

Introduction

Having settled on **Dispensational pre-millennialism** as the best way to understand the Bible's eschatological material, we want to elaborate on that picture. There is an immense amount of biblical material to correlate, and because of this there is some disagreement on some of the details. We want to get the main picture tonight.

There's lots of prophetic material associated with the final days. We won't be able to address every question or show how prediction fits.

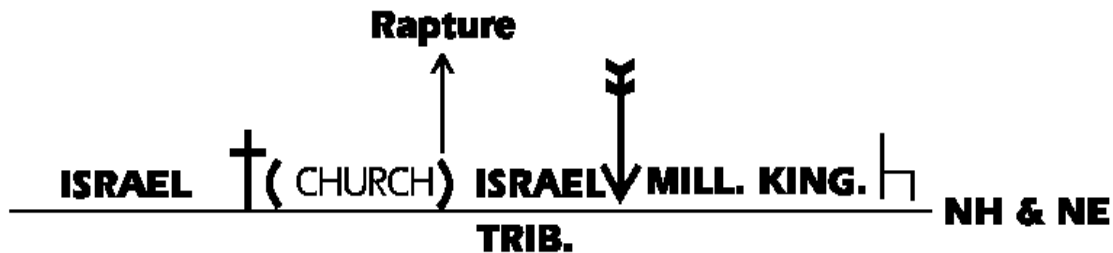
We assume you have done your homework assignment, so we will only allude to (rather than cover) the passages involved in many of these end-times events.

See the Old Testament and New Testament prophecy charts—they help to correlate this material. See also J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* and John Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation* for solid Dispensational treatments.

We will use the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:1-31) as our anchor text.** While it doesn't cover all the events, it is the most comprehensive passage concerning the end times.

The disciples actually ask three questions because they assumed that the destruction of the Temple would herald the end of the age. Actually, the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, while Jesus' coming and the end of the age has obviously not yet occurred.

Matthew only records Jesus' response to the disciples' last two questions. Luke 21:20-24 records his answer to their first question. Jesus answers the question about the sign of "end" in Matt. 24:15, and the question about the sign of his coming in Matt. 24:30.



The Church Age

The entire period from the death of Christ through the Rapture is called a "mystery" because it was not clearly revealed in the Old Testament. (Rom. 11:25) The Old Testament prophets did not understand that God would temporarily suspend his work through Israel and instead work through the church to bring the news of salvation to all people-groups. Jesus calls this period "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24). The Church receives a partial, unforeseen fulfillment of the New Covenant. Therefore, virtually all of our information about the Church Age comes from the New Testament.

The Matt. 13 parables describe the "mysteries of the kingdom"—the portion of God's kingdom which was not revealed in the Old Testament (Church Age). While affirming that the kingdom will come in its fullness as predicted by the Old Testament prophets, Jesus explains several key contrasts between the Church Age and the Millennial Kingdom. (NO TIME FOR THIS LAST YEAR)

Parable	Messianic Kingdom (Second Advent)	"Mystery" of Kingdom (Church Age)
Soils (Vs. 3-9, 18-23)	The kingdom will come with irresistible force.	The kingdom is spread by communicating the gospel, and people respond to this message in various ways.
Wheat & Tares (Vs. 24-30, 36-43)	God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous.	The righteous and the unrighteous live together in the same world.

Dragnet (Vs. 47-50)	God will separate all false members from the righteous.	False members will be swept into its sphere of influence.
Mustard Seed & Leaven (Vs. 31-33)	God's kingdom dramatically covers the whole world.	God's kingdom starts small and grows gradually to become large.
Pearl & Treasure (Vs. 44-46)	The surpassing value of the kingdom will be apparent to everyone.	God's kingdom is inconspicuous, yet of inestimable value and worthy of all that we possess.

Matt. 24:4-14

- **Vs. 4-8 seems to span the entire Church Age.** Though these things do not in themselves signal "the end," they will increase in frequency and intensity ("birth-pangs") through the Church Age: FALSE TEACHERS; WARS; FAMINES; EARTHQUAKES.
- **Vs. 9-13 seems to refer to a more specific period of time** ("then;" "at that time")—maybe the end of the Church Age, or perhaps the first half of the Tribulation >> PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS; APOSTASY; FALSE TEACHERS; SOCIETAL LAWLESSNESS.
- **Vs. 14 makes it clear that the Great Commission must be fulfilled before "the end" (the Great Tribulation) will come.** This verse also implies a long time between Jesus' first coming and the end.
- For an overview of the worldwide growth of evangelical Christianity in the 20th century, see David B. Barrett, "A Century of Growth," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 16, 1998.

