6-7), *so everyone will clearly see and understand His sign*. All the living will know this is Jesus coming with judgment for those who are not His, and deliverance for those who are. As Jesus said to His disciples, *"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now, when these things begin to take place, stand erect and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near"* (Lk 21:27-28).

The interpretation in the above paragraph is based on three lines of evidence. First, the THIRD WOE is said to be “coming quickly” (Rev 11:14), the same phrase Jesus uses in reference to His own Second Coming (Rev 22:7, 12, 20). The literary implication is that the Seventh Bowl and Christ’s coming are virtually synonymous. Second, immediately after the Bowl is poured out, there is great rejoicing in Heaven that the reign of Jesus has finally begun on Earth (Rev 11:15b-19). This is further indication that the Tribulation is officially over. Third, Jesus said that the darkness and His sign would occur “after the tribulation of those days” (Mt 24:29). So, there may be just a very little time to think and to respond as destiny closes in IF you can stay alive—a big IF. But Jesus is coming—decide quickly! ***Quickly!***

In any case, the wrath of God is poured out in a final series of merciful but severe warnings before it is too late for unbelievers. Still, ***instead of turning to God, most people blaspheme Him*** (Rev 9:20-21; 16:9, 11, 21). And rather than repent (i.e., turn to Jesus, the Messiah of God), the world uses this time to ***gather armies against Jesus***, as if He were an evil invader. I believe the darkness and the sign in the sky are designed to give final mental pause to those gathering to battle God’s Messiah.

It is during this time that *Israel finally repents as a nation*. The “fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom 11:25-27). That is, the *Time of Jacob’s Trouble*, when God allows Israel to be so severely oppressed by the anti-God Gentile world, is *essentially over*. At last, Israel has turned to Christ, and He is coming to deliver the nation. Now *her* “fullness” (Rom 11:12) is about to begin! O, how those on the Dark Side are gnashing their teeth!

- b. *The Second Advent—The King Returns* (Rev 19) on Day 1,290 after the Abomination of Desolation (See also Dan 12:11).
 - 1) The armies of the world gather against Him (Rev 19:19). The Kings of the East have mobilized against Jerusalem (Rev 16:12-14, 16), where they know Jesus is to touch down (Zech 14:2-4; Acts 1:9-12). They are all fully aware that their enemy is not another earthly army, but Jesus (Rev 17:14; 19:19; Psa 2:1-6). His sign is in the sky, and they want to stop Him from seizing Earth, as in those old movies, *War of the Worlds* and *Independence Day*. Yes, they will view the Savior as a hostile half-breed extraterrestrial Earth-invader.

- 2) Jesus comes with the Raptured Saints to retake Jerusalem and the whole planet in battle (Zech 14:3-5; 2 Ths 1:7; Isa 66:15; Rev 19:11-15). {Remember the line from that old Christian hymn—"When the saints come marchin' in"?}

The armies of the Beast and the anti-God world attempt to “wage war against the Lamb,” but He utterly defeats them (Rev 17:14; 19:19-21). They, like the hapless German and Japanese armies at the end of World War II, will be told by their lost leaders to fight to the last man and, like the Earthlings of *War of the Worlds* and *Independence Day*, they will hold out for *something* to save them from the "enemy of mankind." Poor fools, deceived by their *true* enemy, the father of lies, the great counterfeiter.

- 3) Jesus has the Beast and False Prophet (the Little Beast) seized and thrown into the Lake of Fire, which had been prepared for Satan and his angels, not for men (Mt 25:41; Rev 19:20). But these two men arrive there before the Devil himself (Rev 20:10, 14-15).

- 4) Jesus slays all the armies of the world with a word; some even kill each other in their panic (Isa 66:16; Zech 14:12-13; Rev 14:17-20; 17:14; 19:21).
- 5) Jesus' feet touch down on the Mount of Olives visibly, physically, just as the angels had predicted to the apostles in Acts 1:9-12, and the mountain splits from east to west, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south (Zech 14:4), creating a straight path for the King into the city. The "times of the Gentiles" are over (Lk 21:24). The King of Israel has come to rule Earth and meets His 144,000 Sealed Ones here at Jerusalem (cf. Rev 14:1).

III. Post-Tribulational Events—The King Takes Up His Throne (Rev 20-22).

- A. *Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Martyrs Resurrected and Rewarded.* This completes the First Resurrection (which began with the resurrection of Jesus and continued with the Rapture) (Dan 12:2-3, 13; Heb 11:35; Rev 11:18; Rev 20:4-6). (The mysterious disappearances of

Enoch (Gen 5:24), Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11), and the Two Witnesses will finally be clarified for the curious.) **NOTE:** “Resurrection” is not mere resuscitation, but translation into one’s immortal body as in the Rapture.

B. The Sheep and Goats Judgment of the Nations, Including Israel (Isa 66:18; Ezek 20:34-38; Mt 25:31-46).

1. The elect (i.e., believers, including Jewish ones) are gathered (Ezek 36:26-28; Amos 9:14-15; Zeph 3:20; Mt 24:31-46; Rev 14:1-16), probably for the Wedding Feast (“C,” just below).
2. All unbelievers are executed by this time (Rev 11:18b; 14:17-20; 19:21).
3. Rewards for all the living (i.e., believing survivors of the Tribulation) are distributed according to their deeds (Rev 22:12).

C. Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-9). Some teach that the Bride of Christ is the Church (Eph 5:22-32), while others think she is Israel (Isa

62:5). Rev 21:2, 9 says the New Jerusalem is the bride. In any case, all believers—OT saints, Church saints, Trib saints, and Trib survivors—are invited to the Wedding Feast!

The three events just mentioned (A through C) will take some time to accomplish. The second half of the Tribulation lasts 42 months or 1,260 days. Jesus returns on the 1,290th day after the Abomination of Desolation. So, these three events probably occur between Day 1,290 and Day 1,335, when the Kingdom (or, as many theologians call it, the Millennium) officially begins (Dan 12:11-12).

D. The Millennium—the King Reigns on the Earth (Rev 20:1-6).
(**SONG:** “*Joy to the World*”)

1. Satan is bound for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1-3).
2. The saints reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev 20:4-6; Dan 7:18; 21-22, 27; Mic 4:1-3; Zech 9:10).

- a. The Kingdom is set up (Dan 2:44, 7:13-14), and Jesus reigns with perfect justice (Isa 11:3-5; 65:20). His empire covers the earth (Dan 9:27; Zech 14:9). *Shalom at last!* (Ask a Jew about that loaded Hebrew word.)
- b. [Earthly] Jerusalem is the capital of the Kingdom, positioning Israel as the queen of nations (Isa 2:2-4; 24:23; Jer 31:6; Mic 4:1; Zeph 3:20; Zech 2:10-11). Hence, Jerusalem is to the Kingdom as Washington, D.C. is to the current U.S.A., and Israel becomes something like the District of Columbia (the province around the American capital city).
- c. There will be a glorious temple in earthly Jerusalem for the people of the world to visit and to worship the King (Ezek 40-48).

This temple is actually His headquarters (Ezek 43:7). A river of pure water flows from here to transform the land (Zech 14:8), banked by special trees, whose fruit is for food, and whose leaves are for healing (Ezek 47:1-12; Rev 22:1-2?),

much needed after the Trib. The new temple will perhaps not be completely ready until Day 2,300 after the Abomination of Desolation, however (cf. Dan 8:14).

d. Under Christ there will be lesser authorities.

- 1) The saints will serve in a hierarchy (Isa 32:1; Jer 30:21; Lk 19:12-27, especially vv. 12-19; Rev 2:22-28; 5:10).

Old Testament Saints (now resurrected) will serve also (Dan 12:13). Church Saints (all of whom had been translated/raptured before the Tribulation) will be quite busy and will probably commute to Earth from the New Jerusalem (see Rev 21 and the section on Post-Millennial Events, below). Those who live on in the flesh (i.e., survivors of the Great Tribulation, all of whom are saints) will serve according to their rewards. I imagine that Jewish Saints (all the translated + Trib Survivors) will probably serve in Israel or on Israel's behalf, while Gentiles (both the translated and Trib survivors) will likely serve in and among the nations—at least that seems reasonable, no?

- 2) There will be a “prince” of Israel itself. He is mentioned 17 times in connection with the temple ministry (Ezek 44-48).

We know this prince is not Christ Himself, since he makes a sin offering for himself and the people of the land (Ezek 45:22) and worships (Ezek 46:2). Some excellent scholars (e.g. the late J. D. Pentecost in Things to Come, pp 498-501) point to some passages (Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5) and suggest the prince of Israel is the resurrected David (while Jesus rules above the planet in New Jerusalem), but he is probably another descendant of David (cf. Jer 33:15-21), since no translated saint can have sin. (He offers sacrifices, though Pentecost could say these are memorial sacrifices only.) Jewish scholars have long understood the reference to David ruling Israel forever as denoting a permanent Davidic dynasty (i.e., sons).

