

End Times: The Tribulation

- **Four Interpretation Methods for Revelation:**

1. Idealist View
2. Preterist View
3. Historicist View
4. Futurist View

- **Key Tribulation Texts:**

1. Jeremiah 30:5-7
2. Joel 1-3
3. Daniel 7:23-25
4. Daniel 9:24-27
5. Daniel 12:7
6. Matthew 24:21-22
7. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12
8. Revelation 7:14
9. Revelation 6-18 (5 & 19)

- **Purpose for the Tribulation**

1. Purification/Conversion of Israel
2. Judgment on the Nations

The Book of Revelation

Church

- Introduction & Vision of Christ (1)
- The Seven Messages (2-3)
- The Heavenly Stage (4-5)

Tribulation

- The Seven Seals (6-7)
- The Seven Trumpets (8-9)
- The Seventh Trumpet (10-11)
- The Heavenly Drama (12-13)
- The Prelude to Wrath (14-15)
- The Bowls of Wrath (16-17)
- Mystery: Babylon (17-18)

Reign

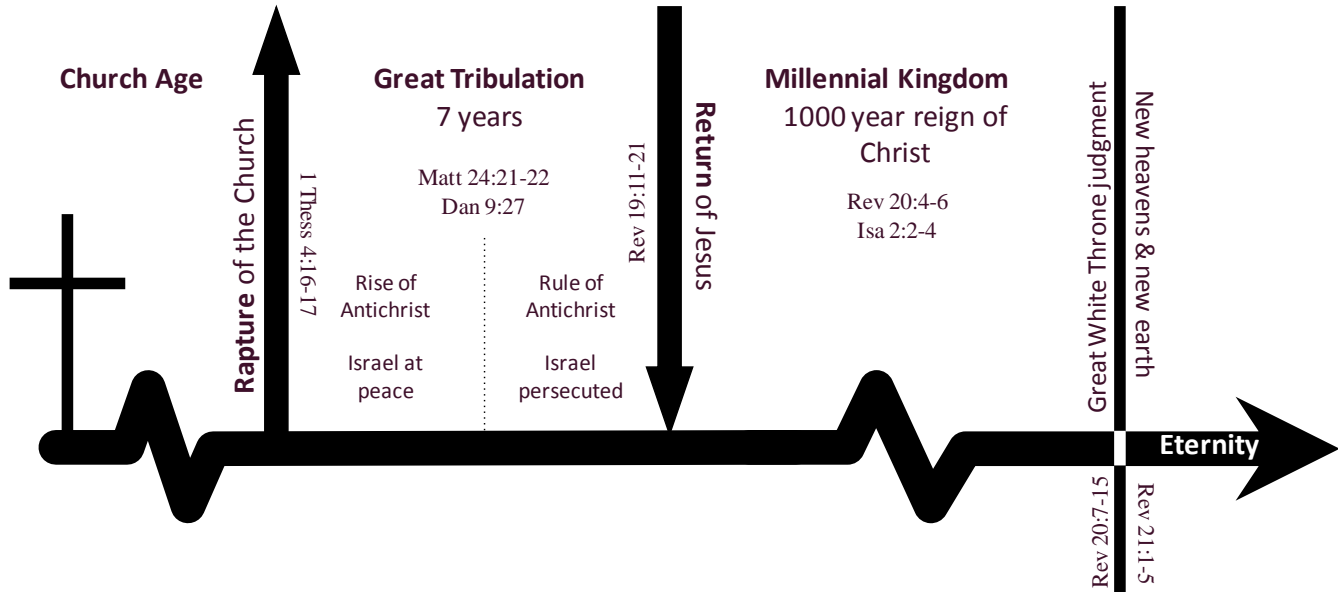
- The Return of Christ (19-20)
- The Reign of Christ (20-21)
- Restoration of Creation (21-22)

(Note: Slide Images are not available for distribution due to copyright restrictions.)

Slide 1:

Welcome! Unfortunately, I was not able to be here last week due to traveling, but I heard Buck gave an amazing overview of our End Times study and did a great job discussing the Rapture. I appreciate what he did to set the stage for the rest of us who will follow.

Slide 2:



Here, again, is the main diagram he gave us to work from. Buck’s main focus was right here on the Rapture. He briefly talked about the millennium last time and went through some of the biblical, historical, theological arguments for a premillennial position. Prior to the return of Christ there will be a literal future return of Christ.

Again, Buck focused on the Rapture, but now we are moving forward to the next smaller piece of the puzzle. So if you are tracking with us on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, then we can move on to the next piece, which is the tribulation. If all of this is intact then the next logical question, is there going to be a definite period called the great tribulation or the tribulation? And how long is it going to be? Is it three and a-half years, seven years, a thousand years? Are we in it now? What’s the nature of this tribulation?

Our Goals

- Be encouraged from God’s Prophetic Word
- Fight eschatological agnosticism & indifference
- Sharpen our Bible study skills
 - Observation
 - Interpretation
 - Application

Slide 3:

But before I begin my presentation on the Tribulation, I want to review our goals. #2 is the main reason why I am here. While Buck’s generation was obsessed by it, my generation was burned out by it.

1. Prior generations obsession – Jim Jones, A Thief in the Night
2. Dating Game, Know your antichrists
3. Who can understand it? – So many different views

There are many different views of the tribulation. Whether it's future or some of it's happening now or some of these prophecies have happened in the past or they're just going to continue to happen in increasing intensity; there are different perspectives on the Tribulation.

Slide 4:

Is The Tribulation Future?

"Idealist" View

Revelation presents spiritual realities that are true of every generation.

There is the idealist view, which takes a look at Revelation and the things predicted there as spiritual realities that maybe kind of enter into history, but they're not really to be taken literally. This approach sees Revelation as portraying in symbolic terms the age-old conflict of the principles of good and evil with no historic elements whether past or future. They're not pointing at any historical truths.

Slide 5:

Is The Tribulation Future?

"Preterist" View

Revelation prophesies events that have mostly already been fulfilled.

Revelation for the Preterist is purely symbolic history rather than prophetic of coming events. So the prophecies about the 70th week of Daniel or the prophecies about the tribulation period, most of those things they say have been fulfilled in the past, if not all of them in AD 70 or the Bar Kokhba revolt in the 130s. This not only does total injustice to the nature of the book as prophecy, but to the normal meaning of words.

Slide 6:

Is The Tribulation Future?

"Historicist" View

Revelation prophesies events that have been unfolding in history.

Then there is the Historicist View. This approach sees Revelation as a symbolic presentation of the total period of church history from John's day to the second coming of Christ. In this view, Revelation does not *just* deal with a future time, but covers all of history from the time of John. The problems is most adherents of this view see the book culminating in their day and as many as 50 interpretations have evolved. Why? Because the normal approach of interpretation has been abandoned. Further, such a view must ignore the imminent return of the Lord.

Where they wanted to look at the newspaper and the magazines and the news and see either fulfillments of prophecies, Old and New Testament, or as foreshadowings. Kind of like when you go to a play; that maybe the show hasn't started yet, but all the stagehands are getting everything ready. And when you see the stagehands getting everything ready and they're selling tickets and they're lining up and, finally, you take your seats and the lights are dimming, you know the show's about to start.

But anything in the book of Revelation or Daniel or New Testament prophecy that you can point at current events or things that have happened in the last couple thousand years of church history, puts you more in the historicist perspective, that is Revelation is prophesying things that have been happening in history.

When I was first a Christian, this is one of the things I was told. I was told that we are between the second and the third seal. That's where we're at today. This was back in the 1980s. The first seal is World War I. The second seal is World War II. And then the third seal is going to be whatever comes next. We don't know. So if you could pinpoint yourself in the book of Revelation today, then you're really kind of a more of a historicist than a futurist.

Slide 7:

Is The Tribulation Future?

"Futurist" View

Revelation presents prophetic events mostly awaiting future fulfillment.

However, if you view the things for the most part, the book of Revelation, the tribulation period, as mostly or primarily, even exclusively, in the future then you're a futurist. In which case, it's not only precarious, but contradictory to start pointing at current events and seeing them as fulfillment or setting the stage for the fulfillment.

A true futurist is not going to be impressed by the dating game, sign seeking, name that antichrist, these different games people play, right? This is not impressive to us. In fact, it immediately turns us off. Now, I think what Jesus meant when He said, "These things are the beginning of birth pains. These things must happen, but the end is not yet." I look at those things and I say it's not that there will be no wars and rumors of wars until the end. It's that there will always be wars and rumors of wars and conflict. And so we should see wars and rumors of wars but the end is not yet. In other words, you can point at signs as being signs of the end, and you're right. But they're the same signs that have been around for thousands of years. They may increase in intensity. They may subside. Israel may be gathered; Israel may be dispersed. It's happened more than once. It happened before 1948. It happened in the 130s when Israel was actually established as a kingdom and they minted coins. So this is not the first re-gathering of Israel as a nation since AD 70. It's possible that the events and earthquakes and things could be leading up to this. But I will never place any money on that or claim that because I'm a futurist. I'm a primarily futurist that sees these things as something that's going to happen in the future.

Slide 8:

Here's the preterist view. "Relax; it all happened in 70 AD." It should say AD 70. Look at this guy, think of all of the poor crazies who would not have a job if that was true. It doesn't sell well.

Slide 9:

The Futurist View

(see Slide 2)

This is the basic chart of the futurist position. This is the typical premillennial position. Others have their chart, but this is simpler and I do have this thing of the future 70th week of Daniel that has not yet been fulfilled.

Slide 10:

The Coming Tribulation

- Jeremiah 30:5-7
- Joel 1-3
- Daniel 7:23-25
- *Daniel 9:24-27
- Daniel 12:7
- *Matthew 24:21-22
- *2 Thessalonians 2:3-12
- Revelation 7:14
- *Revelation 11-13

So what is the tribulation? The tribulation is a future seven-year period of time when God will finish His discipline of Israel and finalize His judgment of the unbelieving world. The church, made up of all who have trusted in the person and work of the Lord Jesus to save them from the wrath of God, will not be present during the tribulation. The church will be removed from the earth in an event known as the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53), and is thus saved from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Throughout Scripture, the tribulation is referred to by other names such as the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6-9; Joel 1:15; 2:1-31; 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2); trouble or tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30; Zephaniah 1:1); the great tribulation, which refers to the more intense second half of the seven-year period (Matthew 24:21); time or day of trouble (Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 1:15); time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).

An understanding of Daniel 9:24-27 is necessary in order to understand the purpose and time of the tribulation. This passage speaks of 70 weeks that have been declared against "your people." Daniel's people are the Jews, the nation of Israel, and Daniel 9:24 speaks of a period of time that God has given "to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy." God declares that "seventy sevens" will fulfill all these things. This is 70 sevens of years, or 490 years. (Some translations refer to 70 weeks of years.) This is confirmed by another part of this passage in Daniel. In verses 25 and 26, Daniel is told that the Messiah will be cut off after "seven sevens and sixty-two sevens" (69 total), beginning with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. In other words, 69 sevens of years (483 years) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah will be cut off. Biblical historians confirm that 483 years passed from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the time when Jesus was crucified. Most Christian scholars, regardless of their view of eschatology (future things/events), have the above understanding of Daniel's 70 sevens.

With 483 years having passed from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the cutting off of the Messiah, this leaves one seven-year period to be fulfilled in terms of Daniel 9:24: "to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy." This final seven-year period is known as the tribulation period—it is a time for the purification/conversion of Israel, which will be accomplished by God's disciplinary dealings with His people, and it will also be a time for God to bring judgment upon the nations.

Daniel 9:27 gives a few highlights of the seven-year tribulation period: "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." The person of whom this verse speaks is the person Jesus calls the "abomination that causes desolation" (Matthew 24:15) and is called "the beast" in Revelation 13. Daniel 9:27 says that the beast will make a covenant for seven years, but in the middle of this week (3 1/2 years into the tribulation), he will break the covenant, putting a stop to sacrifice. Revelation 13 explains that the beast will place an image of himself in the temple and require the world to worship him. Revelation 13:5 says that this will go on for 42 months, which is 3 1/2 years. Since Daniel 9:27 says that this will happen in the middle of the week, and Revelation 13:5 says that the beast will do this for a period of 42 months, it is easy to see that the total length of time is 84 months or seven years. Also see Daniel 7:25, where the "time, times, and half a time" (time=1 year; times=2 years; half a time=1/2 year; total of 3 1/2 years) also refers to "great tribulation," the last half of the seven-year tribulation period when the beast will be in power.

For further references about the tribulation, see Revelation 11:2-3, which speaks of 1260 days and 42 months, and Daniel 12:11-12, which speaks of 1290 days and 1335 days. These days have a reference to the midpoint of the tribulation. The additional days in Daniel 12 may include the time at the end for the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46) and time for the setting up of Christ's millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6).

We're going to take a look at some of the texts that seem to contribute to a doctrine of a tribulation, that there is this coming period on the earth, and figure out what is the purpose of this. Why is there such a period and why can't it just be happening now? Why can't it be a slow simmer over the last two thousand years? Why does it have to be a full-blown boil at the end of human history here? So **Jeremiah 30:5-7** is our first passage I want to take a quick look at. **READ.** Here is this theme of this day of the Lord that's coming. And we know that it has a historical fulfillment, but even when that's fulfilled it still looks forward to yet another fulfillment. There have been many days of the Lord throughout history. And this is a time when God visits in judgment. **Joel 1-3**, and I'm not going to read the whole thing. But what I see in looking back at Joel 2. What I see is this threat of judgment is coming. The day of the Lord is coming. It's going to be horrible. They paint this picture of darkness and gloom. And if you were to witness an ancient battlefield, this is what you'd see. You'd see flames and burning and wailing, and smoke going up into the air

and clouding everything. The moon turns like blood. The sun is darkened and blotted out by the destruction. The land is laid waste. This is the picture of the landscape after a great battle, a great invasion.

So Joel 1-3 paints this picture and threatens Israel, and says, "Even now, if you will repent, if you'll turn to Me and call on full-blown repentance repentance – I will withhold My judgment on you and I'll judge your enemies that are gathering on the hillside there. See those people up there, the armies that are ready to pounce. I will judge them instead if you'll repent. But if you don't, they're willing and eager."

So **Joel 2:1-3 - READ**, so he describes this – these images of this Army.

Joel 2:10: "The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord utters His voice before His army –" so it's not the army of Israel. This is a pagan, gentile army coming in to invade Israel. But God has summoned them. He's called them to do His work – "for his camp is exceedingly great; He who executes His word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?" And here's where he says, "'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.'"

So built into this day of the Lord theme is this call for repentance. The very mention of it, the prophesying of it, is itself an offer that says, "If you repent, if you return to Me with your whole heart, I will relent. I will change My mind." He's not really changing His mind because the offer is, "If you don't repent, this is going to happen. If you do, blessing will come." So it depends on you, repent or not. So, again, built into this is the idea of purging, of purifying, of drawing to repentance these people of Israel.

Look at **Daniel 7**. Alright, so we have the theme of the day of the Lord, which has many manifestations throughout the Old Testament, as well as into the New Testament even. But you also have this looking ahead of that, to an ultimate fulfillment of this day of the Lord. Day of the Lord with a capital D, that Day, the ultimate Day of the Lord that's coming. And I think you get glimpses of it in some of these texts, but when you get to Daniel, I think you're seeing much more clearer anticipation of a final expression of this Day of the Lord.

So **Daniel 7:23-25**, just so you see. He's interpreting this fourth beast, and we'll get into that in a little bit. **READ**.

So now, you're starting to get delimiters, sort of chronological indicators about how long is this particular awful enemy of God going to reign. How long is he going to wear out the saints? And so you have the time, times and half a time coming up.

Take a look at **9:24-27**. "And he shall make a strong covenant –" or firm up a covenant or confirm a covenant – "with many for one week, –" or one seven, a set of seven, and we're talking about years – "but in the middle of the week he shall put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering." So now, we have an equivalent time indicator, three and a-half years. Time, times and half a time, one year plus two years plus a half a year. "And on the wing of the abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." Your translations may have something different. It may punctuate it differently. Daniel 9:27 – actually 24-27, has been hotly debated from – well at least from the 3rd century on. So you have the Antichrist who will make a pact with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation period. But in the middle of the week, at 3.5 years, the Antichrist will break his covenant and desecrate the Temple by demanding worship of himself. Then at Christ's second coming, the Antichrist and his false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20).

Daniel 12:7. So Daniel is the first one to start giving time indicators, chronological indicators to this future, ultimate tribulation day-of-the-Lord period. **READ**. This is talking about how the Tribulation will come to an end after the second 3.5 year period is completed. This second half of the Tribulation is known as the Great Tribulation.

Of course, Daniel didn't understand, but we in the 21st century have this all figured out, thank goodness.

Matthew 24:21-28: "For then there will be great tribulation." I don't think this is yet a technical term as we use it. Capital G, capital T, the Great Tribulation. It's great tribulation. Serious, severe, but Christians are always going to have tribulation, always going to have persecution, we're always going to have hard times. But this is qualitatively different. "...such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be. Unless those days had been cut short, no life

would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There *He is*,' do not believe *him*. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, *or*, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

Take a look at 2 Thessalonians first. Paul actually ties certain themes together from Daniel as well as other passages. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. READ.**

So Paul is getting this imagery from Daniel, from other Christian eschatological expectations at the time, from Jewish eschatological expectations, some kind of an antichrist figure who's going to come, do miracles, deceive people. And it's happening at a certain period of time. This is part of the whole context, that time, that hour, that day is yet to come.

Revelation 7. Assuming you go with the vast majority of people who have dated Revelation in the 90s, including people from the 2nd century who would have actually known. In the 90s – even though this is after the destruction of the temple, et cetera and all of the events of AD 70 and a few years before and after, they still seem to be casting this yet future.

So **Revelation 7:13-14. READ.** And so this mention of this great tribulation. Further in you get until late 1st, 2nd century, this term starts to take on a more technical meaning. The great tribulation. It's the great – the coming tribulation as something yet future.

Then in **Revelation 11-13**, which we will not read all of now. We will be looking at this in a little bit. Take a look at this here though. 11:2: "Do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months." Do the math; 42 divided by 12 – 3 ½ years. "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days." 1,260 days divided by 360 is? Three and a-half years.

Jump down to **READ 12:6.**

Look at **READ Chapter 13:5.** And so you have these same time indicators as Daniel has tied to this coming tribulation period. Jesus mentions it, refers us back to Daniel. Revelation mentions it, talks about the beast doing false-prophet, false-messiah type things and uses similar time indicators casting this into something yet future. We'll get into that a little more.

So then the question is what – and the next question will answer it in just a second – what about the early Christian writers? Are they also seeing this period as yet future, this 42 months of 7 years? Or do they all look back and say, "Well, it happened in AD 70. Relax. We're just waiting for the resurrection of the dead now." It's an interesting question.

Slide 11:

The Coming Tribulation

Daniel 7:25; 9:27, 12:7, Revelation 11-13

3 ½ Years	3 ½ Years
Two Witnesses	Two Beasts
Temple restored	Temple desecrated
Israel flees	Israel in Wilderness
Saints protected	Saints martyred
Trumpets/Seals Begin	Bowls
7 Years	

So Daniel 7, 9, 12, Revelation 11-13, here's the picture that we start to see. The seven years, three and a-half years, two witnesses, temple restored, Israel flees, saints protected, trumpets. We're going to unpack this as we looked at Revelation. Then a second 3 ½ years, the reign of the beasts for the 42 months. Temple desecrated, Israel fled into the wilderness, martyrdom. This seven years divided by three and a half, with some horrible event that happens in the middle. That's the general picture I am seeing from Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John. But, primarily, Revelation 11-13, which places these events and the time indicators yet future from AD 95 on.

Slide 12:

Historical Perspective

- The Didache
- "Barnabus"
- Shepherd of Hermas
- Irenaeus of Lyons
- Hippolytus of Rome
- Lactantius

So my point here is my position, the way I'm reading the text, the way I'm understanding putting this together, it's not novel. It's not universal, but it's not novel, nor is it idiosyncratic nor is it a minority obscure position. So what do we see here in the texts, in the Old Testament texts, New Testament mentions Christian history here?

Slide 13:

Purpose of Tribulation

Purification/Conversion of Israel

- Jeremiah 30:7
- Daniel 9:24
- Romans 11:25-27

The purpose of the tribulation. You see this common theme that it is for the purification of Israel. In fact, the very threat of the day of the Lord. Without anything actually having happened yet, is for the purpose of calling Israel to repentance. It's one of the main purposes of the Day of the Lord. Jeremiah 30, Daniel 9 and, in fact, Romans 11, you can see this hint – if you read Romans 11. Oh let's – might as well. We read the other ones. We might as well read Romans 11. If you read Romans 11 in this view, this context, these eschatological expectations of the coming day of the Lord for the purification of Israel, the saving of the remnant, the saving of the elect, I think you may disagree, but I think I see this as informing his understanding here. **READ Rom 11:25-27.** But he is purifying Israel. They're going through the refining fire, which is the tribulation.

Slide 14:

Purpose of Tribulation

Judgment on the Nations

- Isaiah 26:21
- Joel 2-32 Thessalonians 2:12
- Revelation 6:12-17
- Revelation 11:18
- Revelation 15:1

This is another thing, a judgment on the nations. Isaiah 26:21, Joel 2-3 and then Joel 1-3 we see this threat of the judgment. The army's coming. They're about to do their royal damage. If you repent, I'll turn my wrath away from you and turn it on them. And that's the account we see. The wrath goes upon the nations and ushers in then a time of blessing for Israel. Revelation 6:12 through 17, the nations are crying out. The day of wrath has come upon the nations. Revelation 11:18, Revelation 15:1. I'm going to just skip over the Revelation because we're going to be going into Revelation shortly. So two things. Purification of Israel, judgment on the nations.

Slide 15:

Here's how I outline it. It's not a very good outline, it's not helpful, and you probably don't ever want to use it in teaching; I've tried. But, it does help me for this class. I take the introduction and vision of Christ as completely separate.

Slide 16:

I take Chapters 2 and 3, the seven messages to the seven churches as referencing the Church Age.

The heavenly stage does not fit in; 4 and 5, I don't regard that as portraying prophetic events. It's setting the stage for the revelation, the unveiling of prophetic events.

Slide 17:

Then the seven seals – 6 through 7 – I take this to not really be referring to the beginning, middle, or end of the Tribulation; but giving us a general picture of here's what the whole thing is going to look like. It's going to be characterized by these types of things – less really specific events. And I'm going to talk about that in a little bit. So the seven seals are not particular events, but general themes that you see happening in the Tribulation period.

Slide 18:

Then Chapters 8 through 11 primarily, I think, are relating to the first half of the Tribulation – the seven trumpets. The seventh trumpet, including the two witnesses. I don't, as you can see, take seals first, then following chronologically the trumpets, or they're necessarily contained in the other. I tend to view these series of sevens as distinct visions that comes to an end. Curtain closed, open it up, let's look at this from another angle.

Slide 19:

And then the heavenly drama, 12 through 13, I think it goes back. It recapitulates a little bit about the woman and the male child, etcetera. It moves us forward to almost the end of the Tribulation. So it's giving us a panorama of both parts of the Tribulation period.

Slide 20:

Then 14 to 15, 16 to 17, the prelude to wrath, as well as the bowls of wrath, primarily focusing on the last part of the Tribulation, a last ditch effort to get as many people to repent as possible. And then the pouring out of the bowls of wrath. I will show have to be referring to the very end of the Tribulation period. There are certain descriptions of things that we know don't develop until the midpoint – the Antichrist's kingdom, etcetera.

Slide 21:

Then mystery Babylon. This is Chapters 17, 18 – are interpretive passages where the interpreting angel comes along and says, "I'm going to explain some things here for you that you've seen in these visions. Here's what they are." And He does so by giving him another vision and leaving wondering, "What does this interpretation mean?" It's kind of ironic. Totally not characteristic of apocalyptic genre to give an interpretation that does not adequately, completely resolve the question of, "What does this mean?" But that's okay.

Slide 22:

And then we get the return of Christ, 19 through 20, focusing on the return of Christ, the resurrection of those who suffered tribulation, the reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

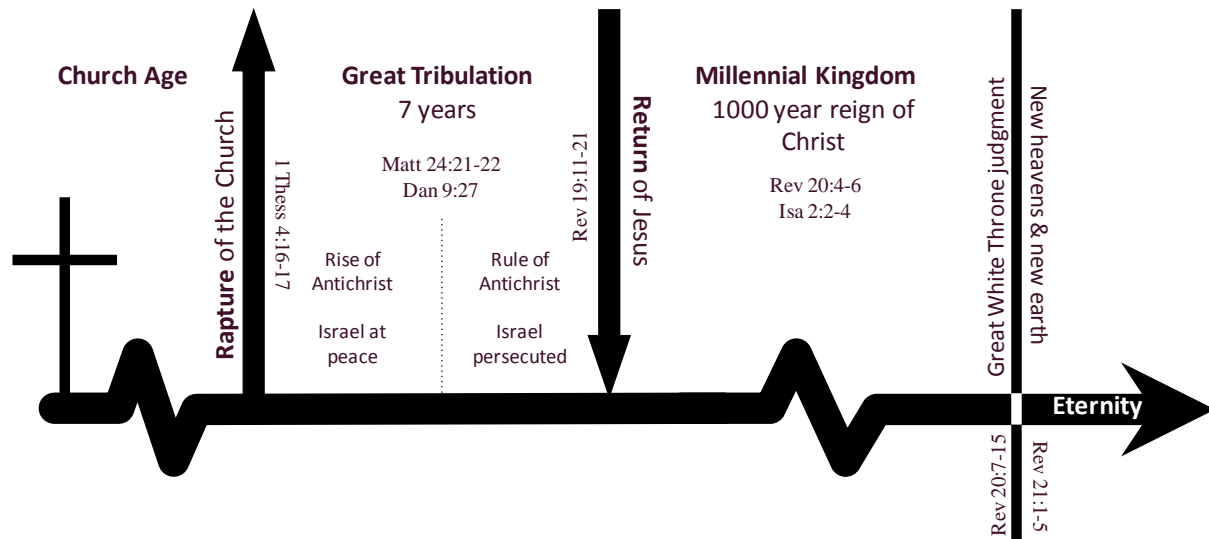
Slide 23:

And then 20 through 21 describes and unpacks the vision of the Kingdom Age, as well as eternity. And the restoration of creation, 21 through 22.

Slide 24:

Remember where we are...

The Futurist View



Slide 25:

Having come off the heavenly stage, setting the stage, the scroll and the Lamb; and you see in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne, this seven-sealed scroll.

Slide 26:

Now, it says the scroll was written on the inside and the outside, meaning he could read some things on the outside of the scroll. And I think it's reasonable and probably right that a sealed scroll would have – it was sealed until a certain day, a date, or some point you could open it up and read the contents. And outside was a description then of what was in that scroll. You didn't just have a bunch of sealed scrolls with no way to identify whose it was or what's in it. Otherwise, every time you needed to find a scroll, you'd have to open every single seal and check it and reseal it. So there was a general description of the contents on the outside. And that's how I take then the seven-sealed scroll, that there is these seven things that you see as the scroll seals are being opened.

I think rather, it's giving us a general description of the Tribulation as a whole. So in other words, as he's opening these seals – deception, war, famine, death, martyrdom, divine wrath, Christ's victory. If you want to summarize what is the final seven years of this world's history about, this is it. "Tell me, what's the Tribulation going to be like?" Well, there's going to be deception, there's going to war, famine, death, martyrdom, divine wrath, but ultimately Christ's victory.

Slide 27:

So, we see in Revelation, Chapter 6, **Read 6:1-2**. So you have this white horse coming out. I take this as deception and I'll show you why in a minute.

Slide 28:

He opens the second seal, a second horse comes out. "Come." Bright red, rider permitted to take peace from the earth. So warfare of some sort.

Slide 29:

And then the black horse, so black you can hardly see it, but it's famine. We have pestilence disease coming and pricing of various commodities.

Slide 30:

And then the pale horse, which is death. His name is Death, and Hades followed him. So you have these personifications and this vision of a rider, and another one coming behind him, death and Hades, are in ancient literature oftentimes personified. But here they come, and they are wreaking havoc on the earth. So I take deception, warfare, famine, and death.

Slide 31:

Matthew 24: When Jesus is asked about the time of the end, he gives several signs, several general descriptions of what those days will be like. And I think they match, again, if you allow this to not be necessarily setting up a chronology, the painting a general picture of what the Tribulation's going to be like. So deception, **READ Matthew 24:4-5, 11-13.**

Slide 32:

Then warfare, **24:6-7**

Slide 33:

And **Verse 7:** For famine, "Famine and earthquakes various places." Just brushes through it.

Slide 34:

Death. Also **Verse 7; 21-28** as well.

Slide 35:

So you have, I think, Jesus painting the same kind of picture we see. Now, in Christ's mini-apocalypse here, the Olivet Discourse, I think he's talking about there's going to be wars, there's going to be rumors of wars. Throughout history, there's going to be an intensification. But we get that clearly in Revelation that there's going to be an intensification of all of these things that Jesus says is going to characterize the days up until the end. So there is intentional correspondence; but this why I say there is already many antichrists, but an ultimate Antichrist; many little tribulations, suffering, martyrdoms. The ultimate expression of that is yet to come.

Slide 36:

Then you have the next seal. Go back to **Revelation, Chapter 6:9-11**. Martyrdom, we see this as well in Matthew 24:9, which we've read through a bit. People, you will suffer, you'll be arrested, you'll be put in jail, you're going to have to testify. Many of you are going to be killed. Not everybody, but many. So it's going to be characterized by martyrdom. And the impression I get from this vision is, there's a large number martyred and they're going to be added to. And they're groaning. They're calling on God for vengeance. That's one of the themes we see in the book of Revelation itself, that God is avenging himself on those who have destroyed his people and destroyed the earth and caused all kinds of wickedness.

Slide 37:

Next, **6:12-17**. So he is telling us that this is a period, this is the day of wrath, this is the Day of the Lord. In fact, if you look at Old Testament passages referring to the Day of the Lord, we see the same kind of imagery. The sun is darkened, the moon becomes blood, there's smoke billowing. This is what you see after a battle as the city is burning. There's earthquakes. People are fleeing, running for their lives.

Slide 38:

Then we have a little pause here. Alright, isn't that nice? I take this as now a little sub-vision, and they are filling in some details here for us. **READ 7:1**. So divine wrath is coming, it's coming. Watch out, you're doomed, hide. Hold on a second. It's not just wrath. That's why I think Chapter 7 is here. **READ 7:2-4 (mention 5-8)**. And then he goes through 12 tribes here.

Slide 39:

"A great multitude then from every nation." A remnant of Israel is sealed, 12,000 from each tribe. And then if you look up here, you got this redeemed from among the Gentiles. Notice how there's a distinction being made here. **READ 7:9-12 (So he's got a number for the 144,000, but the great multitude is innumerable.)**

So then, there's an inquiry here. This is pretty typical of apocalyptic-type literature. But there's an interpreting angel. **READ 7:13-17**. You know now how the whole story ends, you've read the book of Revelation. And so there's this anticipation of what's coming. These people have resurrection and glorification and eternal life in store for them. So this is specifically now talking about this

great multitude from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation redeemed during the first part of the Tribulation.

Slide 40:

Alright. So, we get to the seventh seal. The Lamb opened the seventh seal, **Chapter 8:1**. Could you imagine that? Total silence for a half an hour. Very uncomfortable, very awkward. Why? What's the point? I think it's communicating the solemnity, the gravity, the seriousness of the situation. We sit for a moment of silence, a minute of silence in a stadium; that's hard enough. Could you imagine; 30 minutes. It says about a half an hour.

Slide 41:

"Then I saw seven angels who stand before God and seven trumpets were given to them." So now we have the opening of the seventh seal, which begins this procession and a movement into details about divine wrath, et cetera, that's going to be poured out in the Tribulation. But before we proceed, let's review where we have been.

Slide 42:

The First Six Seals

Character of the Tribulation

- Deception
- Warfare
- Famine
- Death
- Martyrdom
- Divine Wrath

Redemption in the Tribulation

- Preservation of the 144,000 Israelites
- Salvation for the multitude of martyrs

So, the six seals, the character of the Tribulation – deception, warfare, famine, death, martyrdom, divine wrath. In the midst of all the bad, in the midst of the wrath, there is mercy, there's grace, there's still redemption going on. Preservation of 144,000 Israelites, the Hebrews. I take that – it doesn't make any sense to call out tribes and numbers and such, unless the intention is that these are Hebrews; or they constitute the Old Testament promised remnant. In fact, New Testament as well. Romans, Chapter 11, "Until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, and then all Israel will be saved – the remnant of Israel." Then the salvation for the multitude of martyrs – those who suffer death in martyrdom during the Tribulation. There's a promise for them, they will be saved.

Slide 43:

So you have the seven angels with the seven trumpets after the half hour. They come in, they line up, they get their trumpet. And they're blowing these blasts, these pronouncements – that's what this kind of trumpet is – and we see all kinds of horrible things.

Slide 44:

Trumpets vs. Bowls

Trumpets: 1st half of Tribulation	Bowls: 2nd half of Tribulation
EARTH: 1/3 trees/grass	EARTH: sores on people
SEA: 1/3 ships and sea life	SEA: ALL sea life
RIVERS: 1/3 poisoned	RIVERS: ALL become blood
SUN/MOON: 1/3 darkened	SUN: burns people
PEOPLE: 5-month torment	KINGDOM: darkness
PEOPLE: 1/3 killed	EUPHRATES: Armageddon
JUDGMENT: Christ reigns	AIR: It is finished!

But you can take a look at what these judgments are like. The trumpet judgments, the earth – targeting the earth, a third of the trees and grass are burned up. Just take a look really quickly. **READ 8:6-7**. I take this as something that John actually sees – blow trumpet, hail, fire mixed with blood. I think he's seeing this symbol thrown down. But what does it symbolize? The symbol is hail and fire mixed with blood. It symbolizes some kind of divine judgment. We see hail falling on

people. Blood coming out, I don't know. I think it means death is coming. Death from heaven; wonderful.

"Then the sun and the moon darkened." Again, this is an image of warfare, battle, conflict. In the Old Testament at least, when it's talking about the sun and moon darkened, it's what we see after a battle has taken place.

"Then five months of torment." (9:5) We see targeting people. "A third of the people are killed." Judgment ultimately ends the trumpets pronouncing judgment that Christ is taking his throne and beginning to reign. So it's interesting all of these trumpets and bowls and such flash-forward to Christ ultimately taking his throne. So I think all of them, the point is, these are not pointless judgments. They aren't accomplishing nothing. They are, in a real sense, the process of Christ's coming again.

Slide 45:

So we see here, the first half of the Tribulation, things getting worse and worse and worse and worse. Then when we get to the bowl judgments later, we're going to see many of the same things are targeted, but it's total destruction. So that's Chapter 9, the seven trumpets. So today, we have all kinds of bad things. We have fires that burn trees and the earth and poison that poisons rivers and such. But we have a constant up and down in our current Age. During the trumpets, there will be an increasingly severe series of judgments. But when we get toward the end, we have a sudden destruction of the bowl judgments before the end.

Chapter 10. **Read 10:1-11.** What's this? Where do we have someone eating a scroll elsewhere in the Bible? Where? Who's eating a scroll in the Bible? Is it Isaiah? Got himself a little scroll. Or, is it someone else? Anybody eating a scroll in the Bible? Thank you. Isaiah does, you know, he does all kinds of strange things as well, but this beats them all. So Ezekiel ate a scroll too. What's the image there? What's the point? And this is what a prophet does. God is placing in them, internalizing in them his word. And then when they speak, they're speaking out prophetically. And that's why he then says, he recommissions them, John. He says, "I was told you must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

Slide 46:

So then he is given a measuring rod like a staff. **READ 11:1-2.** Keep this in mind now. So it's given to the Gentiles, the nations. There's a temple. Well, wait a second. If, as most people throughout church history have admitted, Revelation was written in the '90s, there is no temple on earth. Well, maybe this is a heavenly temple. Explain how Gentiles are going to be trampling the outer courts of the heavenly temple. That's weird. So you got Jerusalem here. This is going to be Jerusalem. You've got the temple here, you've got the outer courts, and they're going to be trampling on it for 42 months, which is 3.5 years. Keep this in mind. We're going to see these time indicators coming periodically.

READ 11:3 So now we have an option. Is this going to be 1,260 days equals the same time-period of 42 months? It's three-and-a-half years at the same time? Or, is it a different time? Those are your two options. So you have 1,260 days. All we know is that these two witnesses are going to be prophesying for 1,260 days. And then he identifies these with this symbolic imagery here. **READ 11:4.** Alright. This is where you have to go backwards to Zechariah. **Zechariah, Chapter 4:1-14;** Then he moves on to a new vision.

So who are these two anointed ones? Some would say these are Zerubbabel and Joshua at the time. We aren't positive. Revelation though, comes and picks them up and calls them two prophets. And why in the world is Revelation 11 referring us back to Zechariah 4? What other things in this text do you see that are somewhat similar? What's going on in the context of Zechariah? What's the big idea? What's the whole point of Zechariah? Encouraging them to complete the building of the temple. Remember Zerubbabel laid the foundation? He's going to lay the capstone, he's going to finish it. This says it's, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." There's going to be all kinds of opposition, but I'm going to overcome all of that. Notice Revelation 11. Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff. I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship there." Zechariah 4 – plumb line, measuring, sizing it up, finishing the job. Then he says at this time, 1,260 days, they are prophesying. They are the two olive trees, the two lamp stands. They're making a connection. We're supposed to import now.

What's going on in Zechariah? They were building a temple back then. "And if anyone would harm them," these two witnesses or these two preachers, prophets, "if anyone would try to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes." What does this symbolize? I think it symbolizes that they have the ability like Moses, and Elijah, and Elisha, and others to call down judgments by speaking judgments forth. "If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky so that no rain may fall during the days they are prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they desire."

Slide 47:

Now something bad happens. It says:

Rev 11:7-10

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified....

This is at the end of their testimony. So we're given a little bit of a indication here that at the end of this 1,260 days of prophesying bad things are going to happen. At the end of that the beast who's rising up out of the abyss is going to kill them. Alright, pay attention. "And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city." Circle that. That symbolically, spiritually, mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, so this great city in which their bodies are going to lie is Sodom and Egypt, "where their Lord was crucified." What city is this? It's the great city. It's Sodom. It's Egypt. It's Jerusalem. "For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze" – remember, they've encamped around the holy city – "will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb." That's not good. "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents because these two prophets had been a torment to them.

Slide 48:

READ 11:11-14. So now we have a little bit of a help in placing the ministry of these two witnesses. This would place the witnesses' ministry at the first three and a half years, 1,260 days, the beast, we are told in a minute, rises up out of the sea and rules for 42 months, at the end of which the bowls of wrath are poured out on his kingdom. Ah, okay. So basically he fulfills his campaign promise. The first thing he does is gets rid of these beasts or of these two witnesses. Lets them lie in the street. Yay! I'm in power. Everything's great. Let's celebrate. The times of the – whoever this guy is have come and, oh, happy day. Then here they are rising up into heaven and everybody's scared to death. They don't know what to make of it.

Slide 49:

READ 11:15. So we're back in heaven, trumpet, out of the details. We're seeing worship, et cetera, in heaven because of what God is doing.

Slide 50:

Now 12 and 13, I'm calling this the heavenly drama. I also see it as a – the center of the book of Revelation not just – really kind of the center of it, but you see a lot of themes. It becomes the crux of the whole book that holds it together, and so you first see this, something like this.

Slide 51 & 52:

READ 12:1-6. So now we have another time indicator. She flees into the wilderness to a place and once there she's going to be protected for 1,260 days.

READ 12:7-8. This is the invisible heavenly realm. Is it shocking that there are demons and Satan in heaven – in the heavens? No. This is just the in between place to which we have no access really, the heavenly spirit realm, the prince of the power of the air, thrones, powers, principalities, rulers in heavenly places. This is what we're talking about. Now we're seeing it in the form of a symbolic vision.

Slide 53:

So just go back just to Ephesians, Chapter 6, your favorite armor of God passage. It's not the only armor of God passage, but it's a famous one.

Eph 6:10-12.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

So now in Revelation 12 we're seeing a vision of a cosmic battle taking place in this heavenly realm, and where are Satan and his demons thrown? You think things are bad now when it comes to spiritual warfare.

Slide 54:

"The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old" – hmm, ancient serpent, the serpent of old; hmm, what could he be referring to here? Genesis, ancient serpent, serpent of old – "who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him."

READ 12:8-12 Satan doesn't know when – he's not reading the billboards. Well, he is and he's laughing. He probably put the billboard up, but he's not interested in that, but he knows that the moment he's cast down the clock is ticking. Now it's a strategy to do as much damage to the souls of men and women as possible. I'm going to take as many down with me as possible.

READ 12:13-14. I don't think this is a subsequent after the 1,260 days and now there's another 42 months. I think what we're doing is we are stepping back, telling a little bit of the back story, what's going on and then it's referring to the same period of time. He's just revisiting this. It's kind of like, "Previously on vision of Revelation 12." So he's telling them what's going to happen, steps back, gives another detail. And then picks up the action where he left off. So where is this woman? She is now being pursued. The serpent is trying to kill her. Pours water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood.

Slide 55:

Go to Jeremiah 46. **READ 46:7-8, 47:2-4a.** So what is this flood that the devil is sending for the woman? I think it's a typical image of some sort of invasion, a flood of an army coming in trying to destroy this woman. So, yes, this is what I think he's seeing, but I think we're supposed to make the connection with the symbolism and what's going on. Some kind of a military invasion is taking place trying to destroy this woman. But there's a miraculous delivery.

Slide 56:

READ 12:15-17. So he's trying to pursue this woman, this dragon cast down to the earth. He has seven heads and ten horns. Seven heads and ten horns – I'm kind of getting ahead of myself here, but if you look at Daniel and you look at the nations that are in opposition to God's people, God's nation, the seven – the four beasts and you add up the heads – we're going to do this in a second – you add up the heads of this – these four nations. You have seven heads and ten horns total, so I think what this is representing is Satan working through these Gentile powers, these people who are opposing God's people, and trying to destroy Israel, which is symbolized by the woman. She is fleeing. There is a pursuit. There's something going on. This takes time. This doesn't happen in 30 seconds. A military invasion doesn't take minutes or days. It takes a long time. There's an invasion. There's some kind of miraculous delivery. She's fleeing and then she gets to a place where she's protected for 1,260 days.

Slide 57:

The dragon is very, very, very mad because his attempt to destroy this woman has been foiled, so what does he do? He stands on the sand of the sea.

READ 13:1. So the beast is not the dragon. The dragon is inspiring the beast or probably giving the beast his authority, and the beast looks like the dragon though. Same number of heads; same number of horns. It's like father, like son. That's the imagery. He is the image of the dragon in a

certain sense and many have seen here in the beast – a dragon, the beast and the false prophet – a – what they call a caricature or a lampooning of the trinity, the unholy trinity some have called it. So blasphemous names were on his heads.

READ 13:2-5. So now you have some wrangling going here after the dragon is thrown down, take some time of an invasion trying to destroy Israel. Israel flees. So we've got brief description of what's going on in that first part, and the dragon is now working apparently through the kingdoms of the world surrounding Israel, but at some point here in the midpoint of this tribulation, the beast takes power. Satan decides to concentrate all power in this one figure, so the beast rises up and rules then for 42 months. We've learned earlier in Chapter 11 that his first order of business is to kill these two witnesses that had been, so now, hmm. Now maybe the two witnesses were part of those who were instrumental in preventing the dragon from destroying Israel, right? That's where they're centering their ministry. They're holding back the judgment. Dragon very mad; inspires the beast. Beast kills witnesses; begins to reign for his 42 months, which then is the second half of the tribulation, which probably then corresponds **to Chapter 11: 2**. And that's proleptically looking forward to these 42 months when the beast is reigning.

READ 13:6-7a Go back to **12:17**, the rest of her offspring who are not the male child. That was the one offspring. Now the rest of her offspring who is "those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

So he's now given power to make war on the saints and to conquer them. **READ 13:7b-18.**

Slide 58:

Alright, weird, weird, weird. Daniel 2:7 compared with Revelation 13. So interestingly, we have Daniel 2 with his head of gold vision, chest and arms of silver, and this skirt of bronze. And the legs of steel, of iron, and the feet with ten toes are iron mixed with clay and somewhat fragile. In this vision this rock comes up and smacks him right in the feet of iron mixed with clay and the whole thing crumbles.

Slide 59:

Then a little later, in Daniel Chapter 7, you have a lion with wings, represents Babylon. That's what the head represented as well. The bear with some ribs in his mouth leaning on one side, that is – matches the chest and arms of silver, and we know following Babylon was Medo-Persian Empire. Then you have the leopard with four heads. You can't see all the heads there, but they have four heads and some wings. This represents Alexander the Great and his kingdom that is split up into four kingdoms under his four generals after he dies. And then you have this crazy-looking monster that he doesn't even identify that has ten horns, and we – well, there, ten horns, and he represents Rome.

Slide 60:

So then what you see in Revelation 13, this beast that comes up out of the sea is – has features of all of these beasts smushed together. You have the bear. He looks like a lion and a bear and a leopard and indescribable monster. He has seven heads and ten horns. So what's the message? What's going on here? What is he trying to tell us? This is the historical culmination of all of these human kingdoms opposed to God and his people. If you thought these were bad, this is going to be everything put together and worse, and he's not alone. He's going to have Satan directly empowering him and giving him all his authority and power, and he's going to have this false prophet doing signs and wonders, an image that's going to deceive people. It's going to be horrible. In fact, if you read Daniel 7, he even says in Daniel 7 that these will each have a kingdom, and it says their kingdom will be prolonged for a short time, so it's possible that even in the vision of Daniel they're anticipating a revival of these kingdoms, which would mean if the Antichrist comes and somehow is able to harness the political, financial, economic, et cetera, power of the whole world, it would be quite an appropriate image for describing that.

Slide 61:

Moving forward, this is going to go rather quickly, prelude to wrath and then the bowls of wrath. What we see in Chapter 14 is a setting the stage, getting ready, reminding us where we're at,

reviewing some things, 144,000 are gathered and preserved. They make a cameo appearance again. And we're going to talk about then Babylon and such, be able to finish up tonight with that.

So moving through Chapter 13, Chapter 14. **READ 14:1.** I think what we're seeing here is an answer to the Old Testament expectation that God is going to gather his people, his remnant, and restore them to the land. He's sealed them for protection throughout the tribulation, and we see – we're getting here toward the end and we're seeing that they are now gathered where? Mount Zion. They've returned. I think this is the group of people that's reconstituting Israel.

Slide 62:

This is the answer to Paul's "all Israel will be saved." Look at that. I don't think it's coincidental.

Romans 11:25-27.

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Slide 63:

So he sees 144,000 standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. **READ 14:2-5.** So I think this is a gathering from among the nations. He's bringing his people back and restoring them.

Slide 64:

Prelude to Wrath

- 144,000 Gathered and Preserved (14:1-5)
- Final Warnings Issued to Mankind (14:6-13)
- Judgment Executed on Wicked (14:14-20)

Then you have final warnings issued to mankind. 14:6-13, the angel is going through and they're making all these various warnings, repent, do all of these things. We're not going to get into all of that.

But **14:14-20**, John is seeing this huge flow of blood representing that this going to be a bloody battle, a bloody judgment, and blood means death. And some want to take it literally so that, first of all, they have to have horses, so there's going to be a nuclear blast in the atmosphere. It's going to knock out all the electricity and none of the vehicles and tanks are going to work, so they're going to get on their horses and they're going to start riding to battle or maybe John is seeing a symbolic vision of a bloody battle. But why is the blood flowing. That's a lot of blood. You know how many people you have to squeeze to get that much blood? Seriously. Well, no, it's actually just a couple of inches of blood on the ground and the horses are going to be stomping on it and it's going to splash up. No, this is a vision. Battle = bloody. A bloody battle; lot of people are going to die. That's what this is foreseeing.

Slide 65:

This is actually referring back to Joel 3, day of the Lord imagery. God is judging these people through this battle. **READ Joel 3:11-16.** You just saw that earlier in 14. He's gathered and he's protecting his people.

Slide 66:

So here's Israel.

Slide 67:

This is how far the blood will be flowing, up to the horses' bridles if we take this literally. You could give me an inch of blood and it's – and that's just way too much, alright? This is a symbolic vision, but it's pointing to something real. It's pointing to what Joel 3 is pointing to, the day of the Lord and the final battle.

Slide 68:

Now we're getting to the first imagery a little bit here of what we call Armageddon. This is it. I put these pictures together to make kind of a panorama. This is the Valley of Jehoshaphat. This is the Valley of Megiddo. Actually it's on the hill of Megiddo, Har Megiddo, looking over the valley, and here's kind of a panorama starting from left to right. That's a pretty big battlefield, and I really think that something very bad is going to happen here. I'm not going to start drawing battle plans and proposing that armies are going to come from here and there. I don't know. But, yeah, it's a great place to have a battle, and if Israel and Jerusalem and this region is the center of the conflict and the judgments and all that's going on, then it makes perfect sense. I mean actually there's no other way you can come in if this is a ground attack, a ground assault, into Israel except through this route. This is why so many battles have been fought here all the way up to the modern period. If you look at the terrain, this is it. This is the corridor to get in.

Slide 69:

So we get to then Chapter 15, the seven angels with the seven plagues, the seven bowls. Couple of things I want to point out here. 15, they're getting ready; 16, they're actually pouring them out.

READ 16:1**Slide 70:**

READ 16:2-5. God is just in bringing the judgments. Oh, how can he do such horrible, horrible things? Why?

READ 16:6-7. The altar is saying – wait a second. Wait. Oh, wait. The fifth seal, the souls under the altar. "When are you going to avenge our deaths?" Just wait. It's coming.

READ 16:8-11. This is why I say these bowls have to be concentrated toward the end.

Remember, the beast doesn't even rise until the middle point of the tribulation. You got 42 months of the reign. People gnawing their tongues? Yuck. Because they didn't repent of their deeds.

READ 16:12-13 So, again, you have the beast and false prophet and the dragon all working together here throughout all these visions.

READ 16:14-17. So I think John is seeing all of these things happening and what are they – what's the picture? Horrible, horrible judgment.

Slide 71:

Alright, now we get into a wonderful little passage, 17 and 18, where they are allegedly interpreting all of these symbols for us. We'll see about that. **READ 17:1-5a.** Alright, two ways of translating this. It could be a name of mystery, "...name is Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and the abomination of the earth." Or some translations have that "mystery" is the part of the name, "mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and the abomination of the earth." So, it's either, "Here is a mystery. She is named Babylon," or it's, "The name is a mystery," the name itself is mystery Babylon. In the end, I don't know that it matters. In the end, I think the idea is something going on here than just simply Babylon, something that you need to think about and try to figure out.

Slide 72:

So, who is this? Who is this Babylon the great?

1. Well, she sits on many waters, 17:1. What does that mean? What are the waters? The waters, Verse 15, that you saw where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes of nations and languages. So, it's not literal waters here. When the angel interprets things for us, I take it as axiomatic, that this is now an interpretation and not another symbol, or he's not trying to obfuscate things, confuse us. Hey, watch this, I'm going to interpret everything with more symