

Timeline & Justification for Pre-Wrath Rapture

Quick Reference Guide (Scriptural justification in the following section).

1. The days leading up to Jesus' second coming are called the last days, the end-days or the end-times, what Jesus called the "beginning of sorrows." This is where we are now.
2. The so-called Four Horsemen in Revelation chapter six are already running rampant, bringing disease, death and financial disaster upon us.
3. Before the 7-year Tribulation starts, there has to be a major war in the Middle East, then a peace treaty, and a one-world government. Then the 7-year Tribulation starts.
4. There won't be a pre-Tribulation rapture because many verses show that the saints will suffer during the Tribulation (see next section).
5. This peace treaty will bring a 'false' peace that will last for the first three-and-a-half years and give rise to the anti-Christ..The Jews will be allowed to rebuild their temple, but not the outer courts. It is a false peace because there will be no rest for Christians, only persecution.
6. There can't be a mid-Trib rapture because we would know in advance when that would occur since we can mark the beginning of the 7-year Tribulation to the signing of the peace treaty. Jesus said we wouldn't know the day or the hour when He is coming back to resurrect the saints.
7. After the first three-and-a-half years of 'peace,' the anti-Christ will commit the "abomination of desolation" in the Temple by declaring himself to be god.
8. This initiates a time of great warfare and suffering as Jesus begins to open the remaining seals.
9. When the sixth seal is opened, the sun turns black and the moon red, ushering in the Day of the Lord, the Day of Wrath, a "great and terrible day" – a 'great' day because that's when the rapture occurs, right before the wrath of God is unleashed on the earth.
10. This 'day' is not necessarily a 24-hour day but more likely a short time period during which the trumpet and bowl plagues decimate the earth, the period Jesus called the Great Tribulation.
11. At the end of the 7-year Tribulation, a new earth and a new Jerusalem descend from heaven and Jesus establishes his reign on earth for the thousand-year Millennium.
12. Following the Millennium, Satan is released from the 'bottomless pit' and then finally terminated for good in the 'lake of fire.'

Biblical Analysis – Part 1 – The Great Tribulation

The Bible teaches that Jesus is coming back a second time to take permanent possession of the earth. At that time, all people will come before the **Great White Throne** for judgment:

- *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15)*

Unbelievers, all of whom had the opportunity to make a choice, will be cast into a hell of **eternal torment**:

- *And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. (Rev. 14:11)*

Believers will then have their works **judged by fire**. What comes through the fire represents their heavenly treasure:

- *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)*

The days leading up to Jesus' second coming are called the last days, the end-days or the end-times. Jesus spoke about these times in his Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. He separates these days into two phases. The beginning stage He calls the "**beginning of sorrows**."

- *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Matt. 24:6-8)*

These days are characterized by **wars, earthquakes, pestilence** and the like. A time of **great deception**, when many will falsely say "here He is, or there He is." We see a lot of that today, when all sorts of erroneous ideas concerning Christianity will spread great **confusion**, a primary tactic of Satan.

- *Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many... Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matt. 24:4-5, 23-24)*

- Note: The Greek form of the word "if" suggests that it is possible for the elect to be deceived

The deception will be so great that there will be what the Apostle Paul calls a great "**falling away**."

- *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first. (2Thess. 2:3)*

This means that believers will have their faith **undermined by false teaching** and drift away into **unbelief**. That's why Scripture tells us we need to "**hold fast**" to our faith (1Cor. 15:2, Heb. 3:6, 4:14, 10:23, Rev. 2:25, 3:3, 3:11). Jesus tells us we must "**endure**" to the end:

- *But he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Matt. 10:22, 24:13)*

Paul also wrote to Timothy about what these last days would be like:

- *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2Tim. 3:1-5)*

That describes kind of where we are today. But things will get progressively worse. The so-called **Four Horsemen** in Revelation chapter six are already **running rampant**, bringing disease, death and financial disaster upon us. It's happening now and will get progressively worse.

Jesus also said that He would not come again until the gospel had been **preached to all nations**, all people groups. Through the advent of the **Internet** and **satellite** communication, this has largely been accomplished.

- *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)*

Then Jesus says the ‘**Great Tribulation**’ will come upon us, punctuated by a terrible earthquake after the “**abomination of desolation**” occurs:

- *When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24:15,21)*

It is from the prophet Daniel that we get a detailed **timeline** of that terrible period. Daniel 9:24-25 starts by telling us that we’re talking about a period of **seventy weeks**. Actually, the precise translation of this is “seventy-sevens” with **each week** being seven **years**, for a **total of 490 years**.

- *Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. (Dan. 9:24-25)*

Daniel’s starting reference point is when King Artaxerxes gave the decree to **Nehemiah to rebuild the temple** in 445 BC. Verse 25 tells us there will 7 weeks and then 62 weeks. The seven weeks, or 49 years, brings us to 396 BC when the temple was completed.

Verse 26 refers to a subsequent 62-week period after which the Messiah, **Jesus will be ‘cut off.’**

- *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

These 434 years bring us to 37 or 38 AD, depending on whether there is a year zero or not. Jesus was actually born in either 3 or 4 AD and lived 33 ½ years. Jesus was indeed “cut off” or killed **right when this prophecy says**.

After the ‘people of the prince’ (i.e. Satan) destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary, (the temple) which occurred in 70 AD, there is **an indeterminate length of time before the seventieth week**. This is to allow enough time to ‘**finish the transgression**’ as Daniel wrote or when ‘the transgressors have reached their **fullness**’ as he wrote in chapter 8, verse 23-25.

- *And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.*

The Bible refers to **Satan** as the ‘prince of the air’ (Eph 2:2) or the ‘god of this age’ (2Cor. 4:4) in the New Testament, so we know Daniel is talking here about the devil being the ‘**power**’ behind this ‘**king**’ whom John calls the ‘**antichrist**’ (1John 2:18,22; 4:3, 2John 1:7)

Several prophets, primarily Ezekiel, tell us that a **major war in the Middle East** will break out involving Israel and the Arabs, Persians (i.e. Iran) and Russia (Ezek. 38-39). Out of this a “**Beast**” will arise as described in Revelation, chapter 13.

- *And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name... So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:1,4)*

Daniel 9:27 says that this man will ‘**sign a covenant with many**’ meaning a **peace treaty** which will last for one week, or **seven years**. The 7-year Tribulation begins when the peace pact is signed. This

peace treaty will bring a **'false' peace** that will last for the first three-and-a-half years. We call it a false peace because there will be no peace for Christians, only persecution.

➤ *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. (Dan. 9:27)*

Jesus says that the first 'forty-two months' or three and a half years, the **'beast' would be in control** and form a **one-world government**, as described in Revelation 13:5-7. This will actually be a time of peace – for everybody except the Christians.

➤ *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

Then, Daniel states in verse 27 that, in the **middle** of the 7-year Tribulation (i.e. after forty-two months), the anti-Christ will **'bring an end to sacrifice and offering.'**

➤ *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the **middle** of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.*

This implies and is confirmed elsewhere that, as a result of the peace treaty, Israel will be allowed to **rebuild the temple**, the so-called 'third temple,' the first two having been destroyed. However, this will only be the temple building itself, not the inner and outer courts because they will be **overrun by the Gentiles** (i.e. non-Jews) as described in Revelation 11:2. Even now, orthodox Jews in Israel have reconvened the Sanhedrin, their leadership council, and are training priests to prepare to start up their complex system of sacrifices last performed in 70 AD.

In addition to ending sacrificial ceremonies in the third temple, this is also when the so-called **'abomination of desolation'** occurs, as referenced in verse 27 of Daniel 9b as well as by Jesus in Matthew 24:15.

➤ *And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Dan. 9:27b)*

This occurs when the anti-Christ sits in the Jewish temple and **declares himself to be God**, as described by the Apostle Paul in 2Thessalonians 2:3-4.

➤ *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

Part 2: The Day of Wrath

The "abomination of desolation" precedes the **'great and dreadful day of the Lord'** described by Malachi and other Biblical prophets, which is also referred to as "that day" and "the day." Both the Hebrew and Greek words used in this context can mean a **twenty-four hour day** or some **indeterminate amount of time**, usually of **short duration**. So it's not entirely clear whether it's a literal 24-hour day or not, but that goes along with the overall premise that we won't know exact dates and times in advance.

Effectively, **God's hand of restraint is removed** (2Thess. 2:7), **sin** erupts in **fullness**, and cataclysmic events begin to happen when Jesus opens the 'seven seals' of judgment. Here are some additional verses that describe that day. These are just a few of many verses that refer to this day:

➤ *Psalm 110:5 The Lord is at your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations.*

➤ *Revelation 11:18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and*

the saints, and those who fear your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.

- 1Thessalonians 5:4 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*
- Ezekiel 30:3 *For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles*
- Joel 3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near.*

Let's look at a few verses that show us how truly **dreadful** this day will be for **unbelievers**:

- Isaiah 13:6,9 *Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty... Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.*
- Jeremiah 46:10 *A day of vengeance... the sword shall devour.*
- Joel 2:11 *The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?*
- Joel 2:31, Acts 2:20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*
- Matthew 24:21-22 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*
- 2Peter 3:10 *The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*

There are even more verses that speak about how awful it will be. But let's look at a couple of important points contained in these Scriptures, beyond how awful it will be. First of all, notice what it says in Acts 2:20 which quotes Joel 2:31.

- ***The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.***

A major, cataclysmic event will blot out the sun and cause the moon to appear red. There's been lots of speculation about how this will occur, from volcanic eruptions to nuclear war. But that's just speculation. We're more concerned about **when** this will occur. Revelation, chapter five, beginning at verse twelve says:

- *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth... Then the sky receded as a scroll... and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.' Then in verse seventeen, 'For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'*

We can see that this event, which is **triggered** when Jesus opens the **sixth seal**, fulfills Joel's prophecy, with verse seventeen tying it to the 'day of wrath.' Jesus also refers to these signs in Matthew 24:29-31:

- *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of trumpets, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other.*

Part 3: The Rapture

We can see from the above verses that the '**day of the Lord**' involves Jesus coming to **execute judgment** on the earth with **great wrath**, but the **saints will be rewarded**. In several other Scriptures,

we're told that we don't receive our rewards until we are in heaven (Matt. 5:12, 19:21). That's why it's a '**great**' day for Christians, because that's when we are "**raptured**" into heaven.

When Jesus returns, he will appear in the clouds all over the earth, all at the same time. Then, we will be '**caught up**' into the clouds with him. This is what we call the **rapture**, a word that is derived from the Latin translation which uses the word '*rapieumur*' to convey the sense of being '**caught up**' into the clouds."

➤ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them. (1Thessalonians 4:16).*

The so-called **pre-Trib rapture** is a terrible mistake foisted upon us by the devil so that the Church won't rise up to do its job, content to remain **apathetic and complacent**, simply awaiting our trip home to heaven. 2Thessalonians 2:3 says:

➤ *Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is worshipped, so that he sits as god in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

This says that the **Christians will see these referenced events**, which take us up to at least the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation. In addition, Revelation 13:7 tells us that the anti-Christ will '**make war with the saints and overcome them.**' For that to happen, the saints need to still be around and not raptured away before the Tribulation.

Back in Matthew 24:15, Jesus says, '*so when you see standing in the holy place the **abomination that causes desolation***' He is referring to what Daniel says is to occur at the **mid-point** of the 7-year Tribulation. This is written to **believers**, so we're obviously going to be around for the first three-and-a-half years. Furthermore, Rev. 7, verses 9 and 14 speak of the "**multitude... who come out of the great tribulation**" – *out of*, not before.

But the rapture **can't happen at the exact midpoint** of the Tribulation, or otherwise we would know the exact time. We will know the day the Tribulation started, that is when the "**peace pact with many**" was signed as prophesied in Daniel 9:27. So I believe the rapture will occur sometime after the mid-point and **right before the so-called Day of the Lord**, or the **Day of Wrath**, which I believe is when Jesus opens the sixth seal.

We also know from Daniel 9:24-27 that the Tribulation is to last seven years. Therefore, **we will be able to say with certainty when the midpoint of the Tribulation will occur.** This violates Jesus' admonition that we won't be able to predict the day of the rapture, and since He is not a liar, there can't be a mid-Trib rapture.

So the rapture will occur sometime **after** the middle of the Tribulation, after the "abomination of desolation." Of course, we **don't know the exact time** when this will occur. It'll come 'as a **thief in the night**' and catch us by surprise (1Thess 5:2, 2Peter 3:10).

But for the '**elect's sake**,' that is for believers, those days will be '**shortened**' by the rapture, the catching away of the saints prior to the terrible devastation wrought when Jesus opens the seventh seal, the so-called trumpet and bowl plagues (Rev. 8,9,16)

➤ *If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matt 24:22)*

Fortunately, a **new earth**, and a **new Jerusalem** descend from heaven (Rev. 21:1-2) to usher in the thousand-year **Millennial** when the saints will **reign with Jesus** (Rev. 20:4-5). After the thousand years, Satan is released from the 'bottomless pit' before being finally terminated for good in the '**lake of fire**' (Rev. 20:7-10).