2 Tim. 3:1-9 - The general direction of human society will tend toward lawlessness and the church will apostasize (fall away from the truth) through many false teachers (see also 2 Thess. 2:3).

The Rapture

What is it?

Of the few passages which speak of the Rapture, 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:50-53 are the clearest. Christ will descend from heaven to catch up all living and dead believers to meet him in the air. They receive their resurrected bodies at this point. Therefore, **some Christians will never experience physical death.** Instead, they will be instantly translated like Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament.

(1 Thess. 4:16,17) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

(17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

(1 Cor. 15:50-53) I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (51) Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—(52) in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (53) For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Why is it called the "Rapture?"

This word is not found in the bible, but is derived from the Latin verb *rapere* for "seized" or "caught up". We see this type of formulation in 1 Thes. 4:17.

(1 Thes. 4:17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

When will it occur?

None of the Rapture passages directly speak about the timing of the Rapture in relation to the Second Advent. Its timing must therefore be inferred from other eschatological passages. *The key issue here is how one understands God's commitment to Israel. If God's*

covenants with Israel still stand, then the focus of God's dealing during the tribulation will be with Israel.

Covenantalists:

Because Covenantalists see the Church replacing Israel, they see the Rapture as the first event of the Second Coming (POST-TRIBULATIONAL VIEW).

Parousia: The word *parousia* ("coming"), which is repeatedly used to refer to the second coming of Christ, has a special meaning in some cases. When a general staged a triumphal entry into a city, the citizens would go out to meet him, and immediately return in company with him and his army and/or captives. This could be the intended meaning of the word when it is used in passages like 1 Thess. 4:15; 1 Cor. 15:23.

Dispensationalist:

Because Dispensationalists see the Church as a parenthesis in God's working through Israel, they see the Rapture as a distinct event separated by a period of time (PRE- or MID-TRIBULATIONAL VIEWS - the distinction between these views is minor). As we have already seen, the focus of the tribulation is on Israel rather than on the Church.

If the Dispensational hermeneutic is accepted, there is ample additional support for the Rapture as an event which precedes the Second Coming by a significant period of time .

1. Contrasts between the Second Advent and the Rapture:
 - a. **Rapture** - Believers meet Christ in the *air* (1 Thess. 4:17)
Second Advent - Believers meet Christ on the *ground* (Zech. 14:4,5).
 - b. **Rapture** - Believers involved become *immortal* (1 Cor. 15:51-53).
Second Advent - Believers involved remain *mortal* (Is. 65:20; Rev. 19:18).
 - c. **Rapture** - Believers involved *go immediately to heaven* (1 Thess. 4:17).
Second Advent - Believers involved *stay on earth* to populate the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 25:31-34; Zech. 14:9ff).
2. Intervening events between the Rapture and Second Advent require enough time that they are best explained as two separate events.
 - a. There must be enough time for people to get saved, because mortal believers inhabit the Millennial Kingdom (Is. 65:20).
 - b. Rev. 20:4 implies that there must be enough time for some of the above believers to die.
3. The contrast between the "day of Christ" and the "day of the Lord" suggests two different comings.
 - a. The "day of Christ" is for the church and is looked forward to (1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6).
 - b. The "day of the Lord" is for Israel and unbelievers and is feared as a time of God's judgment (Is. 13:6,9 Is. 34:8; Ezek. 30:3; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:7-13; 1 Thess. 5:2; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 2:2).
4. God usually removes believers before he judges catastrophically (e.g., Noah; Lot). Several New Testament passages suggest that he will remove Christians before the Tribulation (2 Pet. 2:5-9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9).

Note: The desire to believe in a pre-tribulational Rapture because it means deliverance from suffering is suspect and unhealthy. The New Testament predicts that *all* committed Christians will be persecuted to some extent (2 Tim. 3:12), persecution has been the norm for Christians for the whole Church Age, and more Christians were martyred in the 20th century than

in all previous 19 centuries combined! (Need citation.) Do you hold this view because you don't want to suffer—or because it makes the most sense?

Application: How should the Rapture affect us as Christians?

1 Thes. 4:13,18 says we should not grieve hopelessly about Christian friends who die, because we'll see them again on that day.

(1 Thess. 4:13,18) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope . . . (18) Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Cor. 15:58 says we should keep abounding in ministry because this work has eternal impact.

(1 Cor. 15:58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

The Judgment-Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-15)**

(1 Cor. 3:10-15)** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. (11) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (13) each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. (14) If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. (15) If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

What is the purpose of this judgment?