- 3) The Twelve Apostles will govern the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28), unless this passage refers to the Sheep and Goats Judgment.

- e. The nations will “go up to Jerusalem” to worship the King and to celebrate the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles (Zech 14:16-17). (Earthly Jerusalem is at a high elevation.)
- f. The curse of the earth will be gradually removed. Also, Israel will no longer be under the “Deuteronomic Curse” (Zech 14:11). There will be a general transformation of nature—from topography to zoology (Isa 11:1-9; 43:18-20; 65:17-25; Zech 14:10; Rom 8:19-21). No more snake bites or carnivorous bears, lions, and wolves, which will now graze like cows and sheep. (How about those mosquitoes and fire ants, Lord?)
- g. Christ’s reign will be characterized by tranquility and prosperity (Isa 2:4; 9:7; 11:6-25:7; 32:17-18; 33:5-6; 54:13; 55:12; 60:18; 65:25; Ezek 28:26; 34:25-28; Hos 2:18; Amos 9:11-15; Mic 4:1-7; Zech 9:10).
- h. There will be universal knowledge of God (i.e., no need for evangelism) (Isa 11:9; Jer 31:34; Hos 2:19-20).

- i. Christ will reign until all things (including death) have been subjected to Him (1 Cor 15:25-26). Then He will turn over the Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor 15:28), but will continue to reign forever (Dan 2:44; 7:14, 18, 27; 2 Pet 1:11).
- 3. The New Heavens and New Earth (Rev 21:1-22:5). (See also **APPENDIX**, below.)
 - a. The New Jerusalem, where translated saints will live, is mentioned or alluded to a number of times in the New Testament (Lk 16:9; Jn 14:2-3; Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20; Heb 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14). Note that this Eternal City will survive the destruction of the planet that occurs just prior to the Great White Throne Judgment—see Page 59.2.a. + 60.e.
 - b. Detailed description of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-22:5).

NOTE: This New Jerusalem is *not* the earthly Jerusalem, but one that came down from Heaven and likely denotes “the place” Jesus has been building for His saints for a couple of millennia now—see John 14:1-3.

- 1) God’s throne is in it (Rev 22:1).
- 2) There are no sinners (i.e., anti-God people) in it (Rev 21:8, 27; 22:15, 19).
- 3) Size: 1,500 miles x 1,500 miles x 1,500 miles (Rev 21:16-17). (You read rightly.)
- 4) It is overwhelmingly luxurious and beautiful (Rev 21:11-22:5).
- 5) There is no curse (Rev 22:3) or tears or mourning or crying or pain in it (Rev 21:4).

- 6) The nations walk by its light and bring their “glory” into it (via born-again or even translated representatives?) (Rev 21:24-26; 22:14-15).
- 7) The nations are healed with the leaves from the trees which bank its river (Rev 22:2). (Notice the river and trees parallel those of the earthly Jerusalem—bottom of Page 52.)
- 8) In it there is no day or night or artificial lighting. Jesus lights it (Rev 21:23; 22:5).
- 9) There is no temple in it, because “the Lord, God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its Temple” (Rev 21:22).

E. Epilogue: Post-Millennial Events—the King Reigns Forever (Rev 11:15; 20:7-15).

1. Satan is loosed “for a short time” (Rev 20:3b, 7-9).

- a. Satan deceives the nations into going to war against God again, but fire from Heaven (New Jerusalem?) destroys them (Rev 20:7-9).
 - b. Satan is (finally) thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:10).
- 2. The Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15; Acts 17:31; John 5:21-24).
 - a. The heavens and earth are eliminated (Rev 20:11; 2 Pet 3:10-13).
 - b. All the dead are resurrected (the Second Resurrection) (Rev 20:12-13a). Implied is the previous or even simultaneous translation of Millennial Saints (i.e., Trib Survivors) who may have died during the Millennium, since they are not explicitly mentioned in connection with the Great White Throne Judgment.
 - c. The dead are judged according to the *Books of Deeds* (Rev 20:13b).

- d. Death and Hades and all those whose names are not in the *Book of Life* are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14-15).
- e. Now begins what many theologians call *The Eternal State*, which certainly seems to include the eternal city, the New Jerusalem, (Heb 11:10; Rev 21:2, 10; see also Psa 46:4-5).

APPENDIX

AN INTERPRETATIONAL PROBLEM AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

According to most eschatological scholars, the entirety of Rev 21:1-22:5 describes the time after the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment—the Eternal State. But there are several difficulties with this interpretation.

- A. Isaiah 65:17-25 says there will be babies born on the new earth. The term “new earth” there cannot refer to the Eternal State, since, according to Jesus, there will be no marriage in the Eternal State (cf. Mt 22:30). Isaiah must be speaking of the transformed millennial Earth. If Isaiah, then perhaps Revelation too?
- B. The Greek term for “nations” (*ethnos*) found in the so-called Eternal State section (Rev 21:24; 22:2) itself implies earthly reproductive activity. (A merely political entity is a *laos*.) Hence, “nations” denotes the idea of races as much as it does geopolitical entities. What theologian sees babies in the Eternal State? And, even apart from babies, why would there be “nations” (even in the political sense) in the post-earth Eternal State?

- C. The term “**kings of the earth**” (Rev 21:24) does not sound like a term we might expect of the Eternal State. The language of Rev 20:11-15 (which introduces the Eternal State) emphasizes strictly the *individual* (vs. nations or people groups). What earthly glory would ever be brought into Heaven, least of all by kings leading (or having recently led) *nations*?
- D. Rev 21:27 says “nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying” can come into the New Jerusalem, implying there are such people around. But after the Great White Throne, all such people are in the Lake of Fire. Then, Rev 22:14-15 compounds the problem, saying, “Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.” How could they be “**outside**” if they are in the Lake of Fire (where all Eternal State unbelievers are)?
- E. Rev 22:2 says the leaves of the trees that line the River of the Water of Life in [the New Jerusalem] are “*for the healing of the nations.*” Why would there be a need for healing in the Eternal State? Interpreting “healing” (*therapeia*) as “service” does not eliminate the problem, because why would there be any need

to serve/minister to the nations in the Eternal State? And *what nations*? Someone may suggest that these leaves serve a function similar to the fruit of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden prior to the existence of death. What, then, of *therapeia*? And I repeat my earlier question—why would there be any "nations" at all in the Eternal State?

- F. Rev 22:3 mentions the *absence of the curse* in the New Jerusalem. Why mention the curse at all, if the time referred to is the Eternal State? Furthermore, Isa 11:6-9 and 65:25 speak of removal of the curse *during the Millennial reign of Christ*. Some have suggested that, since there is no understanding of the Eternal State in the Old Testament, Isaiah sees only the *lack of a curse* and simply *attributes* its absence to the Millennium. Yet, Isaiah's original readers anticipate the removal of the curse no later than in the Millennial reign of the Messiah. Even setting aside the question of the prophet's alleged myopia, and/or delaying the removal of the curse until the Eternal State after the Millennium, there is an additional problem—are we now seeing *animals in the Eternal State*? (They are mentioned in the two Isaiah passages.)

There are, however, at least two alternatives to the traditional approach. *First*, it may be that ***only Rev 21:1 (or 21:1-8) refers to the Eternal State***, and Rev 21:2 (or 21:9)-22:5 speaks of the New Jerusalem of the Millennium. ((New Jerusalem is where translated saints live—the place where Jesus has been building our “mansions” since He ascended (John 14:2-3; Acts 1:9-11).)) *Second*, it may be that there is no mention of an Eternal State in Rev 21-22 at all, and that ***only Rev 20:11-15 refers to the Eternal State***. In support of the latter option:

- A. This understanding of the new heavens and new earth coheres with Isaiah’s use of these terms.
- B. The *Book of Revelation* is not strictly chronological anyway, so there is no ***literary*** need to understand Rev 21-22 as post-millennial. In fact, Revelation has several periodic breaks in chronology to provide glimpses into future and dramatic summaries of the past. This (Rev 20:11-15) could just be one more peek into the future (the Eternal State) before returning to the time at hand (the Millennium) and, really, to the Church Age of John's original readers or at least to the readers of Revelation during the Tribulation to give them true hope in the time of great darkness.

- C. The Eternal State seems to involve *no* “earth and heaven”—after the Millennium “*there was no place found for them*” (Rev 20:11). In other words, the only *clear* reference to the Eternal State in Revelation seems to be found in Rev 20:11-15 and quite possibly Rev 21:1.
- D. Revelation 21-22 could just be giving us a good look the New Jerusalem, which is moving toward Earth all during the millennial transformation (cf. Rev 21:1). New Jerusalem, which lasts through the Great White Throne Judgment, will also be the place where all saints will spend eternity. We do know it could last through the dissolution of Rev 20:11 since the city is eternal (Lk 16:9; 2 Cor 5:1) and has no curse or taint of sin (Rev 22:3, 14-15). Why all this attention on the New Jerusalem? This is where resurrected Trib martyrs (along with Church Age and earlier saints) will live during the Millennial Kingdom—*an encouragement to Tribulation Saints to endure, endure, in view of the glorious future ahead.* (See also Hebrews 12:1-3.)
- E. While during the Millennium there could be **1)** earthly nations and kings, **2)** need for healing, and **3)** the presence of all kinds of sin outside of the New Jerusalem, there is no place for these things in the Eternal State. The more

natural, literary way of reading the text, is to set this passage in the timeframe of the Millennium, where sin (albeit vastly reduced since pre-millennial days) still grows in abundance until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15)—note the post-millennial uprising mentioned in Rev 20:7-9.

As I stated earlier, the two Old Testament passages that mention the new heavens and the new earth explicitly are Isaiah 65:17 and Isaiah 66:22. There are certainly good reasons to think these refer to the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah. On the other hand, 2 Peter 3:10-13 speaks of the *current heavens burning* and the *elements melting with intense heat* followed by the appearance of *a new heavens and a new earth* without specifying a particular time period. Could Peter, like Isaiah, be referring to the Millennium? Or perhaps to an *additional* new heavens and new earth after the Great White Throne Judgment as elements of the Eternal State?

This student would not "go to the wall" for these non-traditional options, since they concern the distant and sketchy future. What is vitally important for the reader, however, is to *finally make the right decision about the true identity, character, power, and saving purposes of Jesus Christ* for the people and our

planet versus the incessant, ever-seeping lies of the dark side, thus ensuring your joyful place in the near and long-term future of the human race—not to be "outside" or in the Lake of Fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41), but to be with the Lamb and the rest of the saints in the New Jerusalem forever—your intended destiny, and that of all humanity from the beginning of history.

Dearest Reader, the Bible clearly teaches that eternal life is a free gift of God for anyone who chooses to trust in Jesus Christ, God's Sent One, who paid for your sins and then rose from the dead to prove He had accomplished that mission of love (Jn 3:16; Eph 2:8-9). "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (Jn 5:24).

Also vitally important for the Tribulation Saint is ongoing engagement in the evangelistic mission of the Messiah until He comes in glory. As our Redeemer and the Lord of the Universe (Mt 28:18), He gave us the job of making disciples who make disciples (Mt 28:19-20) *before it is too late*. As difficult and dangerous as it will be during the Tribulation, make no mistake: disciple making is to continue

right up to the moment He touches down on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem (Rev 5:9; 7:9-10; 13:7; 14:6).

Yes, you missed the bus (the Rapture) and have to walk to school. (Well, it IS a school!) Yes, the Enemy will bomb you with lies and suffering of all kinds in order to distract you from the eternal perspective, but Graduation Day is coming (Rev 22:10-14). *And thousands of people are praying for you today, at this moment, both on Earth and above!* (See Heb 12:1-4, 28-29 even if you have stood firm to the point of losing blood in your striving against sin.)

(**SONG:** “*In Christ Alone*”)

“I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning, the watchmen for the morning” (Psa 130:5-6).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev 22:12-13).

BIBLICAL BOOK ABBREVIATIONS

(“OT” = Old Testament; “NT” = New Testament)

Acts – Acts^{NT}

Amos – Amos^{OT}

1 Chr – 1 Chronicles^{OT}

2 Chr – 2 Chronicles^{OT}

Col – Colossians^{NT}

1 Cor – 1 Corinthians^{NT}

2 Cor – 2 Corinthians^{NT}

Dan – Daniel^{OT}

Deut – Deuteronomy^{OT}

Eccl – Ecclesiastes^{OT}

Eph – Ephesians^{NT}

Esth – Esther^{OT}

Exo – Exodus^{OT}

Ezek – Ezekiel^{OT}

Ezra – Ezra^{OT}

Gal – Galatians^{NT}

Gen – Genesis^{OT}

Hab – Habakkuk^{OT}

Hag – Haggai^{OT}

Heb – Hebrews^{NT}

Hos – Hosea^{OT}

Isa – Isaiah^{OT}

Jas – James^{NT}

Jer – Jeremiah^{OT}

Job – Job^{OT}

Joel – Joel^{OT}

Jn – John^{NT}

1 Jn – 1 John^{NT}

2 Jn – 2 John^{NT}

3 Jn – 3 John^{NT}

Jon – Jonah^{OT}

Josh – Joshua^{OT}

Jude – Jude^{NT}

Judg – Judges^{OT}
1 Kgs – 1 Kings^{OT}
2 Kgs – 2 Kings^{OT}
Lam – Lamentations^{OT}
Lev – Leviticus^{OT}
Lk – Luke^{NT}
Mal – Malachi^{OT}
Mk – Mark^{NT}
Mt – Matthew^{NT}
Mic – Micah^{OT}
Nah – Nahum^{OT}

Neh – Nehemiah^{OT}
Num – Numbers^{OT}
Obad – Obadiah^{OT}
1 Pet – 1 Peter^{NT}
2 Pet -- 2 Peter^{NT}
Philm – Philemon^{NT}
Phil – Philippians^{NT}
Pro – Proverbs^{OT}
Psa – Psalms^{OT}
Rev – Revelation^{NT}
Rom – Romans^{NT}

Ruth – Ruth^{OT}
1 Sam – 1 Samuel^{OT}
2 Sam -- 2 Samuel^{OT}
SoS – Song of Solomon^{OT}
1 Ths – 1 Thessalonians^{NT}
2 Ths – 2 Thessalonians^{NT}
1 Tim – 1 Timothy^{NT}
2 Tim – 2 Timothy^{NT}
Titus – Titus^{NT}
Zech – Zechariah^{OT}
Zeph – Zephaniah^{OT}

