

POST-TRIB



# POST-TRIB

*A Post-Tribulation*

*View of the*

*Second Coming*

DENNIS FARRELL



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Published by Redemption Press, PO Box 427, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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ISBN 13: 978-1-63232-042-1

ISBN 10: 1-63232-042-8

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2012916059

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I dedicate this book to my seven grandchildren who give me great joy.

Thanks goes out to my son, Brian, without whose help I would not have been able to complete this task. Special thanks to my son-in-law, Jesse, whose computer expertise facilitated the production. I also would like to thank my oldest daughter and my wife who encouraged me to write my thoughts and insights that I believe the Lord gave me before the original expanded version of this project, *The Day of the Lord*.





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# INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS about the second coming of Jesus Christ from the premillennial post tribulation view and its relevant concepts. It is a concise revision of my original book, *The Day of the Lord*. I decided to change the title so the reader would know it comes from the post tribulation perspective. I have hopefully made it clearer and easier to read by including most of the scriptures under discussion within the text itself and eliminating as much material as possible. I have also expanded the table of contents by which, along with the index, the reader should be able to look up any important topic. If the reader wants a more thorough discussion, he can consult my first book.

This is not meant to be a verse by verse commentary on the Book of Revelation. I have included very little discussion of symbols for that reason (an example of a symbol might be the precious stones or rainbows in the New Jerusalem). I do make comments on many, but not all, of the verses in the book, since Revelation is primarily about that “day.” However, my primary purpose is to adhere to a discussion of the post tribulation view of the “day of the Lord.”

I have included numerous Old and other New Testament scriptures about the day of the Lord as it relates to the post tribulation view, and as

they are relevant to the Second Coming in Revelation. The book of Daniel, for instance, is discussed, because of its relevance to both Revelation and the day of the Lord. There is a correlation of many scriptures, particularly in the New Testament, with those in Revelation supporting the post tribulation view.

I believe the post tribulation view explains all of the prophetic scripture better than any of the competing viewpoints. However, I must state the view I present here is my own opinion and does not necessarily represent other post tribulation theorists. Undoubtedly, all post tribulation beliefs will have much in common, but there may be peculiarities indigenous to each, and not shared by all. My own position, and I believe the position of most contemporary post tribulationists, is a literal, futuristic and premillennial perspective. There are many important questions I propose and hope to answer, but I do not have any new revelation from God, nor do I presume to have all of the answers. In fact, some scriptures I do not understand. Most of the points are not original, although I believe the Lord has opened my eyes to some of these prophetic scriptures and shown me things I have not yet read elsewhere. However, I am sure He has given these things to others.

I avoided any direct criticism of other viewpoints and any personal criticisms, which is in keeping with a precedent set by George Ladd. I attempted to illustrate what I thought were factual, logical, or scriptural problems in some prophetic opinions. For example, I discuss the concept of “imminence,” but only in the context of the relevant scriptures. However, occasionally I simply disagree with others, including those from the post tribulation camp.

Unfortunately, the attitude of some has not been as amiable. Prophecy is future and can be somewhat speculative. Some events simply have to occur before we can know the exact details, despite our personal beliefs. Breaking fellowship over such doctrinal differences, which I hope is a past practice, is not what I would call Christian love. Fortunately, most, but not all, contemporary writers have adopted a brotherly attitude.

Without question, I believe the Bible is the inerrant literal word of God. I also believe that interpreters should take Revelation, and other prophetic scriptures, literally. Of course, one must consider symbolic usage where applicable, as well as the use of figurative language. It can be arduous when

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attempting to be literal or to interpret symbols. I believe we should have some flexibility in this matter. For example, many interpreters insist that Babylon is a literal city people will build in the future. Others believe it is symbolic of a world system. I think such speculation should be allowable. Other examples might include beliefs concerning the locusts (Rev. 9:3), the woman (Rev. 12), and the “great whore” (Rev. 17). I have found in my research that almost everyone, despite their belief in literalism, has made at least one exception to a literal interpretation. As a rule, though, we should maintain literalness when interpreting prophetic scriptures whenever literalness was the intention of the writer.

I wrote this book for the Christian who reads and knows the Bible. Anyone delinquent in this area would need to read the Bible with some emphasis on prophecy. I include many scriptures, but having a Bible available would be helpful, although not necessary.

I want to present a few points regarding the upcoming chapters. I continuously use the term *parousia* interchangeably and synonymously with the terms Second Coming and Apocalypse. I occasionally repeat some ideas and especially scriptures, a practice which William Barclay, Merrill Tenney, et al, also utilize in their work. This was necessary because one has to look at either a concept or a scripture from different perspectives, or simply to reinforce a point. I hope to have avoided any unnecessary redundancy or inconsistency. Although it is not certain, I believe all of my sources are born-again Bible believing Christians.

All scripture references are from the King James Version of the Bible. In addition, I have consulted several Greek lexicons and looked up the Greek meanings for the purpose of clarifying the meanings of words as one would look up a word in the dictionary. It is not for the purpose of “improving” the scripture, but rather to help the reader better understand the writer’s viewpoint and the scripture, and to reinforce an argument or point. Many of the authors I consulted retranslate the King James Version in spots, despite professing their belief in its authority and accuracy. Occasionally, I may cite a re-translation by one of my Greek sources, which appears to support one of my own hypotheses.

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I relied heavily on Vincent, Thayer, Strong (both Greek and Hebrew), et al. Other sources include books, periodicals, and newsletters. The lexicons and books represent past and contemporary copyright dates. I chose scholarly writers, like John Walvoord, and popular writers, like Hal Lindsey, to represent both perspectives. I have attempted to document the book the best I could. Many of the words of the various writers cited support post tribulation points without violating any context.

I sincerely hope you will read this entire book with an open mind, seriously considering the points presented here. If you disagree with the post tribulation viewpoint, for example, please be willing to hear the other side before making any judgments. I don't expect to reach people who have already made up their minds, nor would they likely even consider reading this book. In fact, I am not really intending to change anyone's mind, although it would be a bonus. My main purpose is to present the post tribulation view and plant seeds.

The first chapter establishes the theme of a lack of chronology, which underlies the rest of the book. I believe the lack of chronology in Revelation allows the reader to look at the day of the Lord from a different, and hopefully more scriptural, perspective. There is a more detailed discussion of the chronology of Revelation in my first book, *The Day of the Lord*.

# CHRONOLOGY

THE MAJOR PREMISE of this book comes from the premillennial post tribulation perspective and, therefore, assumes the church will experience the tribulation period. Of course, the Book of Revelation is a major, but not the only, part of this study of prophecy.

Another premise of this book is that our view of chronology can affect how we interpret Revelation, and prophecy, in general. Most books about Revelation assume it is in chronological order, with interruptions. I believe this is not always true, and there are many examples of a lack of chronology, like events in the beginning of the book that really belong near, or at the end. If this is true, we may interpret the events incorrectly by viewing them in chronological order. In this chapter, I will present examples of this lack of chronology and incorrect interpretation.

Of course, some chapters are chronological. For example, many of the events at the end of Revelation do follow most, *but not all*, of the events in the beginning. Chapters such as 11, 16, and 19 are basically chronological, with exceptions. There is also chronological order between chapters 5 and 6, between 15 and 16, and between 19 and 20. In fact, chapter 19 to the end of Revelation does appear to be chronological, with exceptions.

Despite the suggestion by some that the chronological inconsistencies are interruptions, there is another explanation. It is quite possible that when

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John was receiving his visions he was not seeing them in chronological order, but as the Spirit was presenting them. It may be that Revelation was never meant to be chronological, but rather in the Lord's own presentation of the visions. Jack Hayford is one current prophecy writer who believes Revelation is not necessarily chronological.

John received these prophecies that we call the Book of Revelation through a series of visions, many of them picturing the same events from different perspectives. It's important to emphasize that although John gives us the order in which he received the visions, *he never says the events described in the visions are chronological or sequential*—in the tradition of Hebrew prophets, visions are only recorded, not intended to be understood as sequential (e.g. Jeremiah, Ezekiel).<sup>1</sup> (Emphasis in the original.)

Consequently, there is no reason to believe John's visions had to be chronological, for the Spirit may have had some other purpose in mind. Maybe He simply wanted to give a preview to John earlier in the book of the things to come toward the end, which is surely a theme in all prophecy. Chapters 7, 11, 14, and 16, for example, foreshadow the last day. Thus, Revelation 7:15-17 speaks of the beginning of the millennium.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ... They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ... For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them ... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelation 11:18 is just prior to Armageddon.

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.



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Revelation 14:19-20 speak of Armageddon.

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, ... and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Revelation 16:1 introduces the seven vials on the *last day*.

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

These events should occur near the end of the book, if it was chronological.

Other commentators also have recognized a problem with chronology in Revelation, despite believing it is chronological. John Walvoord says, “the Book of Revelation is not written in strict chronological style in that the events in certain chapters such as 17 actually occur before some of the preceding chapters ...” He also claims that, although the “chronological order of events ... is presented basically in the seven seals,” Revelation 10:1 to 11:4, chapters 13-14, and chapters 17-19 are not chronological. Finally, he also says chapter 19 should follow chapter 16 “immediately.”<sup>2</sup>

Charles Ryrie also doubts chronology stating that “... one cannot always be certain about the chronology of the mentioned events ... pinpointed ... in the tribulation period.”<sup>3</sup> J. Barton Payne assumes the trumpets and vials are simultaneous, which means they cannot be chronological.<sup>4</sup> James Ramsey rejects “chronological periods” for the seals, trumpets, and vials. He says, “that these seven ... denote, not successive periods in the divine administration, but each presents the whole under different aspects.”<sup>5</sup> By the “whole” he means the whole scenario of Revelation, which may be a device of the Spirit.

Leon Morris rejects the idea of the chronology of the visions, saying John “does not take in the whole in any one vision or any one series of visions,” and “we may legitimately expect some things to recur in the visions, but always new details will make their appearance.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the visions

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are unfolding each new event as they are presented to John without regard to chronology. Finally, Robert Gundry points out that the seals, trumpets, and bowls appear early, yet project to the end.<sup>7</sup>

Consider the phrase “after these things” in Revelation 7:1, which does not necessarily have to mean “a progression of time,” and is peculiar to John’s other writings. The Greek word *meta* for *after* could also mean *succession*. Therefore, it could refer to the succession of visions as the Spirit presents them, and as John sees them, and not chronological events.<sup>8</sup> One example is the seals in chapter 6 in which not all of the events necessarily occur *prior* to chapter 7. Walvoord says it is difficult for most scholars to accept the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17), which refers to the day of wrath, literally “at this time” in the book. He claims this cannot be the “final breakup of the world,” as happens later in Revelation, though he sees them as parenthetical interventions.<sup>9</sup> Gundry agrees saying, “*for meta tauta as used in Revelation, refers to time after the giving of a vision, not to time after the fulfillment of a vision*” (italics his).<sup>10</sup>

I believe it is therefore necessary to view Revelation as not chronological, with exceptions, to understand its meaning. Although there are numerous examples, which I have cited above, I want to present three significant examples in the remainder of this chapter. The first is the all important chronology of the sixth seal. It is the most important reason to accept the fact that Revelation is not entirely chronological.

Most commentators believe the entire tribulation is the wrath of God. However, there is no evidence to support this belief. The sixth seal, for example, is not a description of the entire tribulation period, but rather the day of the *parousia*, or visible return of Christ. The events in Revelation 6:12-17 can only be a preview of the last day and appear too early in the book if it is chronological.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the

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heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Revelation 11 and 12 make it difficult to say this passage is in chronological order, since they describe a scene similar to Matthew 24:29-30 and Joel 2:2, both of which describe the *parousia*, the last day.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

—Matthew 24:29-30

A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

—Joel 2:2

Revelation 6:17 is the pivotal scripture for interpreting, not only Revelation, but also for understanding the events and timing of the Second Coming.

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

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This is corroborated by Marv Rosenthal who asks, "... how far inside of the seventieth week of Daniel does the opening of the sixth seal occur?" He also points out the similarity between the sixth seal and Matthew 24:29,<sup>11</sup> as does Clarence Larkin.<sup>12</sup> Another commentator agrees, saying Revelation 6:17 is the "end of history."<sup>13</sup> Recall what Walvoord says above that most scholars would not accept a literal day of wrath "at this time." Revelation 6:17 mentions the wrath of God as occurring on this day. In fact, I will show in chapter seven that there is no reference to the wrath of God prior to this day.

A second major example of the lack of chronological order is Revelation 14, particularly verses 14-20. Although the chapter appears shortly after the middle of Revelation, these verses describe the *final* harvest of both the wicked and the saints, and associate the harvest of the wicked with the wrath of God. Verse 20, for example, is a reference to Armageddon on the last day, which is discussed in chapter 19.

And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

—Revelation 14:20

Scofield in his bible prefaces this passage with the title "Vision of Armageddon."<sup>14</sup>

The final example is the appearance of the trumpets in chapters 8 and 9. John presents these trumpets early in Revelation, yet most students of prophecy would see them at least after the midweek of the seventieth week. The plagues of blood, fire, astronomical occurrences, locusts, and eastern armies imply a nearness to climactic events at the end of the tribulation, rather than earlier. Walvoord corroborates this in his book *Revelation, The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, saying, "The seventh seal ... is important because it actually includes all the events from (Rev.) 8:1 through 19:10."<sup>15</sup> He is saying chapter 8 gives a preview of the judgments of Revelation and is not in chronological order.

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Timing is crucial to understanding prophetic events. I believe the timing of the wrath of God, the *parousia*, the harvests, etc., cannot be properly understood if we view Revelation as strictly chronological. A post tribulational view of the Second Coming requires an understanding of the timing of all these events. Assuming Revelation is chronological distorts our interpretation of the book. Not viewing the book as chronological will help to clear up some of the difficulties that commentators have in trying to explain its events.