This judgment evaluates the service Christians rendered to Christ in this life. Like the judgment of Olympic contestants, **it evaluates our performance for the purpose of reward, not acceptance.** Paul makes it clear that Christians could receive no reward, yet still be saved (1 Cor. 3:15). Therefore, while this judgment should sober us, we should not fear it as the place where we may be rejected by God.

Furthermore, Christ will be perfectly fair in his evaluation. He will take into account all the differences in our gifting, opportunities, etc.—and he will evaluate us by what we did with what he has entrusted us (Matt. 25:14-23). For this reason, some who appeared to be great will be rewarded less than those who were little-known—and vice-versa.

When will it occur?

It is not clear when this judgment takes place. The most logical place is immediately after the Rapture.

What is the reward?

The reward is multifaceted, including:

- **The satisfaction of seeing the true significance of our work for Christ** (1 Cor. 3:13 "each man's work will become evident"—**not to Jesus, but to us**). **(1 Cor. 3:13)** . . . each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.
- **God's praise for faithful service.** This may include bestowing different degrees of glory on us (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17). **(1 Cor. 4:5)** Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. **(Matt. 25:20-23)** "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' (21) 'His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' (22) 'The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' (23) 'His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'"

- **Roles of rulership in God's eternal kingdom.** Responsibility in God's future kingdom will be given according to our faithfulness to Christ in this life (Lk. 19:17,19).
(**Luke 19:17-19**) "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.' (18) "And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' (19) "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.'

Conclusion: 2 Cor. 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- The reward resounds throughout eternity.
- It is absolutely fair. We are evaluated based on what we did with what we had (Matt. 19:30).

Note C.S. Lewis- *Weight of Glory* and chapter 12 from *The Great Divorce*.

How can we accumulate this reward? The New Testament mentions several ways to do this, including:

- **Bring people to Christ**
(**Daniel 12:3**) "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
(**1 Thes. 2:19,20**) For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? (20) For you are our glory and joy.
- **Help Christians grow in Christ**
(**1 Pet. 5:2-4**) . . . shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- **Undergo training to become a more effective servant for Christ.**
(**1 Cor. 9:24-27**) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. (25) And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (26) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; (27) but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Note the self-discipline/self-control, strategic purpose and focus. Paul puts it all on the line in serving Christ.

(**2 Peter 1:5-7,11**) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; (6) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; (7) and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love...(11) for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Character transformation and growth in knowledge required to serve in a way that brings reward. "If you worked for your boss like you work for God, you'd be fired." - Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Worker*

- **Endure suffering in order to advance Christ's purpose** (Mk. 10:29,30).
(**Jas. 1:12**) Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
- **Minister to the poor and needy** (Matt. 25:35-40).
(**Luke 14:12-14**) And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers

or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. (13) "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, (14) and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- **Generously give money and material resources to advance God's work.** (Matt. 6:20)
(1 Tim 6:18,19) Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (19) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

How should hoping for this judgment affect us?

- **We should persevere in ministry.** (2 Cor. 4:17; 5:11; Rom. 8:18).
(2 Tim. 4:1, 5, 8) I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom... *fulfill your ministry...* (8) in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- **We should focus on fulfilling God's plan rather than pleasing others.**
(1 Cor. 4:3-5) But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. (4) For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. (5) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

See Os Guinness' book *The Call*, chapter titled "The Audience of One."

- **We shouldn't waste our Christian life on fleshly pursuits.** There will be eternal implications.(1 Cor. 3:10b,15 >> HOUSE BURNING DOWN: "I ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE, BUT I LOST EVERYTHING ELSE!").
(1 Cor. 3:10b,15) According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it . . . (15) If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.
- **We should suspend full judgment on other Christian workers until that time** (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:5). While we are responsible to judge one another's doctrine and moral lifestyle, we should leave the full evaluation of another Christian's effectiveness for this day, because only Christ is qualified to judge to this degree.
(Rom. 14:10-12) But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. (11) For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." (12) So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

There is tremendous emphasis on this subject in the NT! Along with gratitude for what God has given us in Christ, this is the driving motivation for Christian service. Do you believe that this will happen? Are you focused on this reality? This is a big part of what we call the "eternal perspective."

The Regathering of Israel & Jewish Revival

Read Matt. 24:15-20. Notice Jesus assumes that the Temple will be rebuilt (vs 15) and that the Jews will be in Judea practicing some form of Old Testament observance (vs 16,20). This is one of many Old and New Testament passages that predict the dispersion of the Jewish nation for their sins—and their future regathering as a precursor to the end of the age and the Messianic kingdom (Deut. 28:58-68; 30:1-6; Ezek. 38:8; Lk. 21:24).

(Luke 21:24) They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Fulfillment: Israel was dispersed in 70 AD and (against all odds) became a nation again in 1948.