Chart 1: The Last Days

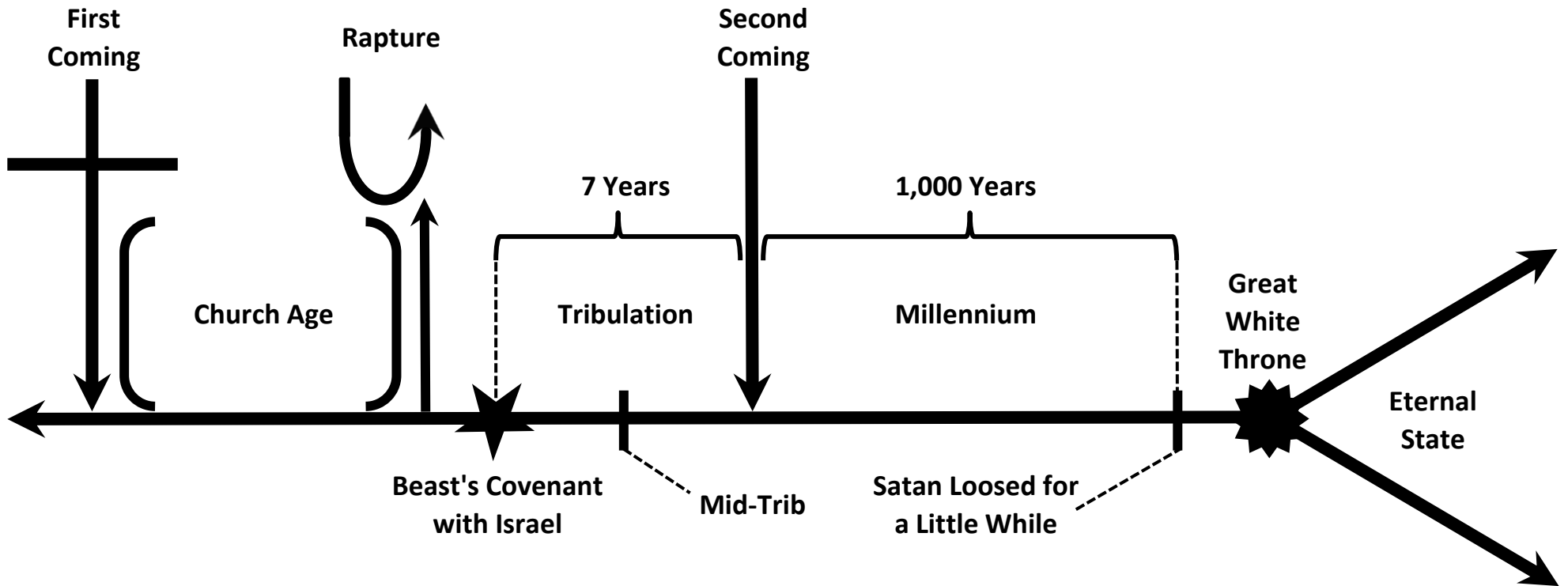


Chart 2: Pre-Tribulational Events

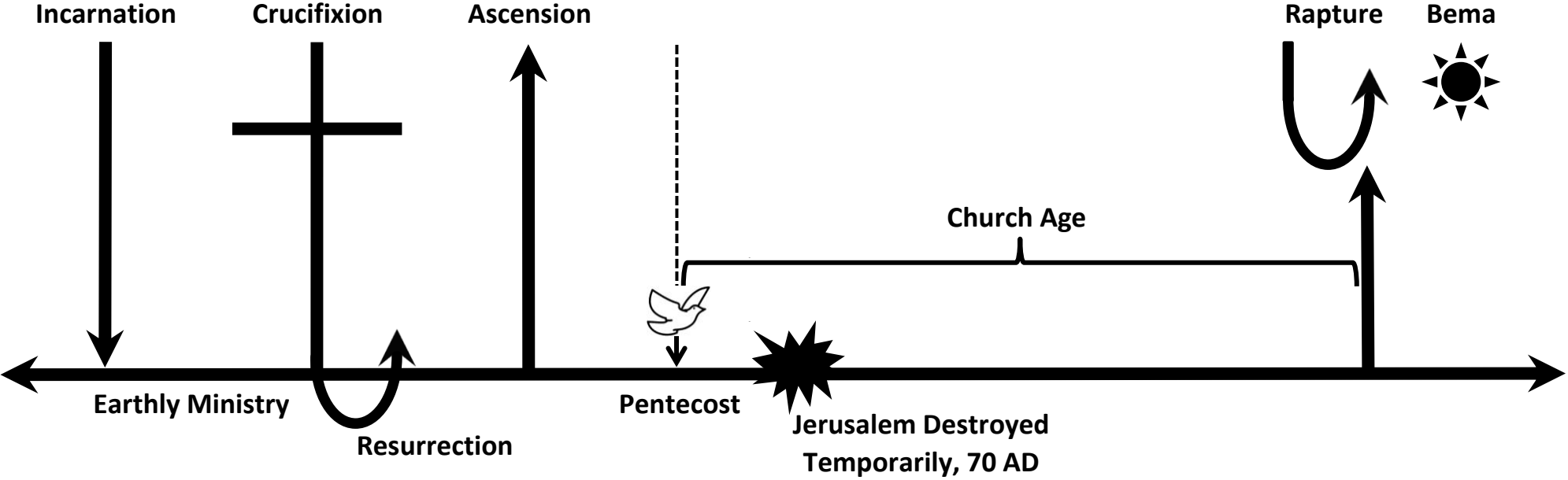


Chart 3: Tribulational Events

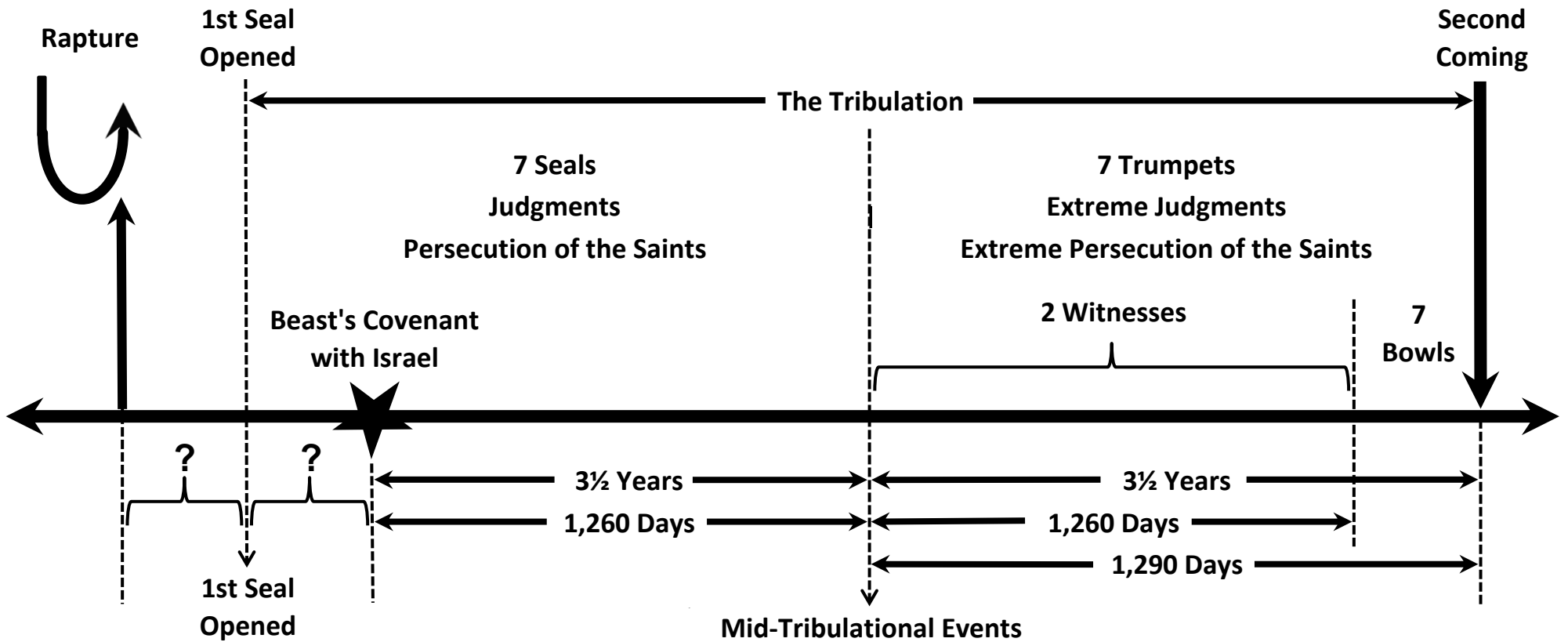


Chart 4: First Half of the Tribulation

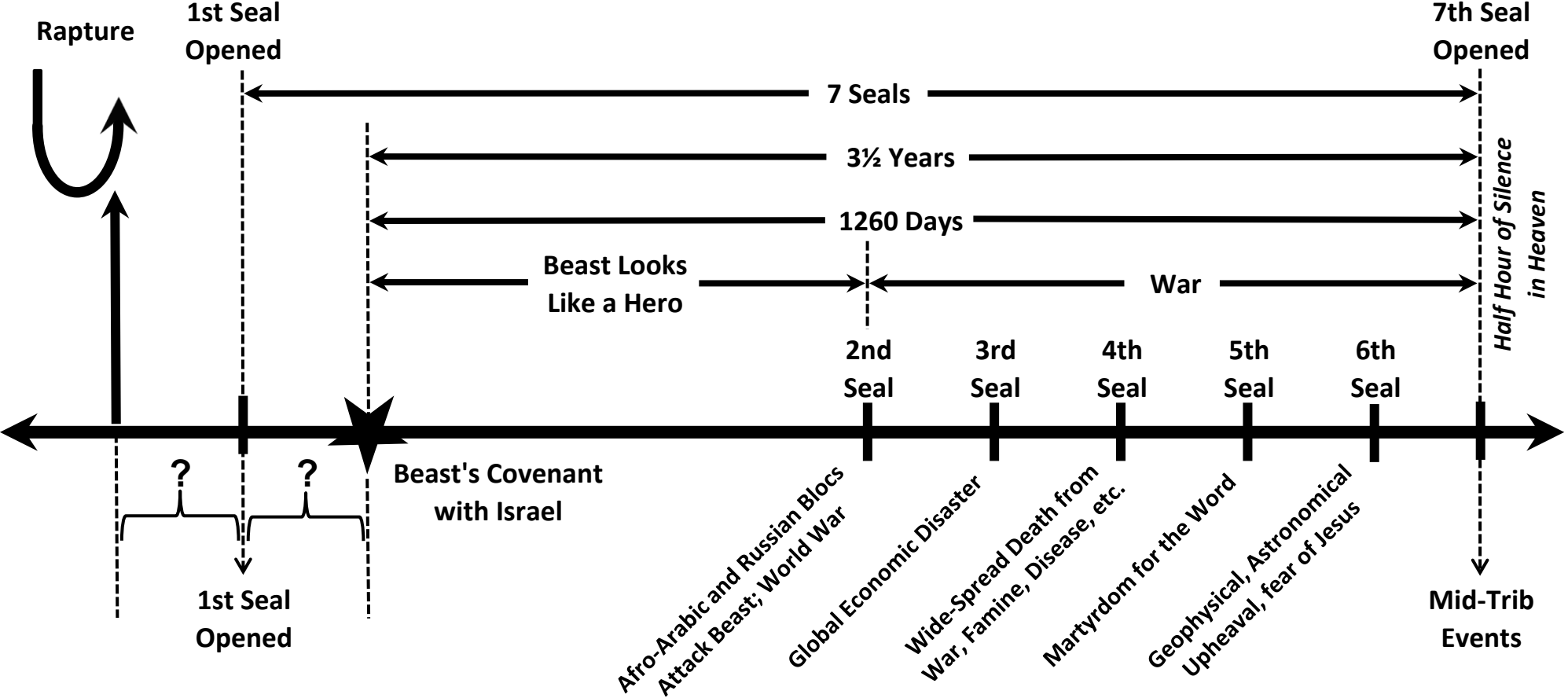
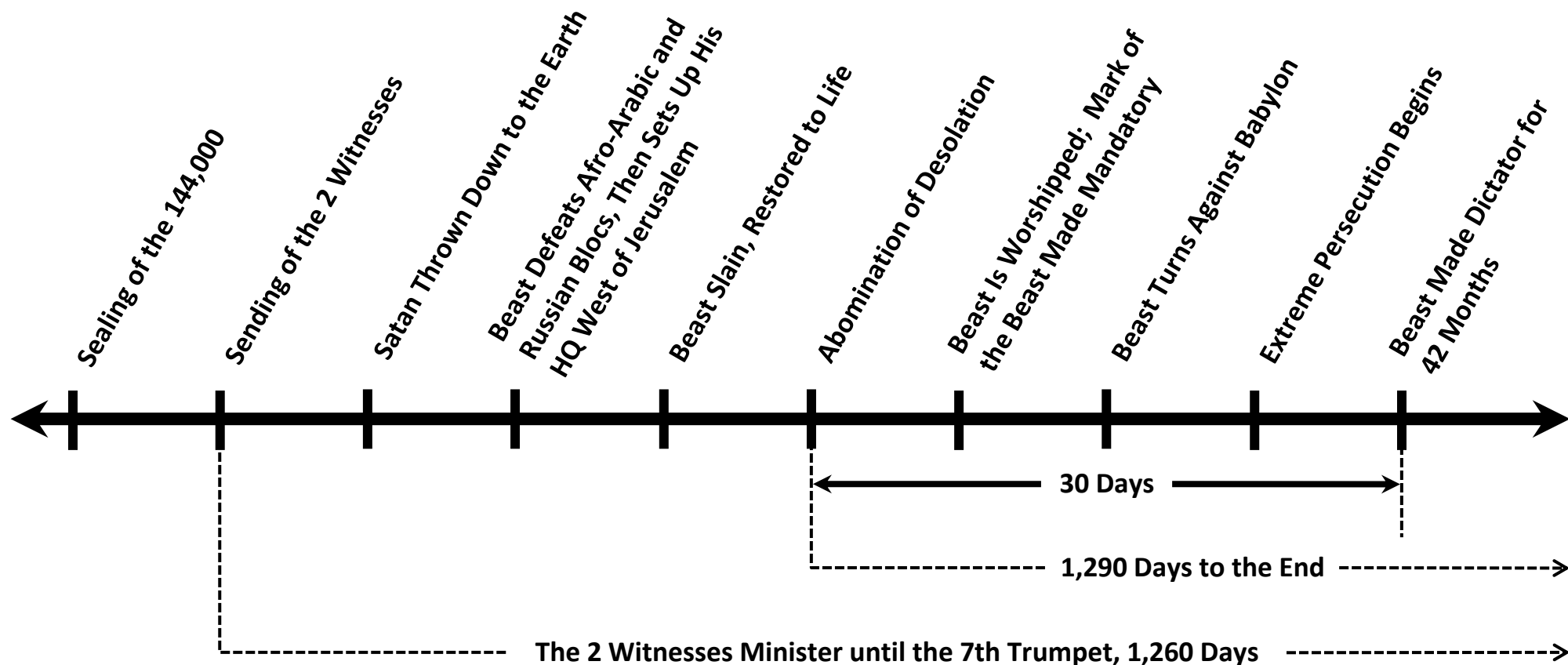


Chart 5: Mid-Tribulational Events



* NOTE: This chronology is only suggested! For example, the Beast's 42-month dictatorship mandate may officially begin and/or end earlier than shown in Charts 5 and 6. Indeed, the Abomination of Desolation may be the way he asserts his new dictatorial powers. Or perhaps the Two Witnesses appear immediately after the A of D (Abomination of Desolation). All we can say at this writing is that we think all these events occur around the middle of the Tribulation.

Chart 6: Second Half of the Tribulation

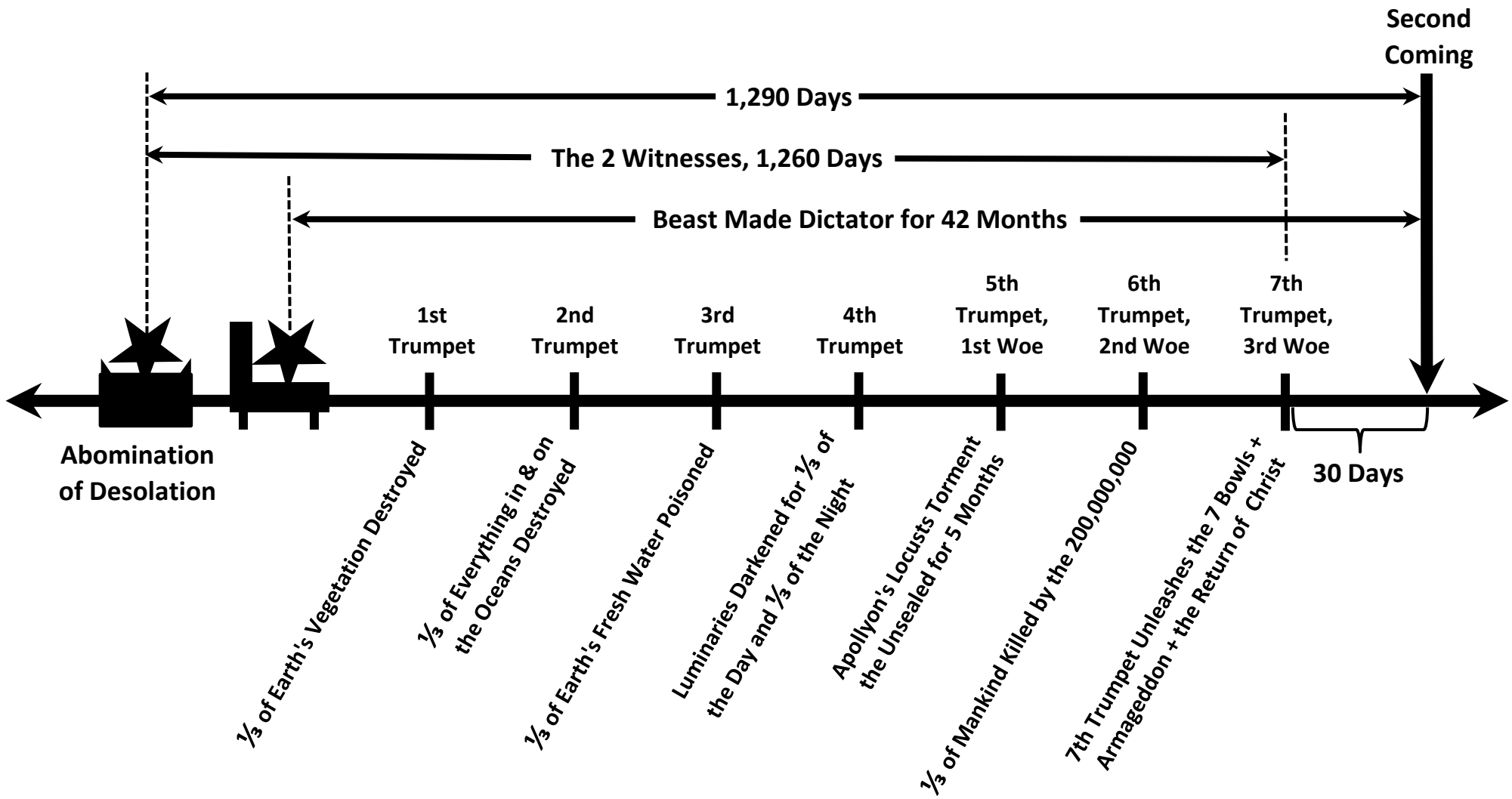


Chart 7: End of the Tribulation

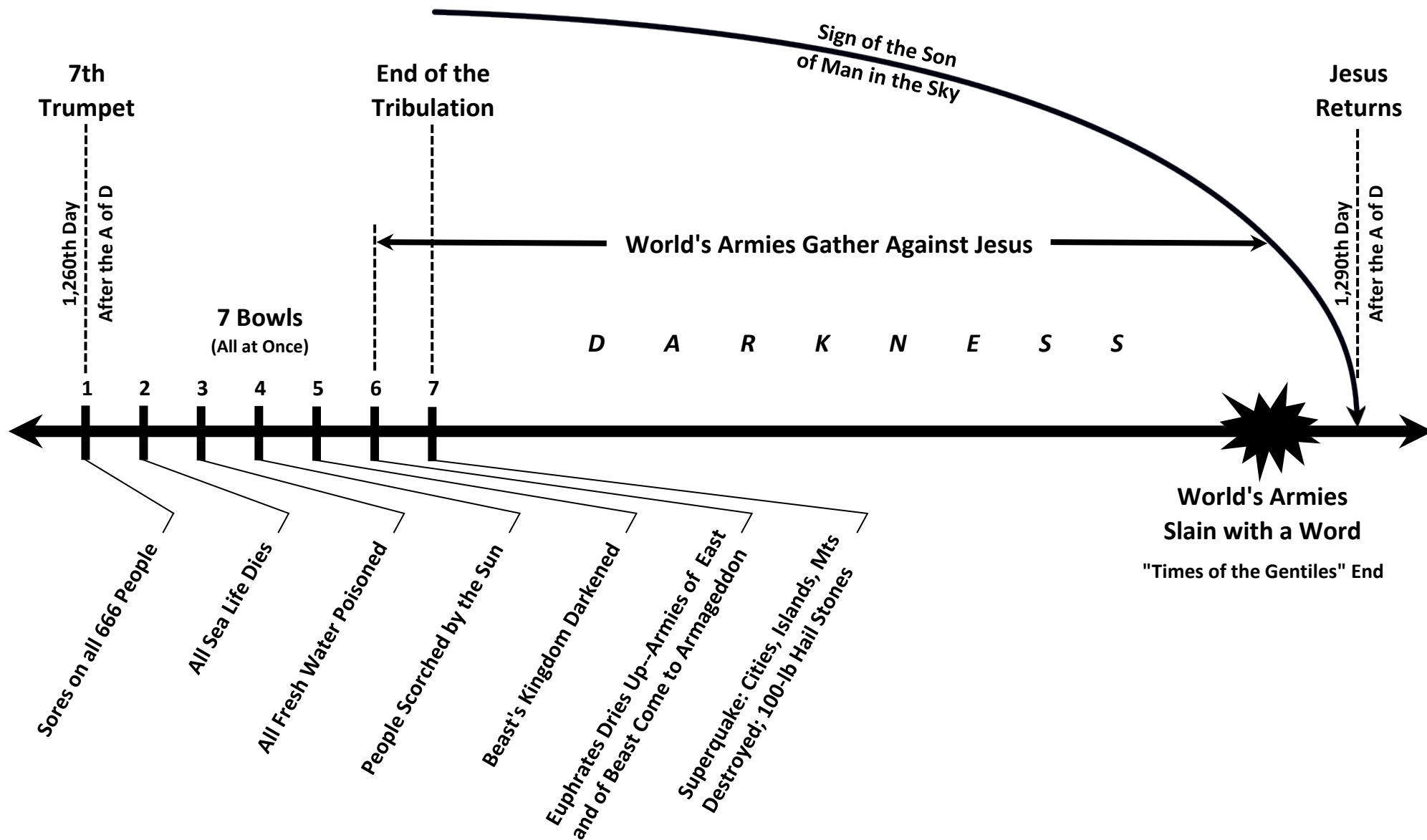
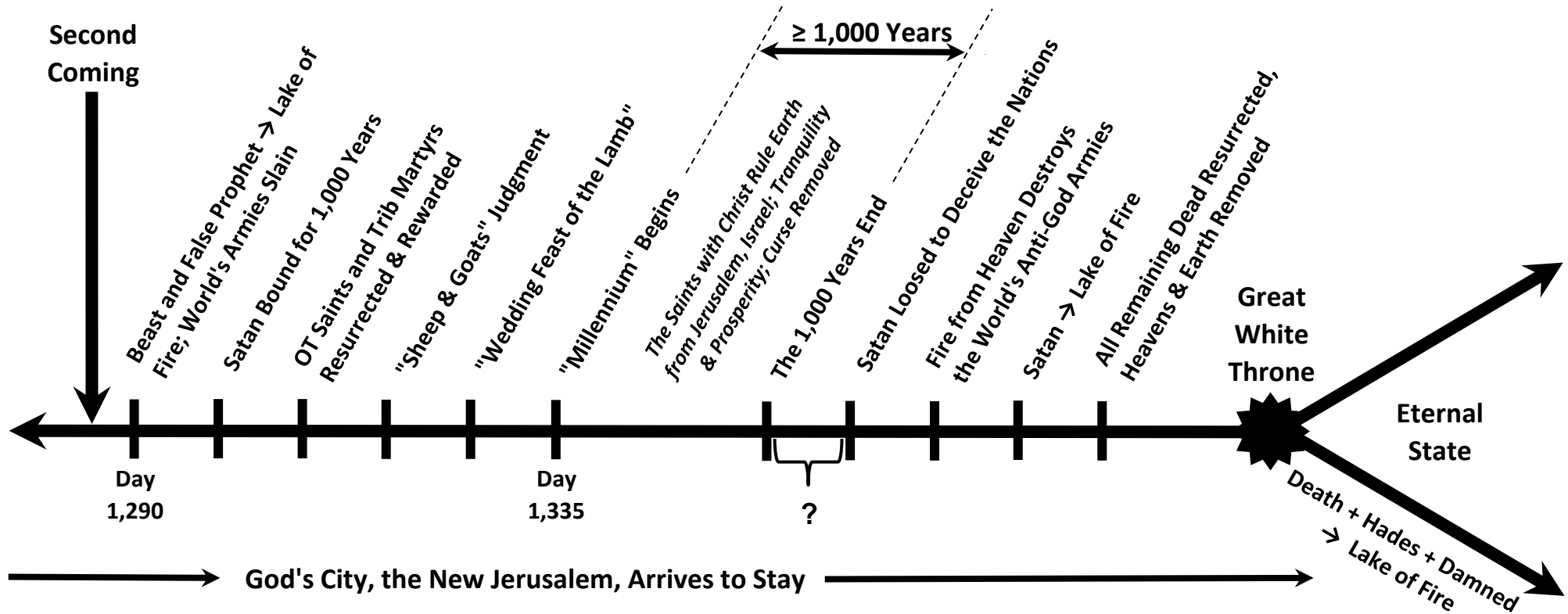


Chart 8: Post-Tribulational Events



* NOTE: Chronology Is Only Suggested!

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!

by Charles Wesley (lyrics) and Felix Mendelssohn (music)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqooC4ZG75Y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xw38pGhPXIk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1OqcyJfFNM>

Lyrics

Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful all ye nations rise!
Join the triumph of the skies!
With angelic host proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ by highest heaven adored
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace,
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that men no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of the earth;
Born to give them second birth!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Is He Worthy?

by Andrew Peterson and Ben Shive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FEuAr8f6bo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-yx2i-qWhM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N02VFg01YbU>

Lyrics

Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)
Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)
But do you know that all the dark
Won't stop the light from getting through? (We do)
Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)

Is all creation groaning? (It is)
Is a new creation coming? (It is)
Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our midst? (It is)
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

Is He worthy? Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy of this? (He is)

Does the Father truly love us? (He does)
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)
And does Jesus, our Messiah, hold forever those He loves? (He does)
Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave

From every people and tribe (People and tribe)
Every nation and tongue (Every nation and tongue)
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God
To reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Is He worthy of this? (He is)
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
He is! He is!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Originally composed in Latin in the 12th Century
Below: The 1861 translation by John Mason Neale

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPfdD3pBUig>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzW_PmW-LzE
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLnlhpXV5IM>

Lyrics

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of Hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

In Christ Alone

by Keith and Kristin Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80vZybgfPLw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmL8kEKdc3E>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjlQ0GtRX5s>

Lyrics

In Christ alone my hope is found.
He is my light, my strength, my song!
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All.
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand!

In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
'Til on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin, on Him, was laid.
Here, in the death of Christ, I live!

There in the ground, His body lay—
Light of the world, by darkness, slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
For I am His and He is mine,
Bought with the precious blood of Christ!

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny!
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Could ever pluck me from his hand!
'Til he returns or calls me home—
Here, in the power of Christ, I stand!

Joy to the World!

by Isaac Watts (lyrics) and George F. Handel (music)
Psalm 98

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30OaM6b48k8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5hj518Iugk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91brmsKegcQ>

Lyrics

Joy to the World , the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing!

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy!

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found!

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love!

THE HYPOSTATIC UNION STORY

THE FOUR MAJOR COUNCILS AND THEIR DOCTRINAL CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Nicea (A.D. 325)—Christ is fully divine.
- 2) Constantinople (A.D. 381)—Christ is fully human.
- 3) Ephesus (A.D. 431)—Christ is singular in person.
- 4) Chalcedon (A.D. 451)—Christ has two distinct natures.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MOST CRUCIAL ONE--CHALCEDON

THE ISSUES AT CHALCEDON

Many modern scholars (e.g., De Wolf, Pannenberg) say that Chalcedon was little more than a political struggle between the Antiochan and Alexandrian schools and that the resultant theological formula was in reality a political compromise. Of course, behind any [heresy] trial there are people involved--people with friends, people with influence, people with careers and personal agendas. However, this does not in any way diminish the theological importance of these trials, least of all Chalcedon.

The chief issue at Chalcedon (as at Nicea, Constantinople, and Ephesus before it) concerned at its base the question of the hypostatic union--what is the construct of Jesus Christ in His two natures? ***How did His humanity and His divinity come together in His person? What is the relationship of the two natures of Christ? Did or do they mix, are they distinct, or what?***

BACKGROUND TO CHALCEDON

This whole controversy actually goes back to the early 4th Century, when the church began to battle Arianism. **Arius** (d. 336), a presbyter in Alexandria, said the Father created the Son who created the Spirit and then everything else. He taught that ***Jesus was a creature inhabited by Logos, and that the Logos, since He was a created being, was only semi-divine.*** Arius further taught that Jesus had the Logos instead of a human spirit—that Jesus was not ***homoousios*** (same substance) with the Father. The more orthodox Athanasius opposed him, especially at Nicea (325). It was a battle of terms: Athanasius argued for ***homoousios*** (same substance), opposing the views of both those holding to ***homoiousios*** (similar substance) and of the Arians

holding to ***heteroousios*** (different substance). Constantine, presiding at Nicea, finally sided with Athanasius, though Constantine's successor favored Arius personally.

In the latter half of the 4th Century, the Cappadocian fathers sought to clarify terminology further by distinguishing *substance (ousia)* from *subsistence (hypostasis)*, while maintaining the *homoousios* of the Son with the Father. Arianism was condemned finally at Constantinople in 381, but Arianism lives on even today. (Note, for example, the Christology of the "Jehovah's Witnesses.")

As Christians continued to contemplate the hypostatic union, further errors arose. Later in the 4th Century *Apollinarius taught that in the Incarnation the divine nature absorbed the human nature (body and soul)*. The Logos displaced the rational immaterial part of the man Jesus. Apollinarius was accused of both denying the humanity of Christ and mixing the two natures of Christ, and was condemned at Constantinople, 381.

Then came *Nestorianism*, a swing away from Apollinarianism, in the 5th Century. Nestorius taught that Jesus was a possessed man with no real deity of His own—that in the man Jesus there was both the Logos personality AND a human personality and the hypostatic union was like the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (cf. Col 2:9). The Word did not become man at all.

Thus, *Apollinarianism mixes the two natures of Christ* and *Nestorianism separates the two natures*. Nestorius also argued, with his understanding of the hypostatic union, against the use of the term *theotokos* in respect to Mary (i.e., saying that Mary was the "mother of God.") In this he was technically right—she did not give birth to a divine nature—but splitting the two natures and two persons was heresy. Nestorianism was condemned at Ephesus, 431. *Most Christian people today are unfortunately guilty of either Apollinarianism or Nestorianism.*

THE CHALCEDONIAN CONTROVERSY

Not long after, along came *Eutyches*, who overreacted against Nestorianism. He believed that Christ had just one nature, in which *the divine and the human were blended*. Even the body of Christ, he said, "mingled" with the divine Logos. This actually produced a third kind of nature, neither divine nor human--a half-breed of sorts. Hence Eutyches confused the two natures of Christ. (Note how this idea is borrowed during the Tribulation to call the returning Jesus a half-breed extraterrestrial enemy invader.) This doctrine was condemned at Chalcedon in 451.

The parties in conflict at Chalcedon were: **1)** Leo I, Bishop of Rome since 440; **2)** Marcian, new emperor of Rome, who called the council to support Leo I; **3)** Eutyches, head of a monastery in Constantinople; **4)** *Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, pro-Eutyches*; **5)** 500-600 bishops, almost all Greeks and Orientals, plus a few Africans (pro-Eutyches), plus the papal delegation.

THE RESULTS AND AFTERMATH OF CHALCEDON

Political: The Africans repented and Dioscorus was deposed.

Doctrinal: Jesus had one "*prosopon*" (person), two natures--one fully human and the other "consubstantial" (and so fully divine) with the Father, which are forever joined in one "*hypostasis*" without confusion or separation--*the "hypostatic union."*

The Chalcedonian Formula set forth the Hypostatic Union as *the permanent, indissoluble, and yet unmixed union in the one person of Jesus Christ of two distinct natures, one fully divine and the other fully human, which began at the incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead.* This, in one blow, excluded not only Eutychianism, but also Ebionitism, Adoptionism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, and Nestorianism.

Still, the controversy did not cease. It was necessary at Constantinople in 553 to state Christ has one "face" (in my formula, "person"), as over against the two suggested by Nestorius and subsequent theologians in his train. Then, in the 7th Century there was a resurgence of Eutychianism in the form of Monothelitism, which taught that Christ had one will. This was condemned at Constantinople in 680. If "will" is defined as a "behavior complex" (Buswell), then Jesus had two wills, for His person operated in the realms of two natures—He had two person-nature axes, two behavior complexes. On the other hand, Walvoord emphasizes *the center of volition* rather than the relation of person-nature, and posits one will. If Christ had two centers of volition, then He actually had two personalities (as in Nestorianism), which the Chalcedonian formula forbids. *The will, in my view, resides in the person or subsistence, not in the nature per se.* A very strong case can be made for a single such will in Jesus, since nowhere in the New Testament where the volition of Jesus is observed do we find evidence of a duality of will in this sense.

THINKING ABOUT THE THEOLOGY OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The Chalcedonian Formula has not to this day been improved upon. To this day, however, theologians have had a hard time *explaining* the hypostatic union as described at Chalcedon. For example, *if Christ was divine, did not God die on the cross?* However, if we make a person-nature distinction (I do not say "separation"), then the union without confusion of the two natures

in the one person of Christ is much easier to digest rationally and theologically. The divine nature did not (and a biblical Theology Proper tells us it *cannot*) experience hunger, thirst, or pain—the human nature did. Yet, it was cosmically crucial that the Logos *person* taste death for us all (Heb 2:9). This simple (though virtually impossible to comprehend) distinction eliminates all the heresies listed above. (See the illustrations on Page 6.)

Observe for a moment Phil 2:6. The term *morphe* ("form") means function, manifestation, *kind* ("species?"). Verse 7 says that the divine *morphe* was *veiled*. The divine *nature* was veiled. (At the Transfiguration—see Mt 17, Lk 9--this veil was pulled back a little.) The *person* of Christ earned extreme exaltation through extreme obedience (vv. 8-11). So, He is a personal example for each of us (Heb 12:2 et al) and *worthy* of praise and worship. We cannot use the excuse, "Of course He was good—He was God," since He genuinely experienced every kind of trial in His *human* nature (Heb 4:14-16).

False views teach that, to one extent or another, Jesus gave up His deity when he became man. A proper view teaches that He subordinated the independent manifestation of His deity to the will of the Father when He took on a human nature without giving up any divine attributes *or* merely disguising Himself as a human.

PURPOSES OF THE INCARNATION: Jesus, the eternal Word, entered history with a fully human nature **1)** to *reveal God* (Jn 1:18); **2)** to *become the sacrifice for sin* (Heb 10:10-12); **3)** to *fulfill the covenants with Israel* (especially the Davidic--Lk 1:31-33); **4)** to *overcome Satan and the anti-God world system* (1 Jn 3:8; Jn 16:33; Heb 2:14); **5)** to *become our high priest* (Heb 4:14-15); **6)** to *become the qualified judge of humanity* (Jn 5:22-27); **7)** to *provide for us a supreme moral example* (1 Jn 2:6).

THE PLACE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Gen 3:15 (though as a proof-text, it may be weak all by itself) says that *the seed of the woman* would be the savior. Lk 1:35 and Mt 1:18 *say* she was a virgin. Jesus was the "only begotten" (Jn 1, 3)—i.e., unique. The incarnation makes no sense without the Virgin Birth--how could Jesus have two actual fathers and still be one person? Isa 7:14's "son" was a type of Christ; Jesus was the total fulfillment of that type (Mt 2:18). In any case--typology. The words *alma* and *parthenos* both cover "maiden" and "virgin." In those days maidens were virgins, and a wife was not a maiden any more. Besides, *of what "sign" significance would a normal birth have?*

Without a Virgin Birth, Jesus would have been *just* a man and not God's Son sent from above, and thus be unqualified to pay the price for the whole race. In some way, Jesus' being born of a virgin avoided His human nature being tainted with sin.

(Otherwise, He would have been in the same fix we are in, needing redemption Himself). *The Spirit as the agent of Jesus' conception could prevent His human nature from becoming polluted as ours are, and it most probably had to do with the Virgin Birth.* Since Mary was his mother, Jesus was still a son of Adam. Jesus needed a full genetic (i.e., species-type) connection to the human race or his death would have made no atonement for the sons of Adam. Thus, *in some way the human father is necessary to pass on the sin nature.* Perhaps the [personhood gene] is the contribution of one's father, human *or* divine? In any case, Jesus can accurately be called 100% a son of man and 100% the son of God without a fallen/sin nature.

By the way, this reinforces the idea of the universality of personhood—the divine and the human uniting to make, not a third kind of being, nor a half-breed, but a real human. The person of Jesus could relate to the person of the Father, to the person of Satan, and to the persons of Israel. So we, too, can relate to God really personally. Remember, the antichrist will teach that God is merely a nasty ET, and his half-breed son is coming to earth on a mission of hate. Instead, the truth is that God loves us all individually and sent His Son the first time to solve our sin problem, and He is sending Him again to rescue the planet and the human race as a whole. Satan, the father of lies, is the real hater.

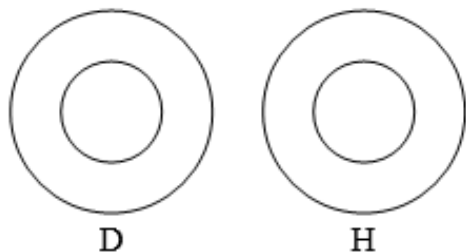
LUTHER ON THE PERSON OF CHRIST

With two exceptions, Luther was fully orthodox in his Christology. First, Luther taught that in the hypostatic union there was a communion or transference of attributes from the divine nature to the human nature. This has been referred to as *communicatio idiomatum*, and is tantamount to *mingling the natures* as in Eutychianism. Second, Luther taught the ubiquity of the physical body of Christ—that Jesus' body is everywhere. Apparently, he came to teach this latter heresy in order to defend his view of consubstantiation, a first cousin to the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation. (Luther thought that the true body and blood of Jesus was *with* the elements in the Lord's Supper. Unlike the Catholic church, he did not say the elements themselves changed, but that the one partakes *mystically* in the real body and blood of Christ. Later, most Lutherans abandoned this doctrine, viewing it as a residue of his days in Roman Catholicism. Such ubiquity is unacceptable, since Christ has a flesh-and-bones body (Lk 24:39), since He went to a specific place (Jn 14:2), and since He is coming again to a specific place (Rev 19-20; Zech 14).

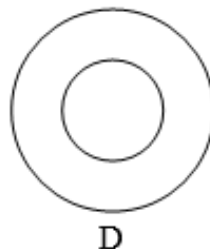
This concludes a brief historical overview of the Hypostatic Union of Christ. One's view of the relationships of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ [consciously or unconsciously] greatly affect one's theology and, ultimately, one's personal connection with God and one's perspective on the entire universe. But these are matters for another study or two! 😊

GEOMETRIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION THEORIES

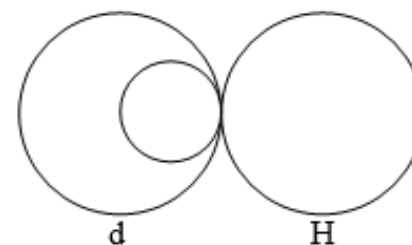
MONARCHIANS, EBIONITES



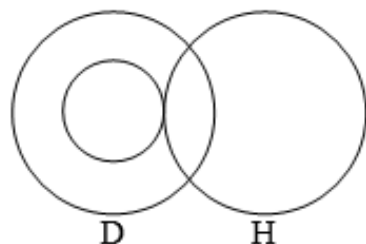
DOCETISTS



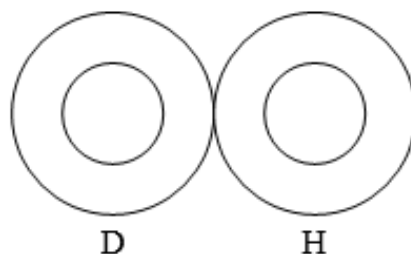
ARIANS



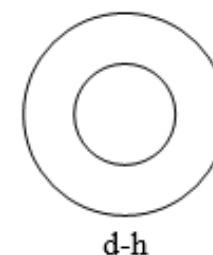
APOLLINARIANS



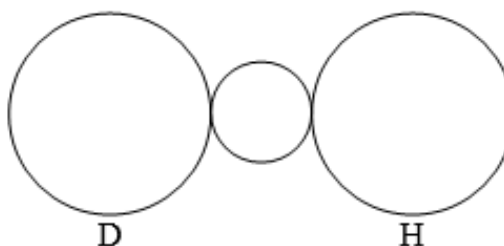
NESTORIANS



EUTYCHIANS



ORTHODOXY (CHALCEDON)



Large Circle = "Nature," while Small Circle = "Person"

"D" = divine; "d" = semi-divine; "H" = human; "h" = semi-human

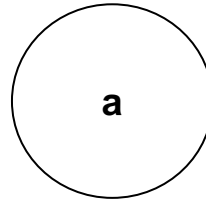
Please notice that in Orthodoxy, the natures neither mix nor separate nor diminish in any way.

A GEOMETRIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE PERSON-NATURE DISTINCTION

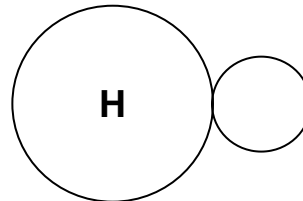
Nature (larger circle) consists in the type of being one is--all finite flesh (animal), finite flesh + finite spirit (Human), all finite spirit (Angelic), or infinite spirit (Divine). "Person" (smaller circle) has not only personality, but also an immortal moral property--i.e., the Image of God. Some natures (Human, Angelic, Divine) are associated with personhood.

Please notice that "Person" is always tangent (connected) to the associated nature, yet never mixed with it. Note also that the divine and human natures are united in the PERSON of Christ and never mix.

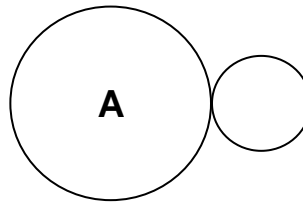
ANIMAL



HUMAN

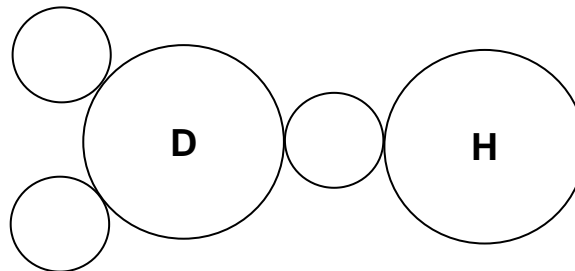


ANGEL




In the Incarnation of Christ, the infinite divine nature did not become finite flesh. Instead, the 2nd Person of the Trinity took on a 2nd nature--fully human--without giving up His divine nature, nor mixing it with the human. Thus, Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man forever. Please note that this modeling also allows for real interpersonal relationships among beings with personhood.

THE TRINITY SINCE THE INCARNATION



Sharing Files from iPhone to iPhone Using AirDrop

iPhone Sending to iPhone (iOS)

1. → Settings. Turn on both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.
2. → Settings → General → **AirDrop**.
3. Select “Contacts Only” or “Everyone.”
4. Select the file to be shared.
5. Select the **Share** icon, which looks like this: 
6. Receiver’s device will appear—select it.
7. Receiving device will get prompt to *Accept* or *Decline*.

iPhone Receiving from iPhone (iOS)

1. → Settings. Turn on both Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.
2. → Settings → General → **AirDrop**.
3. Uncheck “Receiving Off.”
4. When sender AirDrops to you, select *Accept*.
5. Choose where to save it—Books, Dropbox, Files, etc.
6. Receiver can now read and share the file too.

Apple **AirDrop** is for sharing among iOS devices, and Android users have **Beam**, but there are also numerous other Bluetooth and Wi-Fi apps that both Androids and iPhones can use to share files—**SHAREit**, **Instashare**, **Zapya**, **Feem**, and many more. But, **beware apps that use the internet**, which could reveal your location to hostiles. (Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are short range.)

By the way, the **Share** icon, especially for apps friendly to Androids, looks like this:

