

AS TIME WINDS DOWN

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AN OUTLINE OF PERIODS AND EVENTS DESTINED TO
CLOSE OUT THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT WORLD

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Introduction

JESUS CHRIST REVEALS THE CHRONOLOGICAL PATH OF PERIODS AND EVENTS THROUGH TIME

On the 24th day of the first month, in the year 544 b.c., a man stood alone on the bank of the great Tigris River. After three weeks spent in mourning and fasting, Daniel was waiting for a response from his God, when suddenly he was aware of a visitor. He looked up to behold “a man dressed in linen, his loins girded with fine gold of Ophaz, his body like topaz; his face like lightning; his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like polished bronze, and the sound of his voice like the sound of a multitude” (Dan 10:5,6 MLB).

Though Daniel’s companions could not actually see the vision, the apparent nearness of Deity terrified them, and they fled to hiding places. Left alone in the presence of this Glorious Being, Daniel became faint. When his Master actually spoke to him, Daniel was overwhelmed and fell forward unconscious at His feet.

After being revived by the visitor, Daniel was respectfully ordered to rise from his kneeling position and listen intently to the words of his guest. Still trembling greatly, he attempted to obey, but was so overcome with the majesty of the visitor that he could neither raise his head to look upon Him, or open his mouth to answer Him. Then the man-like being touched first Daniel’s mouth and then his body, greatly strengthening him, and enabling him to communicate with his guest. Thus prepared, Daniel became the recipient of a special message his Lord had come to deliver to him. A message, Daniel discovered, whose delivery had been delayed 21 days because of the intervention of powerful spiritual foes (Dan 10:13).

Thus began the disclosure of an amazing prophecy, pertaining to a lengthy future struggle involving powerful confederations of nations (Daniel, Chapters 11 and 12). This revelation focused on events and personalities of particular relevance to Daniel’s own people, the Jews (Dan 10:14); situations and relationships to be experienced by that nation which would be of dire consequences to them; events destined to take place in Israel’s latter history; personalities which this people would meet on earth’s stage between the sixth century b.c. and the end of the Day of the Lord.

Centuries later, another man received a lengthy prophetic vision from this very same messenger. While imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos because of his faith and testimony, the Apostle John was also visited by this glorious man-like being, none other than Jesus Christ Himself (Rev 1:1-19). The prophetic vision

delivered to John on this latter occasion was directed to all the Lord's servants, "to show them what must shortly take place."

Christ's revelation to John includes some important information concerning the Jewish remnant, but for the most part pertains to the end time experiences of "Many peoples and nations and tongues and kings" (Rev 10:11 KJV). It includes certain events outlined earlier to Daniel, but focuses on the Day of the Lord in much greater detail. In fact, it carries us beyond that period of wrath into the Millennium, and beyond that thousand year kingdom to Judgment, and beyond the Great white Throne into eternal bliss with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; encompassing periods, personalities and proceedings far beyond the scope of the message delivered centuries earlier at the River Tigris.

Sandwiched between these two unique revelations to individuals, Christ delivered a discourse to His disciples which also foretold certain events of the last days. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus outlined to His followers the episodes and signs which will precede and introduce His own second coming. Like the other two revelations, all the periods and events which He references are presented in chronological order (Matt 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21).

In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus provides us with a clue as to where and how the events surrounding His coming fit into the prophetic chronology He had delivered to Daniel. The key to such a correlation is a specific event Jesus identified to both Daniel and his disciples, namely the setting up of an abomination in Jerusalem that will result in desolation (Matt 24:15; Dan 11:31, 12:11). Jesus told His disciples that this act would initiate a time of great tribulation for the people of Jerusalem and Judea (Matt 24:15-22). He also informed Daniel of such a period of unprecedented distress to be experienced by his people (Dan 12:1).

Similarly, it is possible to correlate Jesus' Olivet Discourse with His later revelation to John. Both these New Testament accounts of future events include the same unique celestial phenomena first predicted by the Prophet Joel (Joel 2:30, 31). In the Olivet Discourse these cosmic changes are forecast to immediately follow the time of great tribulation and introduce the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory (Matt 24:29, 30). In Revelation these same celestial signs are also related to an appearance of Christ and predicted to be manifested just prior to the Day of God's Wrath (Rev 6:12-17).

Jesus thus provides us with the keys that make possible a complete correlation of all three of His prophetic chronologies. These Scriptural accounts of God's past, present and future program for mankind may be integrated into a single continuous outline representing a step by step itinerary of selected events from the sixth century b.c. to the very end of time and beyond. Christ has laid out historical stepping stones of personalities, places and proceedings to guide us along this entire journey.

Many of the personalities and events presented in Christ's message to Daniel were associated with the 69 weeks of years which preceded Christ's death and resurrection (Dan 9:25, 26). For purposes of the following study, I have chosen to jump over this ancient history, making the leap from b.c. to a.d., and to begin my outline in the post-resurrection period. It is obvious that prophetic events of this later era are more relevant to the final count down.

The study outline which follows is basically my interpretation of the route revealed by Christ in the three passages of Scripture referenced in preceding paragraphs, a panorama of our final march toward eternity future. I have attempted to weave into His chronology, at appropriate places in the panorama of events, a limited number of supplemental prophetic truths from various portions of His Word. The reader may wish to confirm, complement or correct the basic outline by utilizing it as a depository for filing and organizing additional prophetic facts from throughout the Scriptures.

In the outline I have attempted to identify and properly relate the major events which will consume earth's final years. Many of the details and descriptions necessary for a complete understanding of these prophetic events are not included. Presently, I am leaving it up to the reader to search the Word for this missing data. Eventually, a commentary containing considerable explanatory information will be added to

flesh out the skeleton outline. This final portion of the study is presently in the making, and when completed will be of considerable help in clarifying the terminology, interpretations and conclusions presented in the outline.

I have sought the help of the Holy Spirit in my attempt to interpret, correlate and consolidate prophetic facts in a clear and truthful manner. However, it should be recognized that my results represent merely a rough approximation of the path we are upon in our final march to time zero. My hope is that it is at least a close enough approximation to steady our steps and encourage our hearts.

In the outline, we will first focus our attention upon events and personalities associated with the “**last days.**” For purposes of this study, I will refer to the last days as Period I, and define it as that period of time which began with Christ’s first advent (or His death and resurrection) and will terminate when Christ comes to gather His Church to Himself. The primary focus of this portion of the investigation will be upon those events which we, His servants, may personally witness as we wait for Him.

After we have followed the outline through the age designated as the last days, we will move on to look at those future periods less relevant to our present pilgrimage. Those “**end times**” I have divided into three distinct periods of unequal duration.

The first of these to be previewed will be a seven-year period in which God finally brings the nations into a full accounting of their centuries of iniquity, rejection, and rebellion, and pours out His wrath upon earth’s unregenerate masses and their satanic leadership. This abbreviated period of catastrophic judgments I have designated as **Period II**, and identified with the Biblical title, “**The Day of the Lord.**” Though God’s Day of wrath will not actually reach its conclusion until the very end of time, for purposes of this study I am applying this title to just the initial seven years; a period which will culminate with the “**War of the Sovereign God’s Great Day,**” the dreadful transitional conflict to be staged at Armageddon.

Period II also corresponds to **Daniel’s Seventieth Week**, a future week of years that not only follows the rapture of the Church but also the rebirth of a remnant of Israel, at the time of their hour of greatest trial. During their special week, God will interact with the surviving Jewish elect in unique ways. Confirming His covenant with them for the entire week; the first half on earth, and the second half in heaven.

Christ’s victory at Armageddon will terminate satanic administration of the earth through sinful men, and usher in the thousand-year reign of Christ which we refer to as **the Millennial Kingdom**. A consideration of that late era of time will constitute the third major division of the outline. That sunset scene will be painted in a different texture. Very little chronology of events will be presented, but instead the portrait of that period will feature the residents of the Millennium; their identity, their relationships with the Lord, their quality of life, their activities, and their purpose will be highlighted against the backdrop of a remarkable landscape and some amazing architecture. The paramount emphasis of that section of the outline will be upon the King Himself, and His objectives for that climatic period of history.

Following the outline and commentary of Period III, a final chapter, presented in a narrative format, will conclude the study. This chapter will be devoted to describing and commenting on the post millennial event that will close out the history of this current world. Though I have referenced this concluding chapter as Period IV, it is so closely related in time and setting to the Millennium that it could almost be considered the final event of Period III. However, it will actually take place immediately after the completion of the 1000 years. At that time, Satan will be released from the Abyss, and the postponed final phase of the Day of the Lord will take place. While the sun and moon still distinguish between day and night, and the clocks tick off earth’s final hours, Satan will perpetrate his last delusion of mankind; persuading the unregenerate masses of earth to attack the King and his special people. This rebellion will be an exercise in futility and failure that will be terminated with flame. Following the cremation of earth’s armies, and Christ’s eternal victory over His archenemy, a second resurrection of the dead occurs. At that time, all those whose names are not written in the Book of Life are judged and condemned to eternal punishment.

Then, as the present heaven and earth are also cremated, all calendars and clocks will cease to exist, and all schedules and appointments rendered obsolete. **Time will have finally wound down, and we will be ready to march into the eternity beyond.**

Period One: **The Last Days**

I. Period One: The Last Days

FROM CHRIST'S PROVISION FOR THE CHURCH TO CHRIST'S COMING FOR THE CHURCH

A. Days Which are Chronicled in Scripture

Two separate but parallel chronological revelations of Christ cover this period of time.

1. The Last Days are the eon (age, era, generation) for which Jesus presented a condensed preview of events in His **OLIVET DISCOURSE** (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21).
2. The progression of the same major developments within this age are pictured symbolically by the **OPENING OF THE FIRST SIX SEALS** (Rev 6:1-17).

B. Days Which Commenced With the First Advent, Death and Resurrection of Christ (Heb 1:1-3, I Pet 1:20).

C. Days Which Were Confirmed at Pentecost to be Already Underway (Acts 2:16-18, 21).

*The Last Days are those in which “WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.” The period in which the Gentile Church will be completed and the Jewish remnant will finally recognize their Messiah. (Rom 11:25, 26).

D. Days Which Already Confront the Church (I John 2:18; I Tim 4:1-6)

We have already witnessed a major portion of the last days.

E. Days Which Are Clouded by World-Wide Deceit, Divisiveness, Disasters, Destruction and Death- These Events Constitute the First Series of Signs of Christ's Coming.

1. **THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE** goes forth (breaking of the **first seal**—Rev 6:1, 2).
 - a. This is a period in which counterfeit Messiahs will be common, and deceitful teaching will persist.

- b. Christ begins the Olivet Discourse by forewarning the disciples of such deceivers and then repeats this same caution for latter phases of the age.
 - (1) During the early birth pains (Matt 24:4, 5)
 - (2) During the period of Apostasy (Matt 24:11)
 - (3) During the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:23, 24)

Note: It is evident that the Rider on the White Horse continues his conquests throughout and beyond the events depicted by all the riders which follow him.

- 2. **THE RIDERS ON THE RED, BLACK AND PALE HORSES** go forth (triggered by the opening of the **second, third, and fourth seals**-Rev 6:3-8). The timing of their ride is synonymous with the period in which **THE EARLY BIRTH PAINS** are experienced (Matt 24:6-8; Luke 21:9-11).

This will be a time of progressive deterioration on earth, fueled by human conflicts and natural catastrophes (contrasting with the supernatural judgments coming from heaven and the Abyss in the Day of the Lord-following the opening of the seventh seal as identified in Part II of this outline).

- a. Troubles increasing in intensity and frequency with time as typical of birth pains.
- b. Troubles spreading world-wide as the riders continue on their circuits.
- c. Troubles expressed in wide-spread warfare, pestilence, plagues, earthquakes, and attacks by predators. Resulting in serious famines, economic chaos, and an extreme mortality rate over at least ¼ of the inhabited earth.
- d. Troubles which will continue right up to the time of Christ's coming, but will be compounded by the additional general and specific signs scheduled to occur as the last days progress. The intensified travail resulting from these later events is identified in the sections which follow.

F. Days Which Approach Their Climax With A Period of Unprecedented (1) Rebellion Against God, and (2) Persecution of His Saints.

These developments follow THE OPENING OF THE FIFTH SEAL and Constitute the Second Series of Signs of Christ's Coming.

Note: The account in Rev 6:9-11 of the opening of the fifth seal focuses on the latter of the two actions listed in the preceding heading. However, Jesus, in His discourse, interrelates these two subjects (Matt 24:9-12). I have, therefore, chosen to place them together in the outline of things to occur following the opening of the fifth seal. Severe persecution of God's people will be the natural consequence of Man's extreme enmity against God.

- 1. **A Time of World-Wide Apostasy** is experienced: A marked turning away from righteousness, truth, faith and love by the vast majority of mankind (iniquity becomes the accepted protocol of the nations' leaders and peoples).
 - a. As the last days progress, it will become more and more apparent that a spirit of selfishness, uncontrolled lust, disrespect for others, and rebellion against God has pervaded all society (II Tim 3:1-5).

- b. As the end of this era draws near, the climate of iniquity will intensify and become a full-blown storm of apostasy (II Thess 2:3).
 - (1) **Uncontrolled Limits:** A time when those in rebellion against God go to extremes (eventually leading to the acceptance of Antichrist later in the Day of the Lord-Dan 8:23).
 - (2) **Spiritual Hypothermia:** The chill factor resulting from the strong winds of iniquity will prove lethal to natural affection and love (Matt 24:12).
 - (3) **Dispensing of Lies:** The fog of false teaching will thicken, obscuring the truth and deceiving many (Matt 24:11; I Tim 4:1, 2; II Tim 3:13; 4:3, 4).
 - (4) **Declaration of Skepticism:** Scoffers will add their thunder to the storm, attempting to shake the foundation of God's promises (II Pet 3:3, 4).
2. **A Time of Unprecedented Travail for Christians-THE INTERMEDIATE BIRTH PAINS** (A title not appearing in the Bible or commonly used, which I have chosen to apply to the experiences of this time).
- a. Hated by the world because of Christ (Matt 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17).
 - b. Enemies of the State marked for persecution and prosecution (by both religious and civic authorities-Mark 13:9-11; Luke 21:12).
 - c. Betrayed by family and friends (Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).
 - d. Some executed (Matt 24:9, Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).
 - e. The parting of the WAY by those without real convictions (The winds of iniquity and the waves of persecution combine to erode the faith of many professing believers).
 - (1) Jumping ship (renouncing the faith-Matt 24:10a).
 - (2) Joining the enemy (betraying, hating and opposing the faithful-Matt 24:10b).
 - (3) Substituting error for truth (escape to alternate and perverted forms of religion-Matt 24:11).
 - (4) Throwing in the towel (return to an immoral and selfish life style-Matt 24: 12, 48, 49).
3. **A Time of Unprecedented Opportunity for Christians: World-Wide Witness**
- a. **God's plan** to reach the entire world with the Gospel prior to Christ's return (Matt 24:14).
 - b. **God's purpose** for the persecution of Christians is revealed: unique opportunities to present the Gospel to their opponents (Luke 21:13; Mark 13:9, 10).
 - c. **God's presence** remains with them (Mark 13:11). Guaranteed to the very end of the age (Matt 28:20).
 - d. **God's power** provides them with an effective defense of their faith and a strong witness to the truth (Luke 21:14, 15; Mark 13:11; Matt 10:19, 20-no need for prepackaging sermons).
 - e. **God's perseverance:** His grace and power enable Christians to remain steadfast and gain eternal life (Matt 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19).

G. Days Which Contain the Political Rebirth of Israel

- 1. Before God finally gathers Israel, at the beginning of the Millennium, He will bring them back from the nations for a time of judgment and cleansing. He will purge out the rebels and bring a remnant "into the bond of the covenant (new)." (Ezek 20:33-38). This will be a time when He

prepares the remnant for a future permanent citizenship in a restored land (Ezek 20:40-44), but not before He refines them in a trial of unequalled intensity (The subject of Section H which immediately follows).

2. After almost 2,000 years of continuous subjugation by Gentile nations, **Israel became an independent nation again in 1948**. Before and since that time, Jews have returned to their homeland from many parts of the world. God is orchestrating this gathering, just as He will a second (Isa 11:11, 12).
3. Passages which describe conditions and developments during this preliminary sojourn of the Jews, and which seem to harmonize with events we have thus far witnessed in Israel, are found in the writings of the Prophet Zechariah (Zech 10:3-12; 12:1-9).

H. Days Which Will Confront Israel With a Time of Great Tribulation-The Third Series of Signs

1. The Identification of That Event:

- a. Foretold: Zech 14:1-5; 12-15; Dan 12:1, 11; Joel 1:6; 2:20, 25.
- b. Described in Olivet Discourse: Matt 24:15-28; Mark 13:14-23; Luke 21:20-24.
- c. Looked back at: Rev 7:14.

2. **The Specificity of That Event:** The time of tribulation is directly related in Scripture to a single event, not a sequel of different end-time events (Matt 24:15-29).

3. **The Character and Intensity of That Event:** A time of unprecedented physical and spiritual misery resulting from a devastating and cruel attack launched upon a land, its people, and its religion (Matt 24:21; Mark 13:19, 20; Dan 12:1). To recognize how truly devastating the attack will be, one must understand the cumulative sufferings this nation has already endured at that time. The attack will be the final and most severe expression of a mighty storm of judgment that has repeatedly swept disabling waves of trouble across this nation for centuries of time (Joel 1:1-7).

4. **The Location of That Event:** Centered in Judea, the focal point of the attack being the City of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20; Matt 24:16; Mark 13:14; Zech 14:2).

5. The Victims of the Time of Great Misery

- a. The Primary target of the attack is the Jews (Dan 12:1).
- b. There will likely be world-wide repercussions.
 - (1) Jews will be taken away captive into all nations-(Lk 21:24).
 - (2) The attacking international army will be destroyed in its entirety (Joel 2:20; Zech 14:3, 12, 13).
 - (3) Christians world wide, who are already enduring severe persecution associated with the time of apostasy, may actually experience their greatest opposition during those very days (Rev 7:14). (Not necessarily so. Keep in mind that this is a time when God is dealing primarily with the Jews).

6. The Scheduled Timing of That Event

- a. Coming during the period initiated by the **Opening of the Fifth Seal** (Rev 6:9-11).
Arriving on the heels of the time of apostasy, or more likely concluding that period (a world in rebellion against God first persecutes His Church and then seeks to exterminate His covenant nation).
- b. Immediately preceding the spectacular events which conclude the last days and introduce the coming Lord (Matt 24:29, 30).
- c. Taking place prior to the Day of the Lord. Compare: Joel 1:6-14 with Joel 1:15; Zeph 1:4-13 with Zeph 1:14-18; Rev 6:9-11 with Rev 8:1-19:21. The tribulation period must be distinguished from the period of wrath which begins with the opening of the Seventh Seal.
- d. Occurring at a time when the Gentile Church is already complete and anticipating their very soon gathering (Rom 11:25-26). The Great Tribulation is probably the period during which the remnant Jewish nation is saved-see 9b.

Note: In accordance with the above timing, the Great Tribulation (Time of extreme misery) will be an introductory event staged in Israel which will very shortly precede the rapture of the Church, as well as the seven year period of wrath which follows.

7. **The Duration of That Period:** A specific confrontation of limited duration (Matt 24:22) in contrast with the magnitude of its intensity.

Note: that in the Lord's reference to this event, He speaks of a quick response to a single attack; of escaping to short time relief in mountains; of the potential terror of mothers caught in a time of pregnancy or with infants; of the potential arrival of the event during a specific season and a certain day of the week (Matt 24:16-20).

8. **The Actions and Developments Marking That Period:** (Not necessarily listed in sequence of occurrence).

- a. **Possible preliminary events in the Middle East** (See Dan 11:40-45).
- b. **The Attack:** An international army invades the land causing great destruction (Luke 21:20; Joel 1:6-12; Zech 14:2).
- c. **The Abomination That Brings Desolation** (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14).
 - (1) In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus identified **the key sign that would signal the onslaught of the Great Tribulation**. This sign will be the setting up of an abomination in the holy place that would consequently result in desolation. Jesus also noted that this future event would be the very action foretold centuries before by the Prophet Daniel.
 - (2) Daniel made two direct references to such a desecration:
 - (a) In Daniel 12:11 an abomination resulting in desolation is identified as the starting point of a 1,290 day period of time that would be critical for Israel. I have interpreted the end point of this designated period to be the mid point of the Day of the Lord (See (b) on pg. 52). If this interpretation is correct, the abomination would be standing in the Holy Place just 30 days prior to the beginning of God's period of wrath. This timing would be consistent with that already considered for the Great Tribulation.

- (b) In Daniel 11:31 a similar desecrating act is described, but the context of this account would lead us to conclude that the action described relates to a much earlier period of Israel's past history. An abomination resulting in Jerusalem's desolation was placed in God's Temple by the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C., as part of an attempt to destroy the covenant relationship with God treasured by devote Jews. Though this timing is inconsistent with that of the Great Tribulation, the sequence of the actions taken by the oppressors, and the subsequent resistance, suffering, and purification of the oppressed Jews, appears to be prophetic of Israel's future experiences during their time of great misery (see Dan 11:29-35).
- (3) Currently we cannot describe the appearance of this future abomination, but its nature is no secret. An abomination is a life, thought, action, practice or object that is absolutely detestable to God. The term is commonly used in the Bible in reference to idolatry and images used as idols. The references, by both Matthew and Mark, to a "standing" abomination may very well refer to an image of some kind.
- (4) The site in which the abomination will stand is identified by Matthew as "the holy place" and Mark as a place "where it does not belong." This "off limits" site is generally considered to be within the Jewish Temple, but if God schedules this event for a time when no temple exists, there are already historical sites that are considered holy by God. In fact, the entire City of Jerusalem, which God has chosen as an earthly dwelling place, is considered His Holy Hill (Dan 9:16; Ex 15:17).
- (5) It is possible that this desecrating act will be carried out by a force of hateful enemies prior to the main attack by an international army. The response of the Jews to such sacrilege may actually provoke intervention by an alliance of nations who sympathize with the cause of Israel's enemies. In that case, the setting up of the abomination would be the act that perpetrates and initiates the time of Great Tribulation. An abomination resulting in desolation.
- (6) Accompanying the setting up of an abomination will be action to negate the worship of the true God by abolishing ("turning off") the daily sacrifices of the Jews (Dan 12:11). A similar constraint upon the daily sacrifices was forced upon the Jews by the armies of Antiochus, just prior to their desecration of God's temple with an idol statue of the Olympian god Zeus.

Note: In the time of the end, Antichrist will also "take away" the daily sacrifices (Dan 8:11, 12 KJV). However, the word translated "take away" in this latter passage actually means "to be high, i.e. to rise or raise." It may refer to Antichrist's action in stealing worship from the true God by establishing regular worship of himself. If so, this act would represent a devious reversal of the abolishment of sacrifices that will take place during the time of the Great Tribulation.

d. The Casualties:

- (1) Two-thirds of the Jewish population will be killed (Zech 13:8).
- (2) Women in particular will suffer greatly (Zech 14:2; Luke 21:24).
- (3) Half of Jerusalem's residents will be captured and taken into international exile (Zech 14:2; Luke 21:24; Joel 3:2).

e. The Resistance:

- (1) God enters the fight (Zech 14:3).
- (2) "Judah too will fight at Jerusalem" (Zech 14:14).

- (3) The invaders are destroyed (Zech 14:12-15; Joel 2:20).
- f. **The Deliverance** (Dan 12:1).
- (1) A unique escape route is created by the Lord (Zech 14:4).
- (2) The remnant escape to a wilderness retreat after acquiring plenty of provisions from the enemy camps (Zech 14:5, 14; Rev 12:6).
- (3) Their departure is unhurried; guided and guarded by the Lord (Isa 52:12).
- g. **The Aftermath:** Jerusalem begins a period of deterioration under foreign occupants (Luke 21:24).
9. **The Purposes and Ultimate Consequences of the Great Tribulation:** Used by God to remove the final dross from Israel and to purify a remnant for Himself (Zeph 3:11-13).
- a. This period of distress will be the final exercise of God's wrath against the sins of, and the sinners among, this unique nation (Luke 21:22-24). **The dross will be removed** (Ezek 20:33-38; Zeph 1:4-6; 8-13; Zech 13:1-3, 8).
- b. It also will be the period in which the spiritual rebirth of Israel will occur (Rom 11:26). **The Gold will be refined** (Zech 13:1, 9; Dan 12:1, 10; Ezek 20:37; Zeph 3:12, 13).
- (1) **The Promises**
- (a) Israel will return to the Lord in the latter days (Deut 4:30, 31; Hosea 3:5).
- (b) Jacob will be saved in a time of trouble (Jer 30:7).
- (c) A remnant will be preserved and gathered during a time of affliction (Isa 10:21-23; 17:4-6; Dan 12:1).
- (d) The entire nation will experience a sudden spiritual rebirth (Isa 66:6-8).
- (e) The remnant will be made righteous (Zeph 3:12, 13).
- (f) All Israel will be saved following the completion of the Gentile Church (Rom 11:25, 26).
- (2) **The Enactment:** God will prepare many hearts to recognize Christ and exercise true repentance (Zech 12:10-14; Joel 2:12-17; Hosea 5:15-6:3; Zeph 3:9).
- (3) **The Fulfillment**
- (a) Pity and provision for forgiveness is extended by God to the entire nation of survivors (Zech 13:1; Joel 2:18).
- (b) This remnant are refined as a result of their time of testing (Zech 13:9).
- (c) Consequently a unique relationship is established between the survivors and their God (Zech 13:9).
- (d) This renewal is the deliverance on Mt. Zion promised to the Prophet Joel. The Jewish remnant are the last ones to be included in God's promise: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." (Joel 2:32 KJV).
- (e) God will then intervene in the conflict to physically deliver at least half of the remnant from their enemies (Zech 14:2-5, Matt 24:22). The cheer will then go up: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matt 23:39) (An additional passage which possibly references this deliverance is Isa 52:8-12).

Note: This deliverance is the escape identified previously in Section 8f, at the top of this page. The confirmation of this escape, and the subsequent protection of the remnant in a wilderness refuge, will be covered in Part II of the outline.

- (f) It is very likely that even the 1/2 of the Jewish survivors who are carried into captivity throughout the earth [Refer back to d(3) on pg 18] will be spiritually saved. Either at the same time as their brethren who escape, or during their captivity (Deut 4:27-31). The Prophets repeatedly tell of Jews scattered among the nations who are scheduled to be re-gathered and return to the land at the beginning of the Millennium (see PERIOD III). If they are faithful to the Lord, during the reign of Antichrist, they will be among the martyrs who will be resurrected to reign with Christ (Rev 20:4). In the meantime, the Lord takes their spirits to a safe haven, where for a short time they will wait out the judgments He will inflict upon the world during the Day of the Lord. At the conclusion of that period of wrath, they will exit the waiting room to enter the joyful state of being a very special part of His Millennial Kingdom (Isa 26:19-27:3, 6).
- c. The Great Tribulation appears to fulfill a three fold forecast of Israel's future status as presented in Isaiah 40:2: (1) She has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins; (2) Her iniquity is pardoned; (3) Her warfare is completed.
- I. Days Which Reach Their Conclusion With Two Final Signs-This Fourth Series of Signs are Scheduled to Appear Following THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL.** Though quite different in nature, these final two signs will be so closely linked in a time sequence that they will merge to form a single grand fall of the curtain on the last days.
- 1. Sign #1: Special Celestial and Terrestrial Transformations of Universal Proportions.**
- a. **First forecast by the Prophet Joel** (Joel 2:31, 32).
- (1) He described dramatic celestial transformations: "The sun shall be changed into darkness; and the moon into blood..."
 - (2) He also noted terrestrial phenomena: "blood, fire and smoke."
 - (3) He predicted that this compound mega sign would precede the arrival of "the dark and terrible Day of the Lord."
 - (4) He predicted that these physical transformations would follow a series of spiritual manifestations, all occurring within a period when "**Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"
 - (5) He closely associated these signs with a time in which God would call to Himself and save a remnant of Jews.
- b. **Referenced by other O.T. Prophets** (Isa 13:9, 10; 34:4, Zech 14:6, 7).
- c. **Forecast also by Christ** (Matt 24:29; Luke 21:25, 26).
- (1) To immediately follow the Great Tribulation.
 - (2) To include solar changes: Darkening of the sun; failure of the moon to shed its normal light.
 - (3) To also involve other celestial bodies: The falling of the stars as the forces in heaven are shaken [see notes on e(2),(c),and(d), page 21].
 - (4) To be accompanied by distress on the earth: Specific events to include the roaring of sea and waves [see note on e(3), page 21].
 - (5) To immediately precede the Sign of the Son of Man (the 2nd sign of the final sequence).
- d. **Referenced by the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost** (Acts 2:16-21).
- (1) Peter quotes Joel's description of the celestial and terrestrial transformations.

- (2) He recognizes that these phenomenon will occur as a sequel to earlier last day signs of a spiritual nature which actually began to be fulfilled on that very day.
 - (3) He again identifies them as events which precede The Day of the Lord.
 - (4) He again associates them with a period in which “Whosoever shall call on the Lord will be saved.” Could the outpouring of the Holy Spirit represent the beginning of that period of grace, and the celestial and terrestrial signs the end?
 - (5) Peter omits the portion of Joel’s prophecy announcing the delivery of a remnant in Mt. Zion and Jerusalem. Evidently that phase of salvation by grace was not initiated on The Day of Pentecost but must be delayed until the Gentile Church is complete (Rom 11:25).
- e. Actually Seen by the Apostle John in a Vision (Rev 6:12-14).**
- (1) Revealed at THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL.
 - (2) Included celestial transformations:
 - (a) Sun turned as black as sackcloth.
 - (b) Full moon became like blood.
 - (c) Stars of heaven fell toward earth.

Note: Even traveling at the speed of light, these stars would not reach earth for millions of years. They will hardly have begun their journey when, approximately 1,007 years later, God will destroy both the stars and the target, creating a new heaven and a new earth.

(d) Sky retreated in such a way as to give the appearance of a scroll being rolled up.

Note: The stars will fall vertically toward the earth. However, to an observer on the earth, over a great length of time, the stars would appear to converge into a more congested pattern; like a scroll being rolled up. Since God will alter the powers of the heavens, this convergence could possibly occur at an accelerated rate. In order for this descent of the stars to be visible on earth precisely at God’s appointed time, He would have ordered them on their way millenniums ago.
 - (3) Accompanied by terrestrial transformations: A tremendous earthquake which dislodges every mountain and island.

Note: An earthquake of such magnitude could very well be triggered by the celestial transformation we have already noted. Likewise, the tossing of the sea, described by Jesus, would result from the altering of the tides as influenced by changes to the sun and moon. Ocean turbulence and tidal waves would be further magnified by the earthquake itself. A quake that moved mountains and islands would most certainly result in catastrophic damage on both sea and land. Innumerable and uncontrollable fires will be triggered, resulting in tremendous loss of life. Such results are summarized by the Prophet Joel: “Blood, fire and smoke.” Thus we note that all the various Scriptural accounts of this complex event, though looking at it from somewhat different perspectives, are quite harmonious in their reports of its magnitude and assessment of its damage. Each revelation seems to supply some additional details.
 - (4) This compound sign will immediately precede a time in which earth’s residents will see a manifestation of the Father and Son, as evidenced by their subsequent reaction. (Rev 6:15-17; Luke 21:26, 27). They will realize at that point that the Day of God’s wrath is upon them, and the helplessness of their desperate position. (See also Isa 2:12, 19).

- f. **According to the foregoing predictions, the future manifestations of this special compound sign will result in A SHAKING OF BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH.**
- (1) Such a dual catastrophe is foretold by several of the Prophets (Hag 2:6, 21; Isa 13:13; Joel 3:16).
 - (2) The manifestation of this universal shaking seems to be scheduled for a time just preceding or at the beginning of the Day of the Lord, and associated in context with the darkening of sun and moon (Isa 13:13; Joel 3:14-16).
 - (3) The shaking of heaven and earth is the sign that marks the entrance to an era of hopelessness (Isa 2:19-21), but is to be preceded by a time in which men still have the opportunity to heed God and be saved by faith (Heb 12:24-27). These facts are consistent with what we already have learned about the last days.
 - (4) **God will terminate the final three eras of present world history with gigantic international earthquakes** whose source fault seems to pass through the very center of the earth. The first one, scheduled for the end of the last days, is the one we have just identified as a sign preceding Christ's coming. The second will be activated at the end of the Day of the Lord and will be the greatest of all time (Rev 16:18). The third will be triggered at the end of the Millennium (Ezek 38:19, 20). Only the first seems to be directly associated with a joint shaking of both celestial bodies and the earth.
- g. **Explanation:** The reason so much attention has been given to this compound sign is to emphasize its important role in prophetic interpretation. **It is a benchmark in God's prophetic program, appearing on the very border between eras. It marks the exit from the last days and the doormat at the entrance to the Day of the Lord. It immediately follows the Great Tribulation and immediately precedes the Second Coming of Christ. It has implications to both the Church and the Jewish remnant.** God has seen fit to make it a special key for unlocking prophesy by referring to it in a number of different contexts, including two of Christ's chronologies of end time events.

The shaking of heaven and earth catches the attention of human residents of earth for sure! "THEN," as they look skyward, they behold another sign which immediately follows, and which brings them either even greater consternation or unspeakable joy. Against the backdrop of the darkness produced when the solar system lights will be extinguished, an indescribable spectacle of brilliance will appear!

2. **Sign #2: THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** (Matt 24:27; Rev 1:7).

- a. **The Sign** of the Son of Man appears in the sky (Matt 24:30).
- b. **The Savior** Himself is seen descending from heaven (Matt 24:30; Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27; I Thess 4:17; Rev 6:16).

Note: The Sign of the Son of Man and His personal appearance may be synonymous. Matthew prefaces His description of Christ's appearance with the announcement of a sign, but Mark and Luke, in their accounts of this same event, focus immediately on the appearance of Christ "in the clouds with great power and glory" (identical to Matthews description), and make no mention of a preliminary sign. The sign of His coming probably refers to the glory of God that will clothe Christ (Matt 16:27, 24:27; II Thess 1:7). Signs are wonders given to provide authenticity. The glory, which will be revealed at Christ's coming will be of such quality and intensity that none will question its source or who He is. Men will very quickly identify Him

as the Lamb of God and associate Him with the One who sits on the throne (Rev 6:16). In fact He will appear sitting on the right hand of the Father (Mark 14:62).

c. **The Setting:** “On the clouds of heaven”

(1) As foretold to His enemies (Mark 14:62).

(2) As foretold to His disciples (Acts 1:9-11).

Note: Most of the Last Days are included in the period between Christ’s departure on the clouds and His coming again on the clouds (Acts 1:11).

d. **The Show:** “with great power and glory” (Matt 16:27; 24:27, 30; Mark 8:38; 13:26; Luke 17:22-24; 21:27; I Thess 4:16; II Thess 1:7; Titus 2:13).

(1) One of the words rendered “coming” in English translations, and always related to Christ’s next visible manifestation to His Church, is “Epiphaneia” which means “a shining forth” (I Tim 6:14; II Tim 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13).

(2) When Christ informed His disciples of the spectacular glory associated with His coming, He noted just two things that must transpire prior to this appearance: (a) His suffering on behalf of mankind, and (b) His rejection by mankind (Lk 17:22-25). Both of these actions occurred at His first coming. Therefore, His very next appearance will be the spectacular event He forecast. This will be His arrival in the clouds to gather the Church to Himself.

(3) The disciples were informed that the authenticity of Christ’s return would be confirmed by the awesome display of glory that would accompany it (Matt 24:25-27).

e. **The Sound:** “**With a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God**” (I Thess 4:16 KJV; Matt 24:31)

f. **The Sight:** “**Every eye shall see Him**”—no secret appearance (Rev 1:7).

(1) Recognized as the “**Son of Man**” (Matt 24:30).

Note: Jesus told the high priest who was interrogating Him at His trial: “You will see the **Son of Man** seated at the right hand of the Almighty, coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mk 14:62).

(2) Recognized as “**The Lamb**” (Rev 6:16).

Note: Men of the world, who know nothing of Christ, do not naturally or spontaneously think of Him as the Lamb of God. On this occasion they must actually view Him as the glorified Lamb of God, seated next to the enthroned glory of the Father. This is not the image of Christ that men will see at His latter appearance at Armageddon (Rev 19:11-16).

(3) His relationship to humanity (**Son of Man**) and His redemptive work (**Lamb of God**) are the characteristics of Christ most readily recognized by observers at the initial appearance of His second coming. In a later appearance of this same “parousia” (arrival and continued presence), the names and titles used to describe Him will magnify His Deity: “**Faithful and True,**” “**Word of God,**” “**King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**” Initially he comes to execute the final bodily redemption of believers He died for and to take His church to Heaven. At the end of the day of the Lord, He comes to execute His sovereign wrath against those who have rejected Him, and to establish His Kingdom upon the earth. The appearance we are discussing at this point in our outline is the former.

g. **The Sorrow:** The reaction of most of earth’s inhabitants to His coming:

(1) Surprise

- (a) The status quo prevails (Matt 24:37-39; Lk 17:26-29).
- (b) People are involved in their normal occupations (Matt 24:40, 41).
- (c) Peace and safety prevail—their guard is down (I Thess 5:2, 3).

Note: Christ's latter appearance at Armageddon will not be unexpected but rather anticipated. The Beast, and an army mustered well in advance from throughout the earth, will assemble to actually await Christ's attack, intent on repelling it and realizing a victory over the Prince of princes (Rev 19:19; 16:13-16; Dan 8:25).

- (2) Terror (Rev 6:15-17; Isa 2:19-22).
- (3) Grief (Matt 24:30; Rev 1:7).

Note: World-wide recognition of Christ seems to be almost immediate, followed by deep conviction and fear, but not repentance and faith. The time in which "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" has been terminated. Opportunity for salvation is gone. Their grieving is not godly sorry that results in repentance, but rather the sorrow of the world that results in death (2 Cor 7:10).

h. The Schedule:

- (1) The exact timing of His arrival is known only to the Father (Matt 24:36).
- (2) Preliminary signs will alert us to the approach of "that day." The coming of Christ is the focal point of the entire Olivet Discourse. Everything He taught His disciples on that occasion pointed toward His coming; both the course of world history He unveiled, and the specific signs He identified.
 - (a) He will not appear before all the signs are displayed (Matt 24:33-35).
 - (b) The signs announcing His coming are to be observed and interpreted (Matt 24:32-33).
 - (c) We cannot accurately or correctly estimate the exact time of His coming, but we can increase both our perception of its approximate nearness, and our readiness for its arrival. This is accomplished through a life of expectancy; one that demonstrates faithfulness and love (Matt 24:42-46; I John 2:28).
 - (d) We can see the Day of Christ approaching clearly enough to motivate us to encourage other believers (Heb 10:25).
 - (e) When believers still resident on earth see the latter of the signs displayed, they may be assured that He is at the very door (Matt 24:32-33).
 - (f) His coming should take no Christians by surprise (I Thess 5:4-6). Such alertness is contrasted with the surprise of the unsaved (I Thess 5:2-3).

J. Days Which Culminate When Christ Gathers His Saints To Himself—The rapture of the Church. (The last days began with the completion of Christ's gospel work and will end with the completion of His Church.)

- 1. The initial purpose of His coming back
 - a. To take us to Himself (John 14:3).
 - b. To rescue us from the wrath to come (I Thess 1:10, 5:9).
- 2. The accomplishment of this purpose will be achieved through a **bodily RESURRECTION** of both dead and living believers.

- a. **The Promise:** Resurrection is for all who belong to Him (I Cor 15:20-23).
 - b. **The Product:** A completely changed body (I Cor 15:51-52).
 - (1) From mortality to immortality (I Cor 15:53-54).
 - (2) From perishable to imperishable (I Cor 15:42, 53-54).
 - (3) From dishonor to glory (I Cor 15:43).
 - (4) From weakness to power (I Cor 15:43).
 - (5) From a natural body to a spiritual (I Cor 15:44).
 - (6) From a vile body to a glorious body resembling Christ's (Rom 8:29; I Cor 15:49; Phil 3:20-21; I John 3:2).
 - c. **The Signal:** Resurrection occurs at the sound of the last trumpet blast of the last days (I Cor 15:52; I Thess 4:16; Matt 24:31). This will be the last sound to signal deliverance before the Day of the Lord begins and the trumpets only signal God's judgments.

Note: This is not the last resurrection to life with Christ. There will be later phases of this first resurrection, which will occur within approximately 7+ years of this trumpet blast (Rev 14:1-4, 20:4-6).
 - d. **The Length of Time for the Transformation to Take Place:** "In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye" (I Cor 15:52).
 - e. **The Order:** Christians who have already died physically will precede those who remain alive to the hour of His coming (I Thess 4:15-17).
3. **THE GATHERING**—the last order of business of the last days (Matt 24:31).
- a. **The Gatherers:** Angels are sent out by Christ to gather His elect (the Church).
 - (1) They are dispatched with a loud trumpet call. Probably the same trumpet call that dispatches the angels earthward is the one that calls the church heavenward (2c above).
 - (2) This assignment given the angels contrasts greatly with the responsibility given a single angel when the Lord later rides to victory at Armageddon (Rev 19:17-18).
 - (3) The Bible clearly predicts a future gathering of that portion of Israel's elect that have been scattered among the nations. This will take place at the beginning of the Millennium, but it will not be carried out by angels. The remnant will actually be escorted and served by delegates of the very lands that had enslaved them (Isa 14:2, 49:22-23). Their journey back will be over earth's surface and not through the heavens (Isa 66:20). The Lord will be awaiting them in Jerusalem and not in the clouds (Ezek 34:13-16).
 - (4) There will be another harvest undertaken by angels. At His second coming they will concentrate on gathering the good grain but at the end of His earthly reign they will reap the weeds (Matt 13:39-42).
 - b. **The Field:** The elect are to be gathered "from the four winds. From one end of the heavens to the other" (Matt 24:31). Let's consider a possible scenario: Christians distributed horizontally throughout the entire earth will be raised vertically into the atmosphere over their former place of residence or burial. There, scattered throughout earth's enveloping atmosphere, they will be gathered by the angels and brought to Christ. According to Mark's account of Christ's description, His chosen will be gathered "from the ends of the earth to the end of the heavens" (Mark 13:27).

c. The Condition of the Grain:

- (1) Kept for that day (I Cor 1:8-9; Phil 1:6-10).
- (2) Transformed during harvest (Described in J2b on the preceding page)

d. The Destination of the Harvest: “To Meet the Lord in the Air” (I Thess 4:17).

e. The Future of the Reaped Grain: “Ever be with the Lord” (I Thess 4:17 KJV)

- (1) Witnessing His Glory (John 17:24).
- (2) Enjoying His presence, protection, and guidance (Rev 7:15-17; 21:3; 22:4)
- (3) Clothed with His righteousness (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 7:14; 19:8).
- (4) Recipients of the incomparable riches of His grace (Eph 2:7).
- (5) Joint heirs with Christ of an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (I Peter 1:4-5; Rom 8:17).
- (6) Serving Him (Rev 7:15; 22:3).

K. Days Conducted in Watchfulness: (Matt 24:42-44)

1. **The Focus of the Watchman:** Christ’s purpose in disclosing His latter day’s agenda is to focus our attention on **HIS SECOND COMING**. The progressive degradations and dangers of a sin cursed world, as well as the more specific signs, are all presented as stepping stones which lead us ever closer to the day of deliverance and glory (Matt 24:6-13). **THE SIGNS ALL LEAD TO THE SAVIOR.**
2. **The Path of the Watchman:** Christ unveils the dark realities of the present age in order to prepare us for rough times (Matt 24:9; Mk 13:12-13), to warn us of impending dangers (Mk 13:21-23; Matt 24:48-51), to define our opportunities (Mk 13:9; Lk 21:13-15), to clarify the scope of our responsibility (Matt 24:14; Mk 13:10), and to expose our limitations (Matt 24:42).
3. **The Role of the Watchman:** Assuring us of our union with Him at His glorious coming (Mk 13:26-27), and of His present role in our lives through the Holy Spirit (Mk 13:11), He challenges us to a life of expectancy (Mk 13:29), alertness (Mk 13:33-37), courage (Mk 13:7, 11), discipline (Lk 21:34), stability in doctrine (Matt 24:23-27), faithfulness in service (Matt 24:45-47; 25:15, 19, 29), prayer (Lk 21:36), and steadfastness (Mk 13:13; Lk 21:19).

WATCHING FOR CHRIST IS FOREMOST EXPRESSED IN LIVING FOR HIM AND LIKE HIM!

4. The Development of the Watchman:

WHILE THE HEADLINE OF CHRIST’S OLIVET DISCOURSE IS HIS COMING, THE BOTTOM LINE IS A LIFE THAT IS UNASHAMED BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING (Matt 24:46; I Jn 2:28).

The countdown until His coming is intended to be a time of purification (Tit 2:12-13), in which both our hope (I Jn 3:2-3; Phil 3:20-21), and our investments (I Cor 15:51-58; Dan 12:3), are placed in the eternal; a time when our character prepares us to face “that day” with confidence (I Jn 4:17), and our fruit enables us to realize the fullness of its joys (Matt 25:21; I Thess 2:19-20).

5. **The Handbook of the Watchman:** The preceding comments relating to watchfulness are based primarily on the words of Jesus as presented in the Olivet Discourse. This section of Scripture is a gold mine full of nuggets of encouragement and instruction for Christians enduring the birth pains while awaiting the coming of the Lord. Unfortunately, it is commonly taught that this discourse is instead a second hand shop (i.e. that the instruction given therein to believers is really directed to a group other than the Church; Chosen ones who will occupy earth's stage after the Church has been raptured). Therefore, the truths disclosed by Christ are not considered directly applicable to you and I. In section L which follows, are listed some of the reasons why I believe Christ was describing events and circumstances of the last days and not the Day of the Lord. Consequently, I believe the revelations and instructions provided by the Lord were directed to the Church, and are literally and directly applicable to you and I. The agents through whom He conveyed these truths were the Apostles, the very ones who still form an integral part of the foundation upon which the entire Church is constructed (Eph 2:20). Over a dozen times in His address the Lord relates His teaching to His apostles by use of the personal pronoun "you."

In their quest for personal discernment, the disciples had asked Christ some rather specific questions related to His coming and the identity of the signs which would precede His arrival. The Lord not only provided some satisfactory answers, but supplemented His response with instructions guiding their own response to the forthcoming events. It is quite obvious that He speaks of situations and actions which He expects His followers (later called Christians) to experience: "**You** will hear," "**You** will be handed over," "**You** will be hated," "so when **you** see," "**your** flight," "if anyone says to **you**," "see I have told **you** ahead of time," "if anyone tells **you**," "when **you** see these things," "**you** do not know what day **your** Lord will come," "**you** also must be ready!"

It is interesting to note that a good part of the warnings, challenges, and personal instructions given by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse were reiterations or echoes of similar instruction given to the disciples on other occasions. In fact many of them are repeated almost verbatim. When we inspect these instructions in their original context, we discover that without exception, they were directed to the Lord's disciples. This fact would seem to reinforce the internal evidence, in the text of the discourse itself, that Christ's teaching on the Mount of Olives was indeed given for the benefit of His followers, and through them the Church. The words of wisdom given on that occasion were designed to guide us as we currently wait, watch, and work.

During His final week in the flesh, Jesus again communicated to His disciples some of His prior directives. He made them even more meaningful by placing them into the context of His coming for the Church.

The following table identifies some of the truths echoed by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, which were also included in prior instructions from the Lord **to His disciples**. Cross-references are given to pinpoint the occasion of the earlier teaching and to verify the identity of the intended audience.

	Olivet Discourse	Subject	Communicated on another occasion	Party Addressed
a.	Matt 24:9; Mk 13:13; Lk 21:12	Worldwide hatred and persecution because of Christ.	Matt 10:22	Matt 10:1
b.	Mk 13:9; Lk 21:12	Arrest and imprisonment on account of Christ, will lead to opportunities to testify on His behalf.	Matt 10:17-18	Matt 10:1
c.	Mk 13:11; Lk 21:14-15	How to be unprepared for interrogation and trial.	Matt 10:19-20; Lk 12:11-12	Lk 12:1,4,8
d.	Mk 13:12; Lk 21:16	Betrayal by family members.	Matt 10:21,34-36	Matt 10:1
e.	Mk 13:12; Lk 21:16	Some will be killed.	Jn 16:2	Jn 13:1; 16:1
f.	Matt 24:13; Mk 13:13; Lk 21:19	Steadfastness in the face of persecution will be rewarded.	Matt 10:22; Rev 2:10	Matt 10:1
g.	Lk 21:18	The hairs of your head numbered (in both contexts relates to God's care during persecution).	Matt 10:30	Matt 10:1
h.	Matt 24:17-18; Mk 13:14-16	Let go of worldly possessions and flee judgment.	Lk 17:30-32	Lk 17:22
Note: In the Olivet Discourse Jesus relates this instruction to believers in Judea during Israel's time of great tribulation. In Lk 17 it would seem that Jesus is relating this same instruction to believers at Christ's return and to the impending judgment of the Day of the Lord. For emphasis He adds, "Remember Lot's wife!" The rapture will almost immediately follow the tribulation period. Luke directs His instruction in Lk 17:30-32 to Gentile believers who are not likely to be in Judea during the tribulation period, but whose response to Christ's coming is to be similar to that of obedient Jewish believers residing in Judea during Israel's hour of great anxiety.				
i.	Matt 24:23-26 Mk 13:21-23	Caution against false announcements of Christ's coming.	Lk 17:23	Lk 17:22
j.	Matt 24:27	His coming will be unmistakably glorious.	Lk 17:24	Lk 17:22
k.	Matt 24:28	Christians will be gathered to where the object of their affections and source of their life (Christ) is located.	Lk 17:37	Lk 17:22

	Olivet Discourse	Subject	Communicated on another occasion	Party Addressed
l.	Matt 24:36 Mk 13:32	The timing of His coming is known only to the Father.	Acts 1:6-7 [a later disclosure by Jesus rather than a prior one.]	Acts 1:2,6
m.	Matt 24:38-39	The similarity between events and attitudes preceding and accompanying Christ's coming, and those accompanying the deliverance from judgment of Noah and Lot. (The rapture will also be a deliverance from judgment because it immediately precedes the Day of the Lord—It will be the busiest day of travel in the history of the earth as every soul rushes to a destination. Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life to the Lord, and everyone else into the Day of the Lord.)	Lk 17:26-30	Lk 17:22
n.	Matt 24:42,44,50 Mk 13:33 Lk 21:34	An unexpected return.	Lk 12:40	Lk 12:22,32
o.	Matt 24:42-44 Mk 13:33-37 Lk 21:34-36	Alertness while awaiting His return.	Lk 12:35-40	Lk 12:22,32
p.	Matt 24:45-47	Faithfulness while awaiting His return.	Lk 12:42-44	Lk 12:22,32
q.	Matt 24:48-51	Unfaithfulness will be punished.	Lk 12:45-46	Lk 12:22,32
r.	Matt 24:40-41	The gathering.	Lk 17:34-36	Lk 17:22

Note: Luke's gospel was directed to Gentile believers. If Jesus was describing a re-gathering of Israel, He probably would not have included it in Luke's account. The exit described in this passage is given in the context of a challenge to the disciples to forsake this world's values in order to gain eternal rewards, to lose their life in order to find it. The rapture will conclusively verify the wisdom of having an eternal sense of values.

L. Days Which Contrast with the Seven Year Period Preceding Christ's Later Appearance at Armageddon (Contrasting the Last Days with the Day of the Lord).

1. Days characterized by natural catastrophes (Matt 24:7, 8). Contrasted with days of supernatural catastrophes (Rev 8:6-9:20, 16:1-21).

Note: None of the signs of Christ's coming which He previewed in His discourse with the disciples are included in the account of events to take place in the Day of the Lord (Rev 8-19). On the other hand, none of the gigantic, catastrophic judgments that will precede Christ's appearance on the white charger (The War of the Sovereign God's Great Day), are even mentioned by Christ in the Olivet Discourse.

2. Days which include multinational conflicts (Matt 24:6-7). Contrasted with the first half of the day of the Lord when the nations are under attack by supernatural armies (Rev 9), and the second half of the Day of the Lord when a single world dictator controls all the nations and their military forces (Rev 13:2, 4, 7; 17:12-13; 16:13-14).
3. Days in which false prophets will claim to be Christ (Matt 24:5, 11, 24). Contrasted with a time in which a single false prophet will deify the Beast (Rev 13:11-17).

Note: Neither the Beast nor Satan, two of the chief personalities on the earth during the Day of the Lord, are mentioned, or even eluded to, in Christ's Olivet Discourse.

4. Days of persecution of Christians on the earth (Matt 24:9). Contrasted with days in which the Church is in heaven enjoying the Lord (Rev 7:9, 10, 13-17), and participating in the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:6-9).
5. Days in which Satan pursues Christians (I Pet 5:8-9). Contrasted with days in which He pursues the Jewish remnant (Rev 12:13-17).
6. Days in which the gospel is being preached throughout the entire earth by resident Christians (Matt 24:14). Contrasted with days in which the only preaching is conducted by two special witnesses in Jerusalem (Rev 11:3-6), and by a single angel (Rev 14:6, 7).
7. Days in which the Jews reside in Jerusalem and Judea (Lk 21:20-22). Contrasted with days in which they reside in a wilderness retreat (Rev 12:6, 14).
8. Days in which Jerusalem will be surrounded, overrun, and destroyed (Lk 21:20-24; Zech 14:2). Contrasted with days in which Mystery Babylon will be destroyed (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:16-18; 18:2-24).
9. Days in which the majority of Jews suffer defeat and death as a judgment for sin (Lk 21:22-24; Zech 13:8). Contrasted with days in which a holy remnant of Jews (survivors) are defeated by the Antichrist (Rev 13:7).

10. Days which conclude with men, including military leaders, scattered upon the mountains attempting to hide from God in anticipation of the beginning of the Day of His wrath (Rev 6:15-17). Contrasted with days, which conclude with men assembled by the military leaders in a mighty army on

the mountains of Israel, intent on fighting the Lord, on the very eve of the culmination of His Day of Wrath (Rev 19:19-21). **Unsaved men will mourn at Christ's first appearance of His second coming** (Matt 24:30). **They will curse God prior to His final appearance** (Rev 16:9, 11, 21).

11. Days of status quo as the end is approached (Matt 24:37-41). Contrasted with days of complete chaos, anxiety, and upheaval as the end is approached (Rev 16:1-21). At the end of the Day of the Lord, nothing will be happening as usual or in a normal fashion.
12. Days of unexpectedness by the unregenerate, as the time of His coming draws near (Matt 24:38-39; Lk 21:34-35). Contrasted with days of expectancy and preparations by the unregenerate for His arrival (Rev 16:14; 19:19).
13. Days which approach their conclusion with believers still awaiting on the earth (Matt 24:33). Contrasted with days that terminate with only the rebellious resident on the earth (Rev 16:9, 11, 21), all resurrected believers assembled in His heavenly cavalry (Rev 19:14). **In one case, the Church is ready to exit earth, in the other case it is ready to return to it.** As the signs preceding His initial coming are witnessed, believers are told to **"lift up your heads"** in anticipation of your redemption (Lk 21:28). At the final appearance of His second coming, the only believers still resident on the earth are **beheaded**, and in graves awaiting their resurrection (Rev 20:4).
14. Days which conclude with a host of angels escorting the Church to the Lord who awaits them "on the clouds of the sky" (Matt 24:31). Contrasted with days, following the conclusion of the Day of the Lord, when Israel's former gentile captors will escort a remnant of that nation overland to the Lord who awaits them in Jerusalem (Isa 49:22, 23).
15. Days which end with men on earth anticipating the outpouring of God's wrath (Rev 6:16, 17), and about to witness the destruction of the earth and its occupants (Rev 11:18; Isa 13:9). Contrasted with days whose termination marks the beginning of an era when men on earth will benefit from God's righteous reign, and witness the miraculous reconstruction of portions of the earth (Isa 51:3; Psa 48:1, 2), and the salvation of many of its inhabitants (Psa 98:2-9; 87:4).

I-II TWILIGHT: MOVING FROM ONE AGE TO ANOTHER

THE ABRUPT TRANSITION FROM THE LAST DAYS INTO THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. Sunset will be Very Closely Followed by Darkness

1. The night is coming (Jn 9:4; Joel 2:1-2; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph 1:15). (This night is the subject of Period II).
2. Just before spiritual darkness falls, a brilliant sunset will illuminate the earth: The glory of Christ's coming (Already described as the concluding event of the Last days—refer to "The Show" on page 23).
3. **When Christ is revealed in the clouds, two climatic events will take place in rapid succession: The glorification of the Church and the initiation of judgment against those who reject Him (II Thess 1:6-10).**

- a. Christians are to look forward to both His coming (Tit 2:13) and the Day of the Lord (II Pet 3:12); the two arriving essentially on the same day, but separated just enough that we will not experience the latter.

Note: We have the opportunity to participate with God in bringing that day to a timely reality by contributing to the program He will fulfill prior to its revelation (II Pet 3:11-12).

- b. Both of these events will arrive as a thief in the night (same thief, same night).
 - (1) Christ's appearance (Matt 24:42-44).
 - (2) Day of the Lord (II Pet 3:10; I Thess 5:2-3)—note that this day is directly related in the context of this latter passage to the rapture (I Thess 4:16-17), and to the anticipation of His return by Christians (I Thess 5:4-9).
- c. Both of these events will be preceded by the same sign:
 - (1) Christ's appearance (Matt 24:29-31).
 - (2) Day of the Lord (Rev 6:12-17).

At approximately the same time that Christians anticipate meeting Christ in heaven's clouds, there will be miserable expectations on earth's surface.
- d. At His coming, Jesus will rescue us from the wrath that will follow (I Thess 1:10).
 - (1) **Christ speaks of the sudden appearance of a specific day in which we will be enabled to both stand before the Son of Man and escape all that is about to happen (Lk 21:34-36).**
 - (2) Christians will not experience God's wrath but His glory (I Thess 1:10; 5:9; II Thess 2:12-14).
- e. Paul relates our gathering to Christ with the Day of the Lord—speaking of them as though they were **A SINGLE EVENT** (II Thess 2:1-2; I Thess 4:16-5:2).

“The Rapture occurs before the Day of the Lord; in connection with the Day of the Lord; on the very day the Day of the Lord begins.”

Rosenthal, “*The Prewrath Rapture of the Church*”

- f. Judgment will begin the very day the righteous are saved from the scene of impending destruction—“**Just as** in the days of Noah.” “**Just as** in the days of Lot.” (Lk 17:26-30).
- g. At a specific point in history (“day”), God will display His righteous judgment through both His kindness and His anger. He will reward those He has enabled to repent by His grace (the righteous), while displaying His indignation and fury against the wicked (Rom 2:3-11).

B. Intermission—God Inserts a Brief Recess Between Two Eras

The last days are even now being progressively unveiled as Christ breaks the first six seals on the scroll held in the right hand of the Father. The gathering of His Church will be the final act to follow the breaking of the sixth seal. Between the conclusion of this final event and the opening of the seventh seal (inaugurating the Day of the Lord), God will inject a brief intermission as described in **the 7th Chapter of Revelation**.

1. Temporary Restraining Orders (Rev 7:1-3)

- a. The four winds are prohibited from blowing—a worldwide calm is developed just prior to the storm.
- b. The angels empowered to injure the earth and sea (first 4 environmental judgments of the Day of the Lord) are ordered to delay their actions until God’s servants are marked with the seal of God.

2. The Saints on Earth are Introduced (Rev 7:3-8)

- a. Their **number**: 144,000
- b. Their **nationality**: Israelites—12,000 from each tribe.
- c. Their **origin**: They most likely represent all, or a nucleus of, the survivors who escaped from Jerusalem at the end of the Great Tribulation.
- d. Their **status**: Already redeemed (Rev 14:3-4).
- e. Their **duty**: Servants of God.
- f. Their **protection**: Marked with God’s seal (see Rev 9:4).
- g. Their **privilege**: To represent God in the Day of the Lord—a holy nation in the midst of a godless, condemned society.

Note: All Jews living in the Day of the Lord are identified as belonging to God and related to Christ (Rev 12:17; 13:7; 14:3, 4; 15:2-4; 20:4).

3. The Saints in Heaven are Introduced (Rev 7:9-17).

- a. **Their number**: An innumerable great multitude.
- b. **Their nationality**: Representatives of every nation, tribe, people, and language.

- c. **Their origin:** Coming out of the Great Tribulation

Note: All this host of believers will not necessarily enter into salvation during the tribulation period, or even be physically alive to experience or witness that trial, but they will all be raised to new life at approximately the same time that the tribulation terminates, and before the Day of God's Wrath begins.
 - d. **Their identity:** I believe this multitude represents **THE ENTIRE CHURCH. Their united rapture will occur in such close proximity to that period known as the Great Tribulation that for all practical purposes they may be designated as those who have come out of that period.**
 - e. **Their status:** Washed in the blood of Christ and robed with His righteousness.
 - f. **Their garment:** Long white robes which exhibit the righteousness of Christ attained by cleansing with His blood. Evidently distinguishing them from even the angels who wear clean bright linen (Rev 15:6) (See also Rev 3:4-5; 19:7, 8, 14).
 - g. **Their arrival in Heaven:** Rather recent. They were not present in the throne scenes depicted in Rev 4:2-7; 5:6-11.
 - h. **Their favored position:** "standing before the throne and before the Lamb." It appears that this multitude may be in closer proximity to Christ than any of Heaven's other personalities who encircle the throne (Rev 4:4-6; 5:6, 11). The Church is close enough for Christ to "**spread His tent over them.**" This idiomatic expression can mean to take up residence or dwell with them. Another possible meaning is that He shelters them. In either case, it seems that they experience a favored and unique relationship with the Lamb. Before this multitude arrived in Heaven, we are informed that a sea of crystalline material occupied the area in front of the throne (Rev 4:6). The saints probably stand on this sea which reflects God's glory. Midway through the Day of the Lord, redeemed Jews will join them on this sea (Rev 15:2).
 - i. **Their duty:** To serve God in His temple.
 - j. **Their song:** "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb."
 - k. **Their protection:**
 - (1) In the Shadow of the Almighty
 - (2) Sheltered from thirst, hunger, and discomforting rays (both ultra violet and infra red).
 - l. **Their privilege** (for all eternity):
 - (1) To be led by Christ
 - (2) To share His blessings
 - (3) To realize His comfort
4. The Two Congregations of Saints are Destined to be Separated for 3 ½ Years.
- a. **One left on earth to display His righteousness.**
 - b. **One taken to Heaven to behold His righteousness.**