Chapter Sixty

# Eschatology - The Study of Things to Come

THE WORD "ESCHATOLOGY" comes from the Greek word εσχατος *eschatos,* which means "last" or "final".

Although we commonly refer to it as the study of end times, eschatology is more specifically the study of *last things*, because much more is involved than just the end of the world.

Eschatology includes any part of Scripture that speaks of future events (that is, future in terms of when it was written). In doing eschatology we use prophecies that have already been fulfilled as a basis for understanding prophecies that are still in the future today.

A foundational understanding of eschatology is built on the covenants that God has established in the past, particularly with Abraham, the nation of Israel, and David. There is a wide range of interpretations concerning the conclusions drawn by those who study eschatology, but that is nothing new. Keep in mind what we learned as we studied church history and theology – that all areas of theology have been and continue to be, to some extent, controversial. To this day, the church continues to debate the meaning of the Trinity, baptism, the deity of Christ, the sovereignty of God, the gifts of the Spirit, forms of church government, the authority of Scripture – and on and on. It's no different with the area of theology we call eschatology. A large portion of the Scriptures deal with future events because God wants us to know where we are going. Eschatology is a source of joy (2 Corinthians 4:17), a reason for holiness (1 John 3:3), a proof of Scripture, a testimony to God's nature, a revelation of God's plan, and information about who we are and where we are going. Like all Scripture, the study of eschatology is:

> ". . . useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of
> God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16

**The Covenants**

A covenant is similar to a contract, a deal, an agreement, a testament. There are two types of covenants that God makes with man: conditional and unconditional.

1. **Conditional Covenant** – a covenant that involves the formula "if you will . . . then I will." God's obligation to fulfill the promises he gives in the covenant is based on man doing, keeping or obeying the decrees and expectations set down in that covenant. An example of a conditional covenant in Scripture is the Mosaic Covenant which was made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. This form of covenant was used throughout the ancient world between powerful leaders and needy groups of people, and was called a suzerain-vassal treaty.
2. **Unconditional Covenant** – a covenant in which the sovereign God declares an agreement with man and obligates himself with the simple formula "I will". In this case man is the recipient of what God has promised based simply on the fact that God made the promise. It indicates something God is going to do and is not based on man's performance. Examples of unconditional covenants are the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. This form of covenant was

called a royal grant treaty in the ancient world, and would be made when a king desired to award something to one of his subjects.

The **Abrahamic Covenant** is introduced in Genesis 12:2-3 when God says to Abram the Chaldean from the city of Ur:

> "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
> I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
> And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

The Abrahamic Covenant included these promises:

1. A great nation
2. A blessing
3. A great name for Abraham
4. People being blessed or cursed based on their treatment of Abraham and his people
5. All people ultimately being blessed through Abraham

There were no requirements and no time limits. These were things God was going to do no matter what Abraham did. In terms of eschatology, we are interested in the establishment of a nation that would carry the unconditional promise of being blessed for the purpose of blessing others.

In Genesis 15:1-21 the Abrahamic Covenant is actually cut or signed in a covenant ceremony where God clarifies that this covenant also includes the inheritance of a section of land:

> "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this
> land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." Genesis 15:18

The land that God speaks of is the land of Canaan. This includes the area known historically as Palestine or what we know today as Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and parts of modern Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. So, in addition to an unconditional covenant of blessing for the nation that would come from Abraham, God also unconditionally gives this nation the land of Israel.

The **Davidic Covenant** is introduced in 2 Samuel 7:11-16 when God speaks to David through the prophet Nathan:

> "The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son . . . Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

This is another unconditional covenant. David simply receives the promise of a son who will reign in a dynasty that will last forever.

The David Covenant combined with the Abrahamic Covenant establishes three things forever:

1. A blessed nation, which is Israel
2. A land for Israel, which becomes known as the Promised Land
3. A dynasty from the house of David to rule this blessed nation in the Promised Land forever

Correctly interpreting these covenants and understanding their application are foundational to one's views on eschatology. There are three basic views of the end times that are based on different interpretations of these covenants depending on whether they are seen as figurative or literal. Do these covenants represent something that could be completely fulfilled by spiritual realities – such as believers in Jesus Christ being Abraham's promised people, the Promised Land being Heaven, and the eternal king being Jesus himself having ascended to Heaven? Or do these covenants mean a literal nation biologically descended from Abraham living in the literal Promised Land and being reigned over by an eternal, physical son of David?

**Postmillennialism, Premillennialism and Amillennialism**

The word *millennium* refers to a period of time spanning 1,000 years. The Scriptures do not use the actual term "millennium", but they do often speak of the kingdom of God, the day of the Lord, the reign of the Messiah or Christ, and in Revelation 20:2-7, a one-thousand-year period is mentioned six times. Different groups of Christians approach the concept of a 1,000 year millennial reign of the Christ as the royal son of David from these three basic positions:

1. **Postmillennialism** – "post-" means "after" and the term therefore indicates the belief that Jesus will return to earth at the end of this long period of peace and prosperity which is figuratively described as one thousand years. During this "thousand years" the world will be Christianized by the church and the world will experience complete triumph over evil in both the external world and the heart of man. The church will produce a golden age on earth by spiritually fulfilling the physical promises given to Abraham, David, and the Jews, thus satisfying the unconditional covenants. The church age *is* the reign of Christ in a *spiritual* kingdom. Jesus is seated in heaven during this period but will return at the end of the "millennium" (i.e., the second coming) to judge the world.
    a. History of postmillennialism – In the 1100's a notion developed that there are three ages of history: Adam to John the Baptist (the age of the Father), Jesus to St. Benedict in 500 AD (the age of the Son), and St. Benedict to the predicted year of 1260 AD when righteousness would begin to triumph. In the 1600's a Unitarian heretic, Daniel Whitby, taught that the world would be Christianized, the Jews restored to the Promised Land, and the Pope and the Muslims (Turks) would be defeated. Then there would be a period of peace for 1,000 years before Christ returned. This idea was popular through the 1700 and 1800's. As the industrial age continued into the 1900's and society continued to advance, postmillennialism seemed to be happening right before people's eyes. There was talk of utopia and world peace. The events of the 1900's, though, beginning with World War I and the disasters that followed, caused most people to reconsider postmillennialism.
    b. Scriptural support – Rom. 1:16; 11; 1 Tim. 2:4; Matt. 13:33; Rev.7:9-10; Ps. 2:8; 22:27; 47; 72; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:6-9; Jer. 31:34; Dan. 2:35, 44; Micah 4:1-4

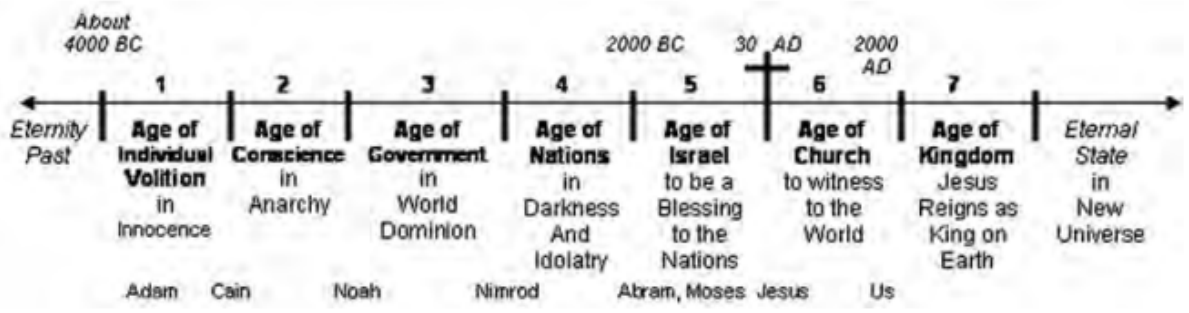
2. **Premillennialism** – "pre-" means "before" and indicates that Jesus will physically return to the earth before the thousand year kingdom begins and will reign on David's throne in the earthly city of Jerusalem. This view interprets the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants as literal, and yet unfulfilled today. Every promise made in the unconditional covenants, and the promises and predictions spoken through the prophets, must literally come to pass. During the church age the church is advancing God's program to all nations, but this age will end when Jesus Christ returns from heaven and causes believers from every age to be resurrected. There will be a restoration of Israel to the Promised Land and Jesus will reign for 1,000 years in Jerusalem, leading the world into unheard-of peace and prosperity.
    a. History of premillennialism – It is debated whether or not the early church believed in a premillennial return of Christ followed by a millennial kingdom on earth. There is evidence that this was the teaching of the church in the first century, and that it continued in the East up until the time of Origen around 220 AD in Alexandria and in the West until Constantine in the 300's and Augustine in the 400's. The allegorical hermeneutic practices of the Bible school in Alexandria snuffed out much of the literal interpretation of Scripture, and this practice of primarily allegorical interpretation continued in the Roman Catholic Church through the Dark Ages. The reformers of the 1500-1600's did not advance the study of eschatology, but maintained their Roman Catholic position. While the Anabaptists and the Huguenots did begin to teach millennialism, at the time it only set the stage for the development of heretical teachings, which led to the cults of the 1800's. However, as we have seen in church history, the false teaching of heretics forced the establishment of the orthodox canon of Scripture, definition of the Trinity, definition of the deity of Christ, and other crucial doctrines – and so it was with eschatology. In the 1800's and 1900's a systematic approach to Premillennialism was highly developed and finely tuned, and what has been discovered appears to line up closely with the current trends of history and the nature of mankind.
    b. Scriptural support comes from a literal interpretation of the verses dealing with the covenants, the kingdom, the nation of Israel, the Promised Land, the royal line of David, the Messiah coming in the flesh as Immanuel, the suffering servant of Isaiah being a real man who actually suffered, died and rose again, etc.
3. **Amillennialism** – "a-" in the Greek is a prefix that means "not" or "un-". Advocates of this position believe in "not-millennialism" or "un-millenialism" – which is to say that there will be no millennium in this sin-filled world. Instead, the "kingdom of Christ" is happening right now as Christ reigns from heaven with the dead saints. This present age will be followed by Christ's return, the end of the world, a general resurrection, a general judgment, and Christ's continued reign in the New Heaven and the New Earth forever. In this view, "Israel" is spiritualized to mean the church, and any scriptural reference to reigning or ruling the earth must be happening today through the church.
    a. History of amillennialism – This way of thinking about eschatology began with Origen (185-254) and the allegorical style of biblical interpretation in Alexandria Egypt. Origen turned the meaning of the covenants and promises into a future spiritual kingdom. The church age did not begin with Pentecost in Acts but with Adam in the Garden. Augustine

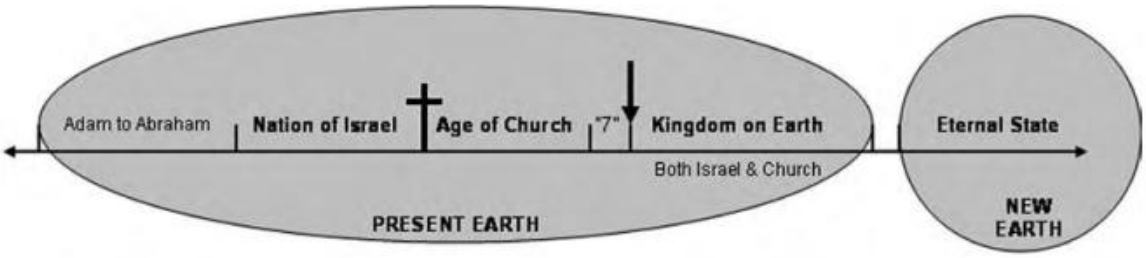
(354-430) took Origen's concept of Israel's covenants as referring to a future spiritual kingdom and associated them instead with the present-day church on this earth. Thus, all of Israel's covenants and promises were interpreted to refer to the spiritual church in the present age. The millennium is the age in which we live now. Though Augustine spiritualized the covenants, he believed the current millennial age of the church would last a literal 1,000 years. Of course, this caused problems when history advanced past 1000 AD and into the second millennium. So, the Roman Catholic theologians who followed Augustine's teaching simply "corrected" this problem by spiritualizing the thousand years to mean the total period of time between Christ's first and second coming. Martin Luther and the other reformers simply followed Augustine and the Catholic Church in their amillennialism. For example, Luther's eschatology looked like this: his life in the 1500's was taking place during the final days of the sixth one thousand year period since creation, which he believed to be the days of the great tribulation against the anti-christ (who he identified as the Pope). John Calvin, along with Luther, believed that the next great eschatological event would be the Second Coming of Christ, which would result in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and the eternal state. Calvin taught consistently that Israel and the church were the same thing. He could read an Old Testament prophecy referring to Israel being restored to the Promised Land and clearly see it as declaring that the church was going to be restored to God's presence in Heaven. Calvin did not like the concept of a literal millennium, as was beginning to be taught by some groups in his day (e.g., Anabaptists, Huguenots), calling it "fiction," intolerable blasphemy, a "dream" and an "insult."

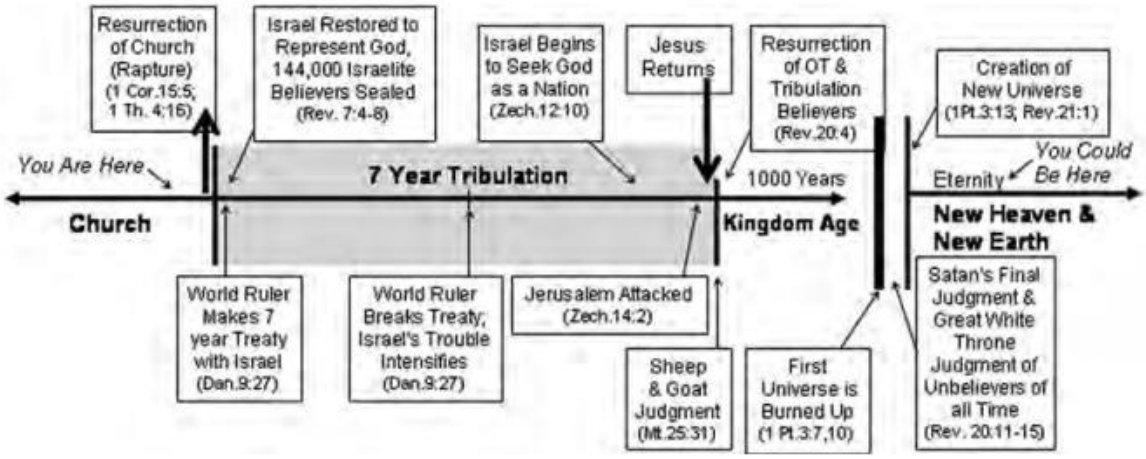
b. Scriptural support – 1 Cor. 15:24; 15:25, 50; Rev. 1:5-6, 9; 20:4; Acts 2:30-32; Luke 17:21 18:17; Matt.13:37-38; 24:14; 28:18; Col. 1:13; Rom. 15:12; John 14:27.

**Praeterist** – One other end-time scenario should be presented here. There are some Christians who hold to the Praeterist view. *Praeterist* is a Latin word that means "pre-" or "before" in fulfillment. This view states that almost all, if not all, Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled in Christ and the events that followed his first coming. One of its key points is that Jesus and his apostles taught that his second coming and the end of all things was near. Events in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are believed to have already occurred, as well as Jesus' return in 70 AD.

**A Premillennial Sequence of Events**






**Rapture of the Church**

The concept of the rapture of the church comes from these verses:

> "I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:2-3
>
> "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
>
> "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17
>
> "Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2

Starting in the 1800's these verses began to be compared with other verses speaking of the Lord's return at the Second Coming. In these verses we learn that the Lord will return to the earth as King of kings, physically descent onto the Mount of Olives, overthrow the anti-christ, judge the nations, enter Jerusalem, and sit on his throne. Among other things, the verses mentioned above appear to describe a different event than the Second Coming since they:

1. Speak only of the church (Israel is not mentioned)
2. Describe church doctrines such as complete sanctification, glorification, physical resurrection, the command of the Lord as head of the church
3. Involve a resurrection
4. State that Jesus will meet the believers in the air, not on the earth
5. State that Jesus will return to where he had been after he appears in the sky
6. State that believers will be taken along with him to where Jesus returns
7. Refer to a mystery, indicating it was a truth not revealed in the Old Testament, but instead belongs to those who are from the mystery age, which is the church age

The Rapture involves this order of events:

1. Jesus will descend from his Father's house (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).
2. Jesus will come to get the believers (John 14:1-3).
3. The believers in the church age who died will return with Jesus as he comes from heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:14).
4. The Lord will give a loud command (1 Thessalonians 4:16), which is possibly the command: "Come up here." (Revelation 4:1).
5. We will hear the voice of the archangel (1 Thessalonians 4:16), which in the Old Testament was Michael the guardian of Israel who may be returning to begin Israel's tribulation in the final seven years of Daniel's 70$^{th}$ 'week' (Daniel 9:24-27).
6. The trumpet call to assemble will sound (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
7. The dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
8. Believers who are still living will be transformed into imperishable and immortal bodies without passing through death (1 Corinthians 15:51, 53).
9. This change will not be a long process but an instantaneous one that happens in the twinkling of an eye – i.e., in the smallest fraction of time that can be measured (1 Corinthians 15:52).
10. Both the resurrected dead and the resurrected living will be "caught up", which is a term taken from the Greek word *harpazo* which means "to be taken by force, carried away or snatched" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
11. Every believer from the church age will meet the Lord and see him in the air (John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 John 3:2).
12. We will go with the Lord back to his house – that is, into heaven (John 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

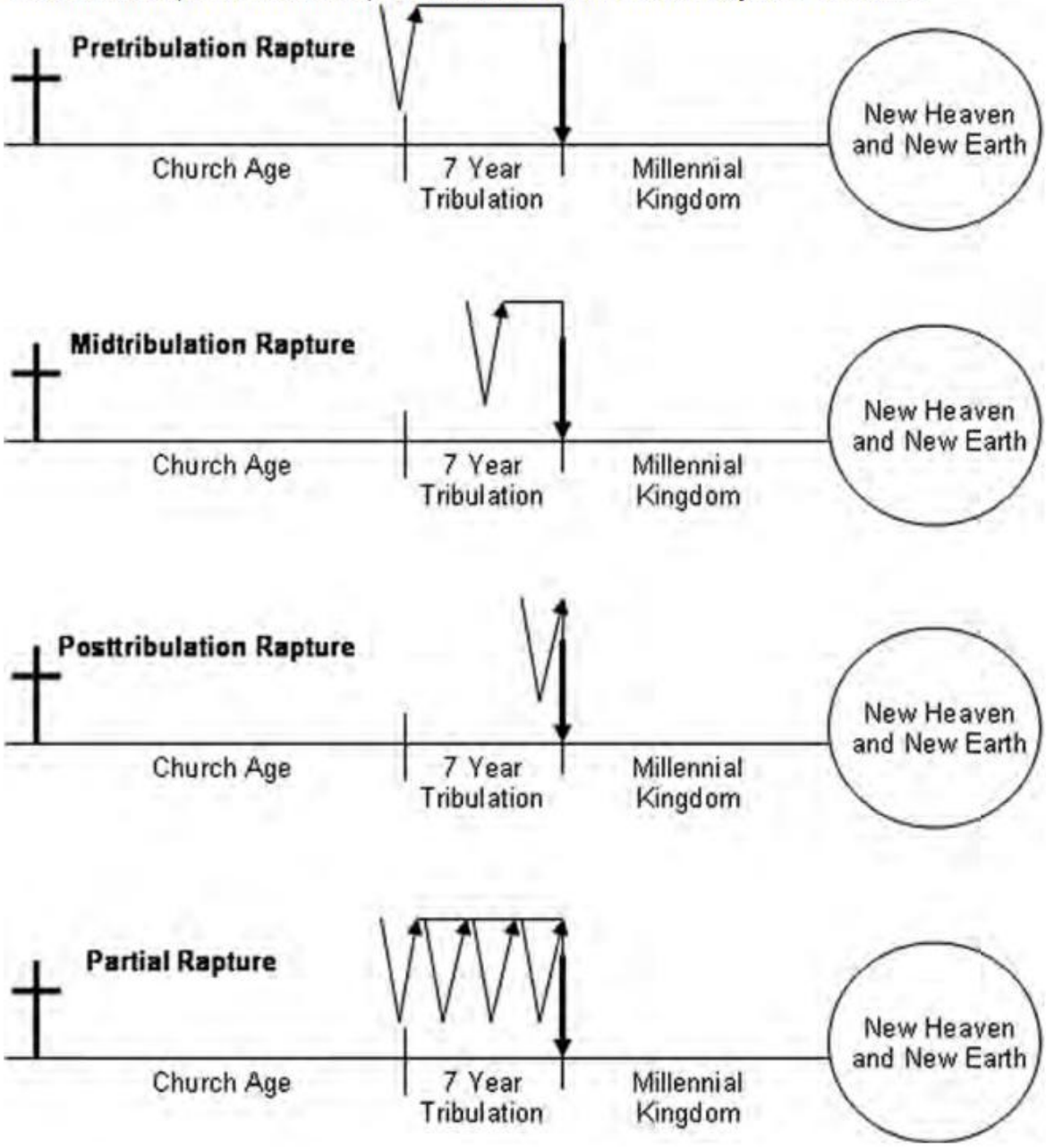
After the Rapture, there will be various eschatological events for the church, including:

1. Appearing before the judgment seat of Christ for evaluation and rewarding of service (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
2. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 19:6-9)
3. Returning with the Lord at his Second Coming as the armies of the Lord "dressed in fine linen, white and clean" (Revelation 19:14). The "fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints." (Revelation 19:8)

| Comparing the Rapture with the Second Coming | |
|---|---|
| **Rapture** | **Second Coming** |
| Jesus takes believers from the earth and meets them in the air. | Jesus returns to earth with believers. |
| Believers are "raptured". | No mention of rapture - people watch from earth. |
| Believers of the church age are resurrected and taken to heaven. | Saints from the Old Testament and the Tribulation are resurrected for an inheritance on earth. |
| No judgment is mentioned. | Judgment is key - Sheep and Goat judgment |
| Focus is the church | Focus is the kingdom. |
| Believers are changed; mankind is not. | All of mankind is involved or affected. |
| Believers meet and see him as he is. | Every eye will see him. |
| Satan is never mentioned. | Satan is bound. |
| Anti-christ is not mentioned. | Overthrow of the anit-christ is a main focus. |
| No prophecy needs to be fulfilled first. | Multitude of prophecies need to be fulfilled first. |
| No signs prelude it. | Multitude of signs are given. |
| Imminent – Paul was waiting for it. | Occurs only after seven years of tribulation. |
| Occurs before the wrath. | Occurs after the Tribulation. |
| Bema (or, Judgement) seat of Christ and rewards in heaven | Church is not judged; nations judged on earth. |
| Church taken to marriage supper. | Church, the bride, returns with Jesus. |
| After rapture the tribulation begins. | After Second coming the Kingdom reign begins. |

| **Rapture Verses** | | **Second Coming Verses** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| John 14:1-3 | 1 Timothy 6:14 | Isaiah 63:1-6;59:16-18 | Acts 1:9-11; 3:19-21 |
| Romans 8:19 | 2 Timothy 4:1,8 | Daniel 2:44-45; 7:9-14; | 1 Thess. 3:13 |
| 1 Cor. 1:7-8; | Titus 2:13 | 12:1-3 | 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:8 |
| 15:51-53; 16:22 | Hebrews 9:28 | Zechariah 12:10; | 1 Peter 4:12-13 |
| Phil. 3:20-21; 4:5 | James 5:7-9 | 14:1-15 | 2 Peter 3:1-14 |
| Colossians 3:4 | 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 5:4 | Matthew 13:41; | Jude 14-15 |
| 1 Thes. 1:10; 2:19; | 1 John 2:28-3:2 | 24:15-31; 26:64 | Revelation 1:7 |
| 4:13-18; 5:9, 23 | Jude 1:21 | Mark 13:14-27; 14:62 | 19:11-20:6; |
| 2 Thessalonians 2:1 | Revelation 2:25 | Luke 21:25-28 | 22:7, 12, 20 |

**Pretribulation, Midtribulation, Pretribulation and Partial Rapture Theories**




The distinction between these rapture theories is the timing of the rapture itself.

- **The pretribulation rapture** - ends the church age and is followed by seven years of tribulation on the earth.
- **The midtribulation rapture** - takes place at the half-way point (which is the three and a half year mark) of the tribulation. In this theory the church is included in the first half of the tribulation.
- **The posttribulation rapture** - occurs when Christ returns at the Second Coming. The church would participate in the entire tribulation. When Christ returns to the earth the believers are raptured to meet him in the air and instantly return to the earth in their glorified state.
- **In the partial rapture theory** - there are several raptures throughout the Tribulation of different groups determined by holiness, nationality or types of ministry. This is similar to the amillennial view of the rapture. It is difficult to support a doctrine that does not address the verses of Scripture describing the rapture, but there are a variety of times it could take place.

## The Tribulation

The Tribulation is the seven year period right before Jesus' Second Coming. It is a time when Israel is severely tested, the anti-christ appears, and God's wrath is poured out on the earth forcing men to make a decision concerning their eternal fate. The tribulation is described in detail in the Old Testament, which is the first clue it is not exclusively part of the church age or an experience suffered only by the church. People who say the church must go through this seven-year Tribulation as a time of testing and purification need to look more carefully into church history and the conditions the church faces even today outside the Western world. Thousands upon thousands of Christians have lived lives under oppression or persecution and have faced martyrdom over the last two thousand years. It is recorded that more people died as Christian martyrs in the 1900's than in all the years of the church age up to that time.

The tribulation is called the "time of Jacob's trouble" in Jeremiah 30:7. Jesus described it as a time of "great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again" (Matthew 24:21). These descriptions indicate it probably was not the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD – especially when we consider the fact that Rome had destroyed many cities before Jerusalem, and there have been many similar, if not more severe, wars since.

- 1,000's died in Jerusalem in 70 AD
- 6,000,000 died in Nazi Germany
- 20,000,000 died in communist Russia
- The tribulation is going to be the worst ever – and never equaled again

Daniel calls it the 70th "week" ("week" is from a Hebrew word that refers to a set of "seven" days or years – in this case, a set of 7 years) of the "seventy-sevens" (Daniel 9:24-27), which totals 490 years (70 x 7). This last "week" is divided in half when Daniel says "in the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering" (Daniel 9:27). This half, or 3 ½ years, is also identified as 42 months (Revelation 11:2 and 13:5) and 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3 and 12:6). It is also defined as "a time, times and half a time" in Revelation 12:14 and Daniel 7:25 & 12:7 (which means "one year, two years, and half a year" – 1+2+1/2= 3 1/2 years).

| **Tribulation Verses** | |
|---|---|
| **Old Testament** | **New Testament** |
| Time of Jacob's Trouble – Jeremiah 30:7<br>Seventieth Seven – Daniel 9:27<br>Lord's Strange Work – Isaiah 28:21<br>Lord's Alien Task – Isaiah 28:21<br>Time of Distress – Daniel 12:1<br>Day of the Lord – Amos 5:18, 20<br>Day of Darkness, Gloom, Clouds, Blackness – Amos 2:2 | Day of the Lord – 1 Thessalonians 5:2<br>Wrath of God – Revelation 14:10,19; 15:1,7; 16:1<br>Hour of Trial – Revelation 3:10<br>Great Day of God and of the Lamb's Wrath – Rev.6:16<br>Wrath to Come – 1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 11:18<br>Great Tribulation – Matthew 24:21; Rev. 2:22; 7:14<br>Hour of Judgment – Revelation 14:7 |

**The Millennium**

The early Church Fathers believed in the 1000 year millennium:
**Papias**: "Among these things, Papias says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth (Eusebius, citing Papias around 120).
**Justin Martyr** (160 AD): "I and others who are right-minded Christians on all points are assured that there will be a resurrection for the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built
. . .For Isaiah spoke in that manner concerning this period of a thousand years."
**Irenaeus** (180 AD): "It is fitting for the righteous to be the first to receive the promise of the inheritance that God promised . . . It is fitting for them to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation that will have been renovated. . . For it is just that in that very same creation in which they toiled or were afflicted they should receive the reward of their suffering. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its pristine condition, should be under the dominion of the righteous without restraint.
**Irenaeus** (180 AD): "The promise of God that He gave to Abraham remains steadfast. . .Yet, Abraham did not receive it during all the time of his journey there. Accordingly, it must be that Abraham, together with his seed will receive it at the resurrection of the just."
**Tertullian** (200): "At that time, the manifestation of the children of God will have delivered the animals from evil. For they had been "made subject to vanity." At that time, the cattle will be restored in the innocence and integrity of their nature and will be at peace with beasts of the field. At that time, also,
little children will play with serpents."
**Tertullian** (207 AD): "We do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven only, it will be in another state of existence. For it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem "let down from heaven."

You can see that the early church believed in the earthly millennial reign of Christ, but with the introduction of allegorical teaching by Origen and his school of thought in Alexandria, the church began to leave the literal interpretation of Scripture. This opened the door for the entrance of human
ideas through allegorical interpretation. Below are quotes from Origen (225) and Victorinus (280) that show that a belief in a literal millennium was common up until their day. Both of these men opposed a teaching that predated their own teaching:

**Origen** (225): "Certain persons . . . adopting a superficial view of the letter of the law . . . are of the opinion that the fulfillment of the promises of the future are to be looked for in bodily pleasure and luxury. Therefore, they especially desire after the resurrection to have again bodies that will always
have the power of eating, drinking, and performing all the functions of flesh and blood . . . consequently, they say that after the resurrection, there will be marriages and the begetting of children. They imagine to themselves that the earthly city of Jerusalem is to be rebuilt . . .Moreover, they think that the natives of other countries are to be given them as the servants of their pleasures . . . The millennialists desire the fulfillment of all things looked for in the promises, all according to the manner of things in this life and in all similar matters . . . However, those who receive the interpretations of Scripture according to the understanding of the apostles, entertain the hope that the saints will indeed eat - but that it will be the

bread of life that can nourish the soul with the food of truth and wisdom."
**Victorinus** (280 AD): "They are not to be heard who assure themselves that there is to be an earthly reign of a thousand years. They think like the heretic Cerinthus. For the kingdom of Christ is already eternal in the saints - even though the glory of the saints will be manifested after the resurrection."

The following are some of the prophecies Scripture gives us concerning the Kingdom reign of the Messiah on earth:

1. **Satan will be overcome by Christ and bound** - Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 24:21; Daniel 7:12; Revelation 20:1-3
2. **Jesus will rule the earth** - Genesis 49:10 ; Psalm 2:6; 22:28; 67:4; 72:9-11; 82:8; 89:21-25;, 27; 96:13; 98:9; 110:1-2; Isaiah 2:4; 9:7; 25:3; 27:5; 45:23-24; 49:7; 51:5; 52:13, 15; 53:12; 55:4; 66:18; Ezekiel 21:27; Daniel 2:35; 7:14, 18, 22, 27; Obadiah 21; Micah 4:3; 5:4; 7:15-17; Zechariah 6:13, 14:9; Matthew 12:21;22:44; Luke 20:43
   Acts 2:35; 3:21; Romans 14:11; 15:21; 1 Corinthians 15:24-25, 27-28; Ephesians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 1:13;2:5;10:13; Revelation 10:5-7; 11:15-17; 12:5; 16:17; 19:6, 15
3. **Jesus' Kingdom will be world wide** - Psalm 72:8; Zechariah 9:10; 14:9
4. **God's true Israel will permanently repossess the land of Canaan** - Genesis 12:7; 13:15, 17; 15:7, 19-20; 17:8; 24:7; 26:3, 4; 28:4, 6, 13; 35:12; 48:4
5. **Unrepentant Jews will be removed** - Zephaniah 3:11
6. **Repentant Jews will return to Palestine assisted by Gentiles** - Isaiah 11:11-12, 16; 14:2; 35:8-10; 49:18-22; 51:11; 55:12; 60:9; 62:10; 66:20; Jeremiah 3:18-19; Hosea 1:11; 2:23; Micah 4:6, 7; Zephaniah 3:10, 18, 19, 20
7. **God will establish His ultimate Testament of Peace** - Leviticus 26:9-12; Isaiah 54:10; 59:21; 61:8; Ezekiel 34:25, 27-28, 30-31; 36:12-15; 37:26; Romans 11:27; 2 Corinthians 6:16
8. **There will be peace as God restrains all violence** - Leviticus 26:6-8; Isaiah 2:4; 9:5, 7; 11:13; 14:3; 26:12; 54:14; 60:18; Jeremiah 23:6, 30:8; 33:16; Hosea 2:18; Joel 2:26-27; 3:17; Micah 4:3; Zephaniah 3:13. 15-16,19, 20; Zechariah 3:10; 8:5-6
9. **He will rule will in righteousness and goodness** - Psalms 67:4; 96:13; 98:9 ; Isaiah 9:7; 11:3, 5; 16:5; 32:1; 42:4; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15
10. **He will proclaim deliverance from servitude (type: Year of Jubilee)** - Leviticus 25:8-17, 27-28, 30-31, 33, 40-41, 50-52,54; Leviticus 27:17-18
11. **Crops will be abundant and prosperity general** - Exodus 23:25; Amos 9:13-14; Leviticus 26:5; Deuteronomy 28:5-6, 8, 12; 30:9; Psalm 72:6-7; Isaiah 4:2; 61:4; 62:3-7; Ezekiel 34:26-27, 29; Hosea 2:21-22 ; Amos 9:13-14; Ephesians 1:18; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 1:3-6; 5:1
12. **Those not in resurrection bodies will attain to a full length of life** - Exodus 23:26; Zechariah 8:4; **they will also enjoy supernatural life spans** - Isaiah 65:20-23
13. **Infirmities will be healed and there will be freedom from disease** - Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 7:15; Isaiah 35:5-6
14. **God's people will be characterized by a Spirit-given holiness and obedience to his commands** - Deuteronomy 30:8; Isaiah 4:3-4; 32:1-5; Jeremiah 3:19-23; 31:40; Zephaniah 3:10-13; Zechariah 8:3, 8; 13:2-6; 14:20, 21; Malachi 3:3
15. **Christ will be glorified in his people** - 2 Thessalonians 1:10
16. **The Land of Israel will have enlarged borders and be divided into East and**