Jerusalem must be back in the hands of the Jews (Zech. 12,14; Lk. 21:24).

Fulfillment: This occurred in 1967 as a result of the 6 Day War.

The Jewish temple must be rebuilt and sacrifices resumed before the midpoint of the tribulation (Dan. 9:27*; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4).

(2 Thess. 2:4) He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Fulfillment: This has not yet occurred, although there is movement of Jews to reconstruct the temple ("the temple reconstructionist movement").

The Jews are regathered while still in an unregenerate state (Ezek. 37 - "dry bones" prophecy). **There are evidently two great movements of the Jews to Christ.**

- Some time, probably early in the tribulation, 144,000 Jews come to Christ. God supernaturally protects them and enables them to carry on a fruitful evangelistic ministry (Rev. 7:3-9; 14:3-5,14-16?).
- Toward the end of the tribulation period, approximately one-third of the Jewish people evidently realize that Jesus was their Messiah and turn to him (Zech. 12:10-13:9).

Fulfillment: Israel has been regathered in an unregenerate state, but neither of these spiritual revivals has occurred yet.

The Tribulation, Antichrist, & Abomination of Desolation

The Tribulation is a time when God's focus returns to the nation of Israel. All of the passages (Old and New Testament) describe its reference to Israel *rather than* to the Church. It is the "70th" week of God's dealings with Israel (Dan. 9:27*). It is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Jesus calls it the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:15-28, see especially vs 21,22). God works through the Tribulation to prepare Israel for the Second Coming.

(Dan. 9:27*) "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The Tribulation is approximately 7 years long—the 70th "week" of Dan. 9:27*. This period is divided into two 3.5 year periods.

- **During the first 3.5 years, the Antichrist rules the world** (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5,7) through his military might (Dan. 11:38; Rev. 13:4) and monetary control (Rev. 13:16,17). This will be a time of worldwide peace (1 Thess. 5:2,3)—but it will be a time of persecution for true Christians (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:7).
- **At the midpoint, he will suspend regular Jewish sacrifices** (Dan. 9:27), **enter the temple and demand to be worshipped** (2 Thess. 2:4; Dan. 11:31; Matt. 24:15). This is the "abomination of desolation."
- **This act precipitates a 3.5 year period of judgment by God on the Antichrist.** Various nations rebel against his rule (Dan. 11:40-45), culminating in a final battle in the Middle east (Armageddon—Rev. 16:16).
- **Ending event: Jesus returns at this point to rescue the world from annihilation** (Matt. 24:16-22). Many other passages describe this period, including Dan. 9:27b; Dan. 7:26,27. It is often called "the day of the Lord" because it is a time of God's judgment (2 Thess. 2:2; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14).

The central figure of the Tribulation is the "Antichrist." He is also known as the "little horn" (Dan. 7:8), the "man of sin" (2 Thes. 2:3), and "the one who makes desolate" (Dan. 9:27*).

Among his important features: (THIS WAS COVERED LAST WEEK)

He is a Gentile. He arises from a 10-nation Gentile confederacy (Dan. 2:41,42; 7:7-10). He arises from the sea (Rev. 13:1), which is a reference to the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15).

(Rev. 13:1,2) And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. (2) The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear

and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

He achieves world wide power for a brief period of time (Rev. 13:8; Dan. 7:23-25).

(Rev. 13:8) All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

He sets himself up as an object of worship

(Dan 11:36,37) "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. (37) He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all."

(Rev. 13:4) Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

He is energized by Satan (Rev. 13: 4)

(2 Thess. 2:9) The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

He is a great adversary of believers

(Dan 7: 25) "And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."

(Rev. 13:7) He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

He hates Jesus Christ

(Rev 17:14) "They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

He is accompanied by "the false prophet," a Jewish(?) leader who helps his rise to power by using miraculous powers to persuade people to follow him (Rev. 13:11-14).

(Rev. 13:11-14) Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. (12) He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

(13) And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. (14) Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

The Second Coming of Christ

At the end of the tribulation, Jesus will return to rescue the state of Israel and those individuals who believe in him.

(Matt. 24:26-31) "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. (27) "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. (28) "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. (29) "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, (30) and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. (31) "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

His return will be:

- **Visible** (Matt. 24:26-31)
- **Physical** (Acts 1:11; Zech. 14:5)
- **Accompanied by unique natural phenomena** (Matt. 24:29-31)

What will happen when he returns:

(Rev. 19:18-21) . . . in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." (19) And I saw the beast and the kings of

the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. (20) And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire** which burns with brimstone. (21) And **the rest were killed with the sword** which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

- **He will slay all non-believers when he returns** (Zech. 14:12; Rev. 19:18,21)
- **He will cast the Antichrist and the false prophet into hell** (Rev. 19:19,20).
- **He will rescue all believers who are alive** (Matt. 24:13, 22, 31).

The Millennial Kingdom

Mortal believers who are still alive at the Second Coming enter the Millennial Kingdom.

They still die, though after a longer life (Isa. 65:20,21), therefore they have mortal bodies. They are evidently still fallen, as inferred from various judgments and the fact that they die. They have children (Isa. 65:23) and repopulate the earth (inferred from Rev. 20:8). The curse on nature is evidently ameliorated removed to some extent (Isa. 65:25).

Satan is bound in the abyss for most of this period, which lasts for 1000 years (Rev. 20:2,3,4,5,6,7).

Satan is released at the end of this period and incites a rebellion against Jesus, at which time he is thrown into hell. This evidently demonstrates that the problem with humans is not environmental, but moral and spiritual. Even in a perfect environment and a perfectly just government, humans still revolt. It is also probably the final piece of evidence for Satan's condemnation.

Jesus rules from Jerusalem (Obadiah 1:12-20; Zech. 14:16). Gentiles come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Zech. 14:16-21). Jews have a new temple and offer commemorative sacrifices there (Ezek. 40-48). Resurrected believers may participate in the administration of the messianic kingdom (Matt. 19:28-30; Rev. 20:4)?

The Great White Throne Judgment

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

Who is judged at the judgment?

This judgment is evidently for all unsaved people of all times.

Why are the people condemned?

- **Their names do not appear in the book of life. That is, they did not respond to God's offer of forgiveness through Christ.**
- **Their works reveal that they deserve God's judgment, because they fall short of God's standard of moral perfection.**

What is their fate?

The unsaved dead are then sentenced to the lake of fire (also called "hell," "Gehenna," "the outer darkness," "eternal fire," etc.).

(2 Thess. 1:9) And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . .

Hell is a place of eternal, conscious alienation from God and condemnation (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 14:9-11; Jude 1:7). The Bible does not support the idea that the unsaved are eventually annihilated after being punished for a period of time (conditional immortality).

There are evidently degrees of punishment in hell. **People will be punished differently according to how much they knew of God's will** (see Mark 12:40; Lk. 20:46-48).

The New Heavens & New Earth

(Rev. 21:1-8) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. (2) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, (4) and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (5) And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." (6) And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. (7) "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. (8) "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

This is the eternal state. God destroys our present universe (Rev. 21:1; 2 Pet. 3:10-13) and creates a new universe in which his reign endures forever (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

How can God give people free will in this state and yet guarantee that there will never be a rebellion again? Part of the answer may be that we will be able to see the complete record of revolt against God, the full demonstration that only he has the right to rule (Isa. 66:24).

The Intermediate States

Where do people go after they die, but before their eternal states? Are they conscious or not? These are the questions most people have about the intermediate state. There is not a lot of material on this subject, but we can infer what might happen.

Believers are divided into two groups:

- **Those who died before Christ's death** went to a waiting place which Jesus called "Abraham's Bosom" (Lk. 16:22). They were conscious and comforted. They evidently could not go into God's presence because their sins had not yet been paid for in history.
(Luke 16:22) "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried."
- **Those who die after Christ's death** go directly to be consciously with Christ in heaven (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Lk. 23:43). However, they do not receive their resurrected bodies until the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:52).

(Luke 23:43) Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." **Therefore, the New Testament refers to dead Christians as "asleep" not because they are unconscious, but to emphasize that they will be raised from the dead just as a sleeping person will awaken (contra "SOUL SLEEP").**

Nonbelievers:

Nonbelievers evidently go to a waiting place Jesus called "Hades" (Lk. 16:23). They are conscious and in agony—probably because they are aware of their coming judgment. They will be raised at the end of the Millennial Kingdom to be judged and sentenced to hell (Rev. 20:11-15).

(Luke 16:23) "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

(Rev. 20:13,14) The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. (14) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

- **There is no second chance for people to repent after they die.** Lk. 16:26 (along with Heb. 9:27; Matt. 25:10-12; Lk. 13:24,25) *(contra* JEHOVAH'S WITNESS & CATHOLIC PURGATORY; MORMON BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD)

(Luke 16:26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

(Heb. 9:27) Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Memory Verses

Matt. 24:1-31** - Jesus' description of the end of the age.

1 Cor. 3:10-15** - Christ's judgment and reward of Christians.

Rev. 19:11-21:8** - the chronology of events from the second coming to the new heavens and new earth