

My View Of The End Times Parts 1-10

My View Of The End Times 1

Introduction

Many Christians say that studying End Times is a time-wasting distraction and that we should be focusing on Jesus and spreading the Gospel. They say that we should not worry about whether Jesus will return before the Tribulation (PreTrib) or after the Tribulation (PostTrib) and some even say that they are PanTrib, meaning that everything will pan out (work out) in the end. This attitude is in sharp contrast to what Jesus had to say about End Times.

In Rev. 1:3 Jesus said, *“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”* In this verse, Jesus says that those who study Revelation, and take it to heart, will be blessed. Not only that, in Matt. 24, He said that the End Times will be a time of great turmoil and deception and that many will be deceived and fall away from the faith. So, it is understandable why He said that those who study Revelation will be blessed because those who don't may be deceived and fall away to be eternally lost. This warning makes studying End Times a very worthwhile thing to do, to say the least.

I believe in what is called the PreWrath Rapture which is the belief that the Rapture will occur at some point during the Great Tribulation, just before (Pre) God's wrath is poured out on sinners during the Day Of The Lord (DOTL). For a deeper study of this doctrine, I highly recommend a book by Robert Van Kampen, called *The Rapture Question Answered, Plain And Simple*. This book gives a much deeper insight into the PreWrath Rapture.

It is often said that the word “rapture” is not in the Bible but it is. The Bible has been translated into many languages and the word “rapture” is derived from the word “rapio” found in the Latin Vulgate Bible. But even if the word could not be found in any Bible, the fact is, it's simply a term to describe Jesus gathering His saints when He returns as in 1 Thess. 4:17 and 2 Thess. 2:1 etc.

I also believe that after Jesus returns there will be a one thousand year period, called the Millennium, during which time the nation of Israel will be established as the leader of all nations, and the saints will reign over the earth with Jesus.

In this series of articles I will do my best to show Biblically why I believe PreWrath. I don't pretend to have a great insight into all the finer points but I believe that the basics of the PreWrath Rapture doctrine are plainly written, *provided* Scripture is taken literally. By literally, I mean that we take the text at face value whenever it makes sense. Of course it makes no sense to believe that Jesus is a gate or a lion as we all know they are figures of speech so, like parables, we interpret them spiritually rather than literally. By literal, I mean that when the plain sense of the text makes sense then we accept it at face value. We simply believe it!

In order to make these articles easier to understand, I'll try to be brief and to the point and not say too much about the other rapture positions as that tends to get confusing. If we just focus on scripture and compare scripture with scripture then I believe we will see plainly that a PreWrath Rapture makes sense.

Matthew 24 is a good starting point as in that chapter Jesus has given us an outline of the End Times, that is, a summary of world events up to the time of His return. In the next article I'll start there. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 2

Matthew 24

Matt. 24 is a summary of the End Times up to, and including, Jesus' return when He will rapture the elect (Christians) out of the Great Tribulation. Once the elect have been safely removed from the earth, God will then pour out His wrath on sinners during the time known as the Day Of The Lord (DOTL). The following is a breakdown of Matt. 24.

In Matt. 24:4-14, after Jesus was asked about His return and the end of the age, He said -

- Watch, because many false Christs will deceive many (vs.4-5).
- There will be wars, famines and earthquakes (vs.6-7).
- These things are the beginning of birth pains but the end is yet to come (v.8).
- Christians will be hated by all nations, persecuted and put to death (v.9).
- Many will turn from the faith but those who stand firm to the end will be saved (vs.10-13).
- And, after the gospel is preached throughout the world, the end will come (v.14).

In these verses, Jesus spoke of the terrible events leading up to the end and then, in Matt. 24:15-27, He continued on to give us more detail of what will happen during that time. He said -

- The Abomination, the Antichrist, will appear in the Holy Place (v.15).
- The Jews must flee to the mountains to avoid the Antichrist's wrath (vs.16-20).
- There will be great distress, great tribulation, like never before (v.21).
- The Great Tribulation will be cut short otherwise no one will survive (v.22).
- He again warns not to be deceived by false prophets and false Christs (vs. 23-26).
- And during the Great Tribulation, He will return like lightning (27).