**West strips (12 horizontal strips) for the twelve tribes** - Ezekiel 47:13-21; 48:1-7, 10-14, 20-29

17. **The territory of Judah will be leveled but Jerusalem will be elevated** - Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Zechariah 14:10
18. **The center of the Kingdom will be Jerusalem** - Isaiah 4:5, 6; Jeremiah 3:17; 31:38-39; Ezekiel 48:35; Joel 3:17; Zephaniah 3:15-17; Zechariah 8:3; 12:10
19. **Temple sacrifices will be resumed in Jerusalem** - Isaiah 2:2, 3; Micah 4:1-2; Ezekiel 37:26-28; 47:1; 48:8-9, 10, 21; Jeremiah 33:18(21-22); Zechariah 14:20, 21; Malachi 3:3-4
20. **A stream will flow from the temple to bring water to surrounding areas** - Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:8
21. **Apostles will sit on thrones to judge the 12 tribes** - Matthew 19:28; 20:21, 23; Mark 10:37,40; Luke 22:30
22. **God's people will enjoy a privileged status of power** - Deuteronomy 26:19; 28:1-3, 9-10, 13; Isaiah 14:2; 27:6; 45:14-17, 25; 49:23-26; 60:3-6, 8-12, 14-17; 61:5-6, 9-11; 62:1-2; 66:7-12; Luke 12:43-44 ; Romans 4:13-14, 16; 5:17; 15:8; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6
23. **The Feast of Tabernacles will be observed annually** - Zechariah 14:16
24. **Not all people will be converted** - Micah 4:5
25. **A nation that fails to go up to Jerusalem to worship will have no rain** - Zechariah 14:17-19
26. **Egypt will be desolate because of their former acts of violence** - Joel 3:19
27. **Edom will be desolate because of their violence** - Joel 3:19
28. **Those Jews who escape from Armageddon will evangelize the nations** - Isaiah 66:19
29. **God's truth will be universally taught** - Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2; Revelation 20:6
30. **Nations will experience conversion and be incorporated into Israel** - Psalm 47:9; Jeremiah 33:22; Ezekiel 47:22-23

**Bema Seat, Sheep and Goat, and Great White Throne Judgments**

There is a universal understanding both in the Christian world and the Pagan world that there will be a final judgment of mankind by God. The Scriptures give us details concerning this judgment, as well as the various times and groups it will be applied to. Scripturally, all men – believers and non-believers – will be judged or evaluated.

"He has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." John 5:27-28

There is, of course, a difference between the judgment and condemnation the unbeliever will face and the evaluation and rewarding the believer will face. Here are a few of the final judgments revealed in Scripture:

1. **The Bema Seat** – The bema seat judgment comes from the Greek word βεμα *bema* as used in Romans 14:10. Writing to Christians Paul says, "We will all stand before God's judgment (*bema*) seat." Again, in 2 Corinthians 5:10, Paul says to Christians:

   "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

The bema seat judgment of believers takes place immediately after the rapture and has nothing to do with being saved, since only true believers are taken in the rapture. With the whole church assembled in heaven and the church age closed, God will individually evaluate each believer to determine his eternal reward. Details of this judgment can be found in 1 Corinthians 3:9-15. The rewards are referred to in these verses: 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:2-4; Revelation 2:10. This event is followed by the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. At the completion of the Tribulation the church, now resurrected, judged, rewarded and clothed in glory, will return to the earth with Jesus, as described in Revelation 19:7-9; 14.

2. **The Sheep and Goat Judgment** – When Jesus returns in glory at the Second Coming and is seated on his throne in Jerusalem all the people from all the nations that lived through the tribulation will be judged. We can read about this judgment in Matthew 25:31. It begins like this:

   "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."

   The sheep are taken into the earthly kingdom of God, but the goats are cast off the earth into outer darkness (likely a reference to Hades, the underworld). The basis of their condemnation is their acts toward what Jesus calls "these brothers of mine". In context, this judgment takes place on earth after the Tribulation has ended and after Jesus has returned from heaven as the glorious king; and, it will be presided over by the Jewish man Jesus who said several times in the gospels that he would judge all men (John 5:27). The tribulation will be a time of great persecution of the Jews, even forcing them to flee into the mountains of Jordan for safety, because the anti-christ will demand their worship and obedience. The Jews, then, are "these brothers of mine" that Jesus refers to. Anyone willing to help feed, clothe, visit or care for the Jews during the later part of the Tribulation must have an understanding of who the anti-christ really is, and faith that the true Christ was the soon coming king. The actions of the sheep indicated their faith and understanding. The people from the nations that will help the Jews during the tribulation have faith and are rewarded with entrance into the kingdom age.

3. **The Great White Throne Judgment** – At the end of the tribulation all non-believers will be brought out of Hades to stand before the Throne of God for final judgment; no believers will be involved in this judgment. Revelation 20:11-15 records the details of this future event. Because the names of non-believers are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire for eternal judgment, along with Satan, his angels, the anti-christ, the false prophet, death and Hades.

**The New Jerusalem and the Eternal State**

The writer of Hebrews quotes from the book of Psalms describing the earth as a creation that will wear out and eventually be changed:

"In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens

are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." Hebrews 1:10-12

After the Millennium, the created world, the universe (heavens) and the earth will be uncreated or destroyed.

"The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare (burned up) . . . That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness." 2 Peter 3:10-12

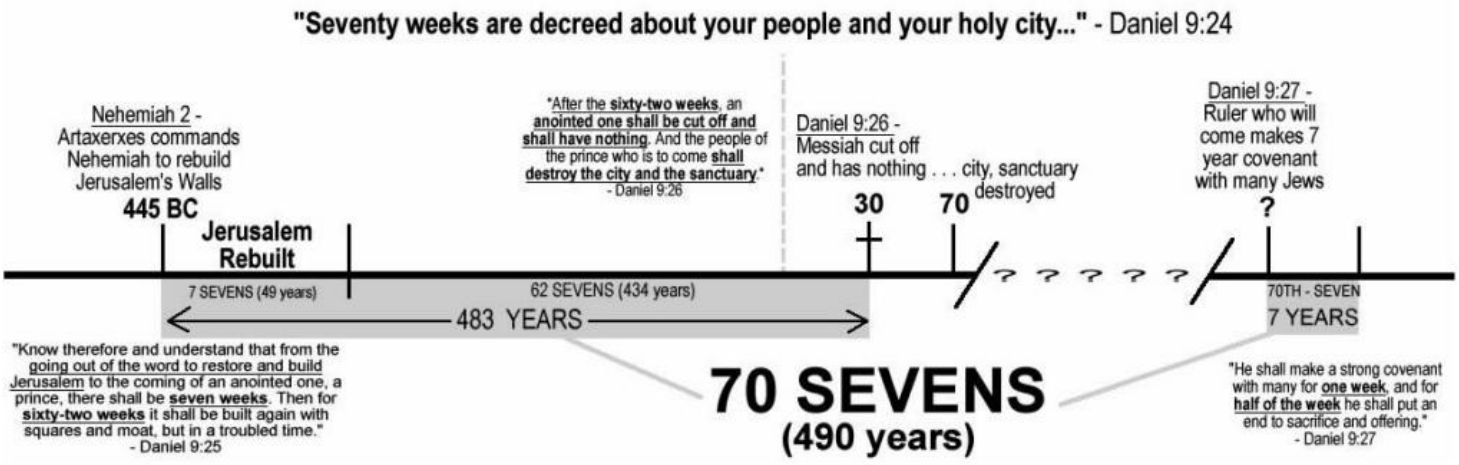
The new universe that God will create for our eternal existence is described in Revelation 21.

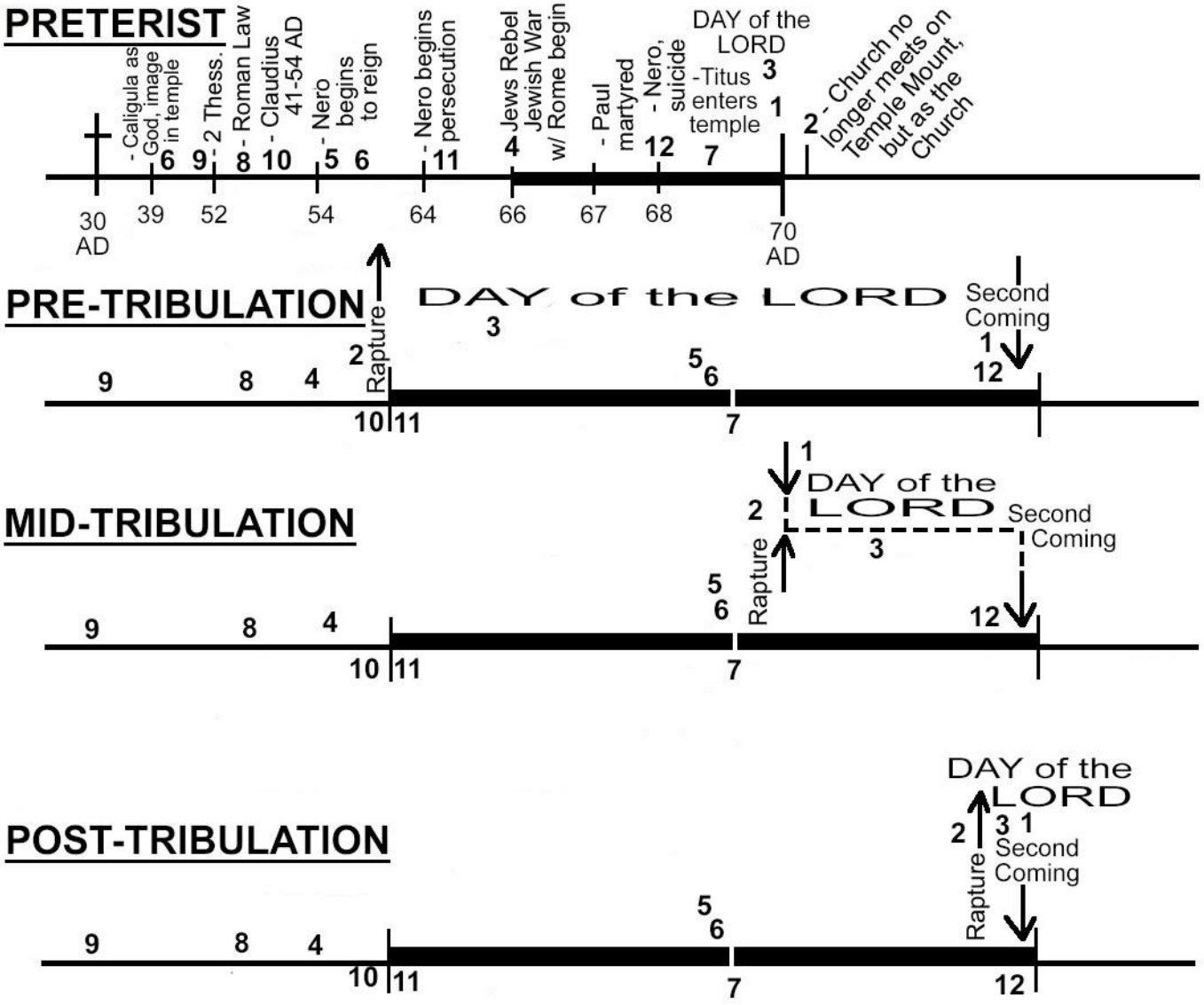
"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Revelation 21:1

Here are some details of this new earth:

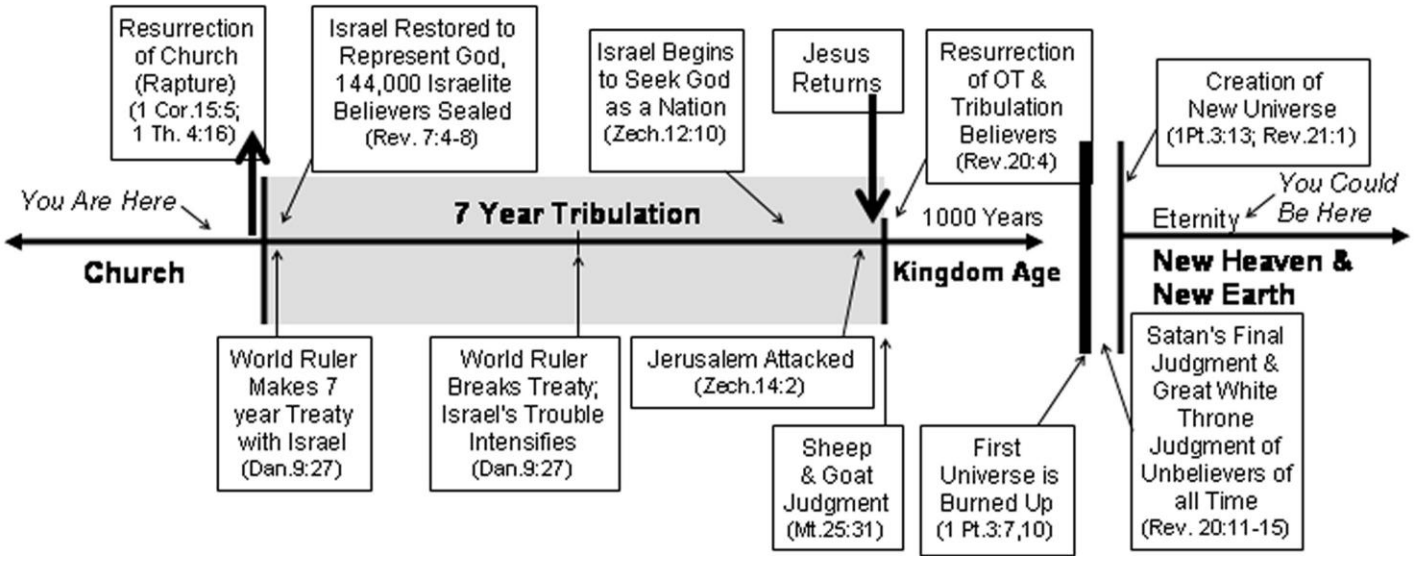
1. Satan is removed from history along with death, Hades, and other forces of destruction (Rev 20:10).
2. There will no longer be any seas (Rev. 21:1). The salt water in the seas helped with the purification process of the world.
3. There will be no death, crying or pain (Rev. 21:4).
4. There will no longer be any night (Rev. 21:25).
5. Sin and sinners will no longer exist (Rev. 21:27).
6. There will no longer be any curse (Rev. 22:3).
7. The sun will not be used (Rev. 22:5).
8. Men will live with God and see God, even his face (Rev. 22:4).

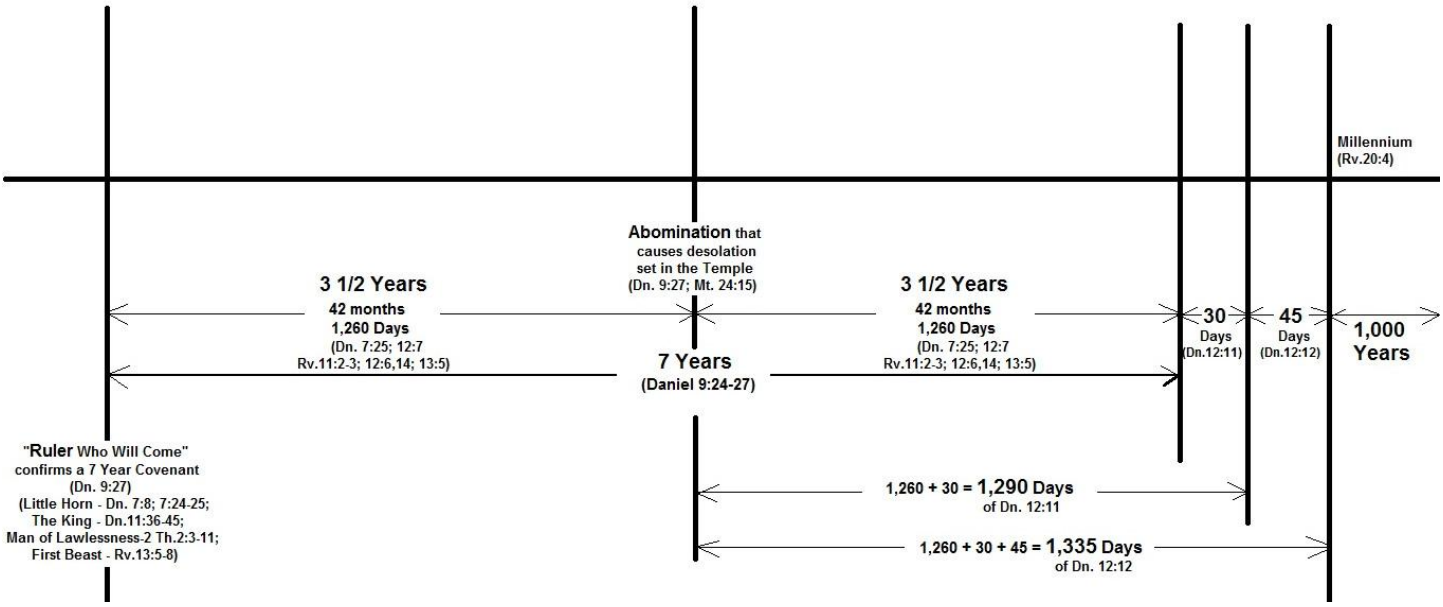
Another feature of the new earth is the presence of the eternal, heavenly city (Heaven itself) called "New Jerusalem". (Rev. 21:2; Heb. 12:22-24; 11:10)






1. "coming (*parousia*) of the Lord"
2. "of us being gathered (*episunagogas*) to him"
3. "that is come (*enestaken*) the Day of the Lord"
4. "unless comes (*elthe*) the apostasy (*apostasia*) first"
5. "and revealed (*apokaluphthe*) the man of lawlessness"
6. "setting against and exalting himself over everything called god"
7. "him in the shrine of God (*naon tou theou*) to sit"
8. "now the thing restraining (k*atechon)* him from being revealed (*apokaluphtheiai*)"
9. "mystery of lawlessness already operates *(energeit*ai)"
10. "now the one restraining (k*atechon)* until out of the midst it comes"
11. "then will be revealed (*apokaluphthesetai*) the lawless one"
12. "whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the outshining (epithaneia) of the presence (parousia)"


Resurrection of Church (Rapture) (1 Cor.15:5; 1 Th. 4:16)
Israel Restored to Represent God, 144,000 Israelite Believers Sealed (Rev. 7:4-8)
Israel Begins to Seek God as a Nation (Zech.12:10)
Jesus Returns
Resurrection of OT & Tribulation Believers (Rev.20:4)
Creation of New Universe (1Pt.3:13; Rev.21:1)
You Are Here
7 Year Tribulation
1000 Years
Eternity
You Could Be Here
Church
Kingdom Age
New Heaven & New Earth
World Ruler Makes 7 year Treaty with Israel (Dan.9:27)
World Ruler Breaks Treaty; Israel's Trouble Intensifies (Dan.9:27)
Jerusalem Attacked (Zech.14:2)
Sheep & Goat Judgment (Mt.25:31)
First Universe is Burned Up (1 Pt.3:7,10)
Satan's Final Judgment & Great White Throne Judgment of Unbelievers of all Time (Rev. 20:11-15)


Millennium (Rv.20:4)
Abomination that causes desolation set in the Temple (Dn. 9:27; Mt. 24:15)
3 1/2 Years
42 months
1,260 Days
(Dn. 7:25; 12:7
Rv.11:2-3; 12:6,14; 13:5)
3 1/2 Years
42 months
1,260 Days
(Dn. 7:25; 12:7
Rv.11:2-3; 12:6,14; 13:5)
30 Days (Dn.12:11)
45 Days (Dn.12:12)
1,000 Years
7 Years
(Daniel 9:24-27)
"Ruler Who Will Come" confirms a 7 Year Covenant
(Dn. 9:27)
(Little Horn - Dn. 7:8; 7:24-25;
The King - Dn.11:36-45;
Man of Lawlessness-2 Th.2:3-11;
First Beast - Rv.13:5-8)
1,260 + 30 = 1,290 Days
of Dn. 12:11
1,260 + 30 + 45 = 1,335 Days
of Dn. 12:12

TIME OF THE GENTILES
TRIBULATION
GREAT TRIBULATION
DAY OF THE LORD "THE END", "WRATH"
"PEACE AND SAFETY"
3 1/2 YEARS (TIME, TIMES, 1/2 A TIME, 1260 DAYS)
3 1/2 YEARS (TIME, TIMES, 1/2 A TIME, 1260 DAYS)
7 YEARS
SIXTH SEAL
DAY OF THE LORD
"THE END"
See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet... the one who endures to the end will be saved."
- Matt. 24:6, 13
GREAT TRIBULATION
"Then there will be great tribulation."
- Matt. 24:21
30 days more to = 1,290 days
45 days more to = 1,335 days
1,000 years
CLEAN UP
JUDGMENT
KINGDOM
4. Worldwide regathering of Israel
5. Israel controls Jerusalem – 1948
6. Israel controls the Temple Mount – 1967
7. Invasion of Israel by Northern Alliance (Gog)
8. One World Government
9. Ten Kingdoms
10. Rise of the Antichrist