From this we can see that the Great Tribulation will be a time of deep deception and severe persecution brought on by the Antichrist. Believers are strongly warned not to be deceived but to wait for Jesus' unmistakable return to Rapture them as described in vs.29-31, which tell us -

- The sun and moon will be darkened and the stars will fall (v.29).
- Then Jesus will come (like lightning) with power and great glory (v.30).
- And the angels will rapture the elect (v.31).

So, Matt. 24 gives us an overall picture of the End Times and the order of events is -

- 1) The Antichrist will appear (v.15) after which
- 2) The Great Tribulation begins (v.21) then, during the Great Tribulation,
- 3) The Cosmic Sign appears - the sun and moon are darkened and the stars fall (v.29) then
- 4) Jesus will return to rapture the elect (vs.30-31) and
- 5) The nations will mourn (v.30).

Why will the nations mourn? They will mourn because they have just seen Jesus return like lightning to rapture the Christians they had been severely persecuting, and they know that God is about to take revenge by pouring out His wrath on them. God has set a time, calling it the Day Of The Lord, when He is going to destroy the nations that oppose Him. Isa 13:9 tells us, "*See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.*"

From the above order of events, we can see that the Great Tribulation (# 2) and the Day Of The Lord (# 5) are different events, separated in time by the Cosmic Sign (# 3). In the next article, I will give more Scripture to show clearly that -

- 1) The Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are separate events and
- 2) The Day Of The Lord begins immediately after the Rapture. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 3

The Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord

In this article, I would like to explain two very important points -

- 1) The Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord (DOTL) are not the same event.
- 2) The Day Of The Lord begins immediately after the Rapture.

1) It's a common belief that the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are the same thing but Scripture makes it very clear that they are different events and occur during different time periods. In the last article on Matt. 24, we saw the following sequence -

- The Antichrist appears, v.15, and brings about the **Great Tribulation**, v.21.
- Then the **Cosmic Sign** appears and Jesus returns to rapture His people, vs.29-31.
- Then the nations mourn because they know that the **Day Of The Lord** has come, v.30.

This same sequence can be seen when we compare Matt. 24 with Acts 2:20 -

- Matt. 24:21 tells us that there will be.....**Great Tribulation**.
- Matt. 24:29 then says that there will be.....**A Cosmic Sign in the heavens**.
- Acts 2:20 also mentions this Cosmic Sign and says that **AFTER** that sign.....**The Day Of The Lord comes**.

Both of these sequences show us that the Great Tribulation and the DOTL are different events, separated in time by the Cosmic Sign. Further proof that the Day Of The Lord occurs after the Cosmic Sign can be found in the likes of Rev. 6:12-17 and Isa. 13:9-12.

So, the **Great Tribulation** comes before the Cosmic Sign and is a period of the **Devil's wrath against Jews and Christians**. Rev. 12:7-17 and Rev. 13:1-10 tell us that during the End Times the Devil is cast from heaven to earth and is filled with great wrath. He gives his power and authority to the Antichrist who then makes war against the saints, persecuting and killing Christians until Jesus returns to rapture them. Many Christians will fall away during that time.

On the other hand, the **Day Of The Lord** comes after the Cosmic Sign and is a period of **God's wrath against sinners** and, as I will show next, it does not begin until after the persecuted Christians have been raptured from the earth. So, Christians won't endure God's wrath because they won't be on the earth. Isa 13:9 tell us that God's wrath during the Day Of The Lord is only against sinners: "*See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.*"

2) The Day Of The Lord begins immediately after the Rapture. The following passages all show the connection between these two events:

- In 1 Thess. 4:15-17, Paul is talking to the Thessalonians about being "caught up" in the Rapture then two verses later, in 1 Thess. 5:1-2, he says, "*about times and dates [of the Rapture] ... the Day Of The Lord will come like a thief.*" In these verses, Paul associates the Rapture with the DOTL.
- Next, 2 Thess. 2:1-2 say, "*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.*" Once again, Paul associates being gathered in the Rapture with the DOTL.
- Then, as mentioned in the last article, Matt. 24:30-31 say, "*... all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky ... And he will send his angels ... and they will gather his elect ...*" The Rapture and the DOTL are again connected.
- Lastly, Luke 17:26-35 tell us that, after Noah entered the Ark, the flood came and destroyed the unrighteous. Likewise, after Lot had left Sodom, fire and sulphur destroyed the unrighteous. Then v.30 says that it will be "just like this" when Jesus returns, that is, after the righteous are taken to

safety (in the Rapture) sinners will be destroyed. So the Rapture comes first then the DOTL.

From these four passages, we can see that as soon as Jesus raptures the elect to safety, the Day Of The Lord will begin and God will pour out His wrath on sinners ... just as He did in the days of Noah and the days of Lot.

Summing up, the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are different events, separated in time by the Cosmic Sign. The Great Tribulation is a period of the Devil's wrath against Jews and Christians while the Day Of The Lord is a period of God's wrath against sinners and it begins immediately after the elect are raptured from the earth.

In the next article I'll compare Matt. 24 with Rev. 6-8, and the well known Rapture passage of 1 Thess. 4:15-17, to show that these passages are all talking about the one and only return of Jesus. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 4

The Rapture - Matt. 24, 1 Thess. 4-5 & Rev. 6-8

Many Christians believe in the PreTrib Rapture doctrine which is the belief that Jesus is going to return twice. They say that the first time is in 1 Thess. 4-5 when He will come secretly in the clouds to take all Christians to heaven before the Great Tribulation. And the second time is after the Tribulation when He will come to the earth for the war of Armageddon (Matt. 24). However, when we examine 1 Thess. 4-5 and Matt. 24 we find that they are parallel passages, that is, they are both talking about the same thing - the one and only return of Jesus.

The following list shows ten similarities between the two passages:

- Both passages speak about Jesus coming from heaven - 1 Thess. 4:16 & Matt. 24:30.
- Both say that there are angels present - 1 Th. 4:16, 3:13 & Matt. 24:31.
- Both speak about a trumpet call - 1 Thess. 4:16 & Matt. 24:31.
- Both say believers will be gathered to Jesus - 1 Thess. 4:17 & Matt. 24:31, 40-41.
- Both mention clouds - 1 Thess. 4:17 & Matt. 24:30.
- Both say that the time is unknown - 1 Thess. 5:1-2, & Matt. 24:36.
- Both say that Jesus will come like a thief - 1 Thess. 5:2, 4 & Matt. 24:43.
- Both say unbelievers will be caught unaware - 1 Thess. 5:3 & Matt. 24:37-39.
- Both say that believers are to watch - 1 Thess. 5:6 & Matt. 24:42, 25.
- Both warn against drunkenness - 1 Thess. 5:7 & Matt. 24:49.

These ten similarities are more than enough to show that Matt. 24 and 1 Thess. 4-5 are parallel passages. When two people give evidence about something, it's highly unlikely that they will use the same words, or speak about the exact same points, but the similarities in their accounts would make it obvious that they were talking about the same thing. This is how it is with these two passages. In 1 Thess. 4-5, Paul described, in his own words, the same things that Jesus spoke about in Matt. 24. So, there are not two returns of Jesus but only one where He raptures all Christians out of the Tribulation, just before the Day Of The Lord begins (Matt. 24:27-31). (At the end of this article, there is a link to a chart which shows sixteen similarities between these two passages.)

There is also a clear, sequential parallel between Matt. 24 and Rev. 6-8 as the following shows:

- First, both passages talk about wars and famines - Matt. 24:6-7 & Rev. 6:3-6.
- Then both mention the Great Tribulation - Matt. 24:9, 21-22 & Rev. 6:7-11.
- Then they talk about a cosmic sign in the heavens - Matt. 24:29 & Rev. 6:12-17.
- Then Christians are saved out of the Tribulation - Matt. 24:22, 31 & Rev. 7:9-14.
- And then the wrath of God comes - Matt. 24:30, Matt. 24:37-39 & Rev. 8:1-7.

This sequence of similarities shows that Matt. 24 and Rev. 6-8 are also parallel passages. This of course means that all three passages, Matt. 24, Rev. 6-8 and 1 Thess. 4-5, are describing the one and only return of Jesus. So there is no secret, Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

When Jesus returns to rapture Christians, it will be far from a secret. First the sun and moon will be darkened, the stars will fall and the heavens will be shaken. Then His coming will be announced with a trumpet call, a shout, and with the voice of the archangel and He will appear in the clouds like lightning, with power and great glory. All the world will know about it as Rev 1:7 tells us, "*Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.*" The nations will wail and mourn because they know that the Day Of The Lord has arrived and that God's wrath is about to come down on them.

The next article will be on coming like a thief and watching. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 5

Coming like a thief & watching

1 Thess. 5:2 tells us that *"the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."* The popular understanding of *"come like a thief"* is that Jesus can return at any moment and surprise Christians. However, 1 Thess. 5:4 says, *"But you brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief"*. So, Christians won't be surprised by the coming of the Day Of The Lord but those who are *"in darkness"*, the unsaved, will be.

In Rev. 3:1-3, Jesus told the Sardis church, *"you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead [in sin]. Wake up! ... repent ... But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come."* This confirms that it is the unsaved, those who are dead in the darkness of sin, who will be surprised when Jesus comes like a thief.

The unsaved make fun of the idea that Jesus will return and they mock God, saying, *"Where is this 'coming' he promised? ... everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation,"* and then a few verses later it says, *"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. 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"* (2 Pet. 3:4, 10).

So we can see that it is the unsaved who will be surprised by Jesus' return because they will be living life just like the people in the days of Noah. Matt. 24:38-39 tell us, *"For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."* While Noah was aware of the coming disaster, the unrighteous were not. So, in the same way that the unrighteous were surprised, and destroyed by the flood, those who are unrighteous during the End Times will be surprised when Jesus returns to destroy them in the Day Of The Lord.

On the other hand, Christians will not be surprised because they will be watching and waiting for Jesus to Rapture them out of their great suffering. In Mark 13:20, Jesus said that the Lord would cut short the days of tribulation but He didn't say exactly when. In Mark 13:32-37, He said, *"No one knows about that day or hour ... Be on guard! Be alert! ... If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"* Jesus gives this strong warning because, during the Great Tribulation, there will be enormous deception so believers will need to watch carefully and not sleep.

Where Jesus says not to sleep, He doesn't mean it literally as we all must sleep. In 1 Thess. 5:5-6, we are told, *"You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness [of sin]. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep [in their sin], but let us be alert and self-controlled."* From this we see that sleeping is associated with sin, so, during the End Times, Christians must not *"sleep"* but be self-controlled and alert so as not to get caught up in sin.

Summing this up, Jesus will come like a thief and surprise the unsaved but Christians will be watching and waiting for Him. As already mentioned, during the Great Tribulation things will be very bad. In Matt. 24:10-13, Jesus said, *"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."* So Christians will need to be alert and self-controlled, not sleeping, but watching so that they will not be hardened or deceived and turn away from the faith.

The next article will be on the Antichrist. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 6

A short look at the Antichrist

The Antichrist has many titles including the Ruler Who Will Come, the Little Horn, the Beast and the Man Of Lawlessness. In this article we'll look at just these four titles. The Antichrist will be a blasphemous dictator whose reign of terror against God's people will last for 3½ years. This 3½ years is also expressed as 42 months or 1260 days and is known by the term 'a time, times and half a time' (one year + two years + ½ year = 3½).

Dan 9:27 talks about the **Ruler Who Will Come** and says, *“He will confirm a covenant [a peace agreement] with many for one 'seven' [a seven year period]. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”* So, after 3½ years, the Antichrist will break the covenant and set up the *“abomination that causes desolation”* which is spoken of in Matt. 24:15. Then Matt. 24:16-22 tell us that the Antichrist begins his persecution of Jews and Christians during the time known as the Great Tribulation.

The Little Horn is spoken about in Dan. 7. This chapter is about four beast empires. The fourth Beast has ten horns (ten kings) when a little horn comes up amongst them and uproots three of the horns. Dan. 7:25-26 say that the Little Horn *“will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time (3½ years). But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever”*. These verses also tell us that the Little Horn, the Antichrist, will oppress the saints for 3½ years and then he will be defeated.

Rev. 13:1-10 tell us about **The Beast** with ten horns and seven heads. One of the heads of the Beast recovered from what seemed to be a fatal wound. We are told that the Dragon, the Devil, gives his power and authority to the Beast who blasphemes God and makes war against the saints for 42 months (3½ years). He will be empowered by the Devil and rule the world militarily, religiously and economically -

- **Militarily:** *“Who is like the Beast? Who can make war against him? ... 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.”* (Rev. 13:4, 7)
- **Religiously:** *“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast - all whose names have not been written in the book of life.”* (Rev. 13:8)
- **Economically:** *“He [the False Prophet] also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.”* (Rev. 13:16-17)

The Man Of Lawlessness is another name for the Antichrist and in 2 Thess. 2:3-4 we are told that *“he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”* Because he thinks he is God, he demands worship from everyone. Then, 2 Thess 2:9-10 tell us of his satanic deception: *“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, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”*

There is also another beast, known as the False Prophet, who assists the Antichrist and performs miracles. We are told, *“he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth”* (Rev. 13:13-14).

So, the Antichrist will be an extremely powerful and deceptive dictator who will dominate the world and severely persecute God's people. The things we know about the Antichrist include -

- As a little horn, he rises up and uproots three horns of the ten horned beast.
- One head of the Beast recovered from what seemed to be a fatal wound.
- He confirms a seven year peace agreement.
- He breaks that agreement half way through it.
- He sets up an abomination in the Temple.
- He declares himself to be God.
- He hates all who oppose him, especially Jews and Christians.

Basically, he will be the Devil in the flesh. In Rev. 12:3, 9, the ten horned, seven headed beast, is called a dragon, which is another name for the Devil. That is why Jesus warns not to even go near false prophets or false Christs but to wait for Him, the real Christ, to return. End Time believers will be without excuse if they become deceived as Jesus said, “*See, I have told you ahead of time*” (Matt. 24:25). During that time believers will need to be watchful of deception more than ever, and be walking closely with Jesus for the strength to persevere to the end.

The next article will be on the Millennium. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 7

The Millennium

The Millennium is a one thousand year period between the war of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) and the coming of the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21:1). During that time, the earth will be restored, as Acts 3:21 says, and Jesus will rule over all the nations with the saints. The following is a brief flow of events -

- Jesus defeats the Beast and his armies at **Armageddon** (Rev. 19:11-21).
- The Beast and the False Prophet are thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).
- The Devil is bound for one thousand years – the Millennium period (Rev. 20:1-3).
- Jesus and the saints reign during the **Millennium** (Rev. 20:4).
- The Devil is released and raises up armies but fire from heaven devours them (Rev. 20:7-9).
- The Devil is thrown into the lake of fire with the Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 20:10).
- The **New Heaven and New Earth** come (Rev. 21).

So, the Millennium is a one thousand year period after Armageddon during which Jesus and the saints rule the earth. Some Christians don't believe in the Millennium but there are many Scriptures which only fit such a setting. For example, Rev. 19:15 and Rev. 2:26-27 say that Jesus and the saints will rule the nations with an iron scepter. This can only be talking about a yet-to-come period because the saints have never ruled the nations and it's ridiculous to say that they will rule heaven with an iron scepter.

Other Scriptures, such as Isa 65:17-25 and Isa. 11:1-9, only make sense in a Millennium setting. In these passages it says that the lion, leopard and wolf will live with lambs and goats and a child will lead them. This can't be referring to our final heavenly state because death still exists as Isa. 65:20 tells us, “... *he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.*” This scene only fits a restored, Eden-like earth.

Who then populates the earth during the Millennium? Zech. 12-14 tell us that, when all the nations surround Jerusalem, Jesus will destroy them during the war of Armageddon and pour out His Spirit on all Israel. After that, Zech. 14:16 tells us, “*Then the survivors from all the nations [Gentiles] that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.*” So, the Jews and Gentiles who make it through these times will enter the Millennium. Israel will be the leading nation (Isa. 60) and the Gentile nations will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the Lord. This gives further proof of the Millennium as the nations have never gone up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish feasts.

Few people will survive Armageddon. Zech. 13:8 says that only one third of the Jews will survive and, regarding the Gentiles, Isa 24:6 tells us, “*Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.*”

It's not 100% clear why God has chosen to have a Millennium period. Perhaps it is to fulfill all His promises to Israel. They have not received all the land promised in Genesis 15:18-21 nor have they been head of the nations as Isa. 60-65 says. Or maybe God will be using that time to show mankind that the Devil is not to blame for their sinfulness because sin will still exist even with the Devil bound. And, despite the fact that righteousness has ruled for 1000 years, when released the devil will again deceive the nations and gather them to rebel against God, only to be devoured by fire (Rev. 20:7-9).

[Both Isa. 65:17 and Rev. 21:1 talk about a New Heaven and New Earth but they cannot be talking about the same thing as Isa. 65:20 speaks of people dying while Rev. 21:4 says there will be no more death. Obviously, Rev. 21:1 is talking about our final heavenly state. This means that Isa 65:17 can only be talking about the present heaven and earth being restored to an Eden-like state for the Millennium, as mentioned in verses such as Rom. 8:19-21, Acts 3:21 and Isa. 11.]

The next article will be on the Rapture timing. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 8

The Rapture Timing

Regarding His return, in Matt. 24:36 Jesus said, “*No one knows about that day or hour.*” However, after speaking about the Great Tribulation, He said, “*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). So, even though we don't know the exact day, we do know that Jesus will return to rapture the elect at some point in time during the Great Tribulation. This is shown between points B & C on the timeline below.

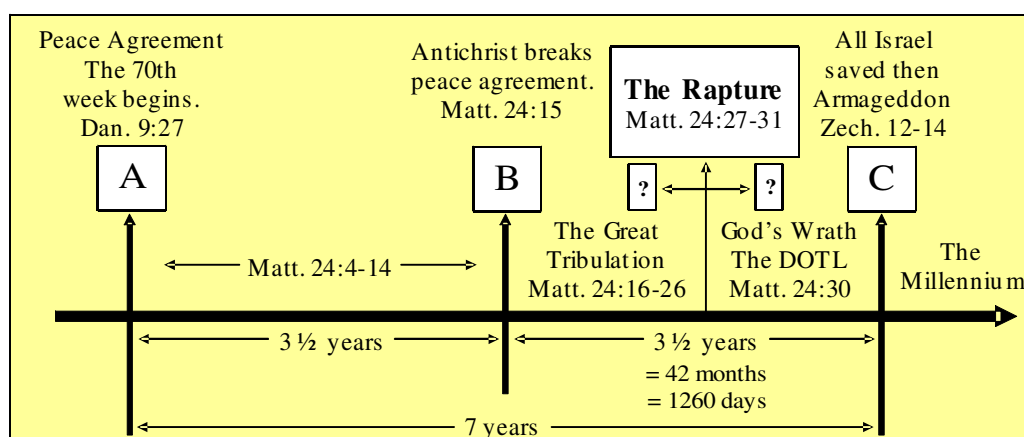
The timeline shows what is called the 70th week of Daniel (a week represents 7 years). In Dan. 9:24, Daniel was told that 70 weeks were decreed for his people, the Jews, to end sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. This, of course, has not yet happened in Israel. Then Dan. 9:25-26 tell us that the first 69 weeks were fulfilled when Jesus was crucified but the 70th week is still future and only begins when the Antichrist confirms a 7 year peace agreement, shown as Point A on the timeline.

The timeline shows the 70th week of Daniel, spoken of in Dan. 9:27.

A marks the beginning of the 70th week, when the Antichrist confirms a peace agreement.

B is 3 ½ years later when the Antichrist breaks that agreement.

C marks the end of the 7 year period. All Israel is saved and the Antichrist is destroyed.



At point B, the peace agreement is broken by the Antichrist and he begins his persecution of Jews and Christians during the time known as the Great Tribulation. As already stated, Jesus will return to cut short those days by rapturing the elect. Even though we don't know the exact day, we do know that the Rapture is somewhere between points B & C. After the Rapture, God's wrath of the Day Of The Lord begins and it ends with the war of Armageddon.

Regarding Israel, Dan. 9:24 says that everlasting righteousness will be brought to Israel at the end of the 70 weeks. This means that unsaved Jews will remain on the earth right up to the end of the 70th week, point C, when Jesus will pour out His Spirit on all Israel and destroy the Antichrist in the war of Armageddon (Zech. 12-14). These Jews will then enter the Millennium along with the Gentiles who survive Armageddon and get through the Sheep & Goat Judgement of Matt. 25:31-46.

Further proof that the Rapture occurs after the appearance of the Antichrist can be found in 2 Thess. 2:1-3 where we are told, “*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him [in the Rapture] ... Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*” These verses very clearly tell us that the Rapture will not occur until after the Man Of Lawlessness, the Antichrist, is revealed so don't be deceived into thinking that the church will escape the Great Tribulation. In Matt. 24:25, Jesus warns the church, “*See, I have told you ahead of time.*”

The next article will be on Luke 17 which clearly shows the End Time flow of events to be 1) The Antichrist appears 2) The Great Tribulation starts 3) The Rapture and 4) The DOTL. Amen.

My View Of The End Times 9

The Rapture in Luke 17

The following chart begins by looking at events in Matt. 24 and then switches to Luke 17 at Point #3 which is highlighted in white - this is where Jesus returns like lightning in both Matt. 24 & Luke 17.

We begin here in Matt. 24:15 where the Antichrist sets up the Abomination.

Next, the Great Tribulation occurs (Matt. 24:21).

This is the common point where Jesus appears like lightning in both Matt. 24:27 and Luke 17:24. The rest of the chart follows Luke.

Luke 17:26-27 say that in the days of Noah everyone was living as normal until Noah entered the Ark, then the flood came and destroyed them all. Then Luke 17:28-29 tell us that in the days of Lot everyone was living as normal until Lot left Sodom and then fire and sulphur destroyed them all.

Next, in Luke 17:30, Jesus said that when He returns it will be just like it was in the days of Noah and Lot. That is, the unrighteous will be unaware, living life as normal, when the righteous are taken to safety leaving the unrighteous to be destroyed by God's wrath.

Then, in Luke 17:31-36, Jesus said that on the day when He returns like lightning, "*one will be taken and the other left*". This is the Rapture in which the righteous are taken to safety. After the righteous are safe, the unrighteous are destroyed, just the same as in the days of Noah and Lot.

Some Christians say that those taken are the unrighteous but that cannot be true as Jesus said that when He returns it will be the same as in the days of Noah and Lot. At that time, it was the righteous who were taken while the unrighteous were left where they were and destroyed.

The second reason we know that it is the righteous who are taken is because the Greek word translated "*taken*" is the same word used in John 14:3 where Jesus said that He will return to "*take you to be with me*". The Greek word means "to take or to join to oneself" while the Greek word for "*left*" means things like

#	Event	Verse(s)
1	The Antichrist sets up the Abomination.	Matt. 24:15
2	The Great Tribulation	Matt. 24:21
3	Jesus appears like lightning.	Matt. 24:27 & Luke 17:24
4	The days of Noah	Luke 17:26-27
5	The days of Lot	Luke 17:28-29
6	It will be just like the days of Noah and Lot when Jesus returns.	Luke 17:30
7	On the day Jesus returns like lightning, one will be taken and the other left.	Luke 17:31-36

"abandon and divorce". So, when Jesus returns, He will take the righteous to be with Himself while the unrighteous will be left on the earth to be destroyed by God's wrath during the Day Of The Lord. This interpretation is confirmed by Isa. 13:9 which tells us, "*See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.*"

From this we can see that the flow of End Times events is -

- The Antichrist is revealed.
- The Great Tribulation begins.
- Jesus appears like lightning.
- The righteous are taken to safety in the Rapture while the unrighteous are left where they are and destroyed by God's wrath during the Day Of The Lord, just the same as it happened in the days of Noah and the days of Lot.

The Day Of The Lord ends with the war of Armageddon. The Gentiles who survive this war will be judged at the Sheep and Goat Judgment of Matt. 25:31-46 and those who are found worthy will enter the Millennium. Zech. 14:16 tells us that these Gentiles will go to Jerusalem each year to worship the Lord and to celebrate the Jewish feasts. See "My View Of The End Times 7" about the Millennium.

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Imminence

Imminent means that something can happen at any moment, without anything else having to happen beforehand. Put another way, if something must happen before an event occurs then that event is not imminent. So, when people speak about an imminent Rapture they mean that it can occur at any moment, without any prior sign or warning. Imminence is one of the key arguments used by those who believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. However, I believe the following clearly shows that the Rapture is not imminent and never has been.

1) Peter definitely would not have believed in an imminent Rapture because Jesus told him he would die after he had grown old (John 21:18-19). So, rather than expecting to be raptured, Peter knew that he would die. This fact alone destroys the idea that the Bible teaches that the Rapture has always been imminent.

2) Paul's letters are said to support imminency but that is simply not possible as he wrote his letters before Peter died. Paul would have known what Jesus said to Peter and, even if he didn't, the Holy Spirit certainly knew and would not have inspired Paul to write about an any-minute Rapture while Peter was still alive. Clearly, Paul's letters can't be used to support imminency.

3) In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to the disciples, "... *be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" The book of Acts shows that the gospel was first preached in Judea, then Samaria, and only after that did it go to the ends of the earth so obviously the Rapture could not have been imminent before the gospel was preached outside of Judea and Samaria.

4) 1 Thess. 5:2 is used to support imminency because it says, "*the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*". However, 1 Thess. 5:4 says, "*But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.*" So we can see that it is sinners, those in darkness, who will be surprised by Jesus' return. Christians won't be surprised because, after the Antichrist is revealed, they will be watching and waiting to be raptured out of the Great Tribulation.

5) In Mark 13:1-31, Jesus spoke about the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation and then, in Mark 13:32-37, He told the disciples about His return and told them not to sleep but to watch. Note that Jesus said to watch after these events had occurred so 'watching' does not support an any-moment Rapture but is a warning from Jesus not to be 'sleeping' when He returns.

Where Jesus says not to sleep, He doesn't mean it literally as we all must sleep. In 1 Thess. 5:5-6, we are told, "*You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness [of sin]. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep [in their sin], but let us be alert and self-controlled.*" From this we see that sleeping is associated with sin so, especially during the End Times, Christians must not sleep but be self-controlled and alert so as not to get caught up in sin because Jesus said that only those who overcome to the end will be saved (Matt. 24:10-13).

"My View Of The End Times 5" gives more detail about 'coming like a thief' and 'watching'.

Finally, nowhere does the Bible say that the Rapture is imminent. Rather, 2 Thess. 2:1-3 tell us very clearly that the gathering, the Rapture, will not occur until after the apostasy occurs and the Man Of Lawlessness is revealed. This makes it very plain that the Rapture has never been imminent and will not be until some time after the appearance of the Antichrist. In fact, it will only be imminent after the Cosmic Sign when the sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall and the heavenly bodies are shaken (Matt. 24:29-30). Amen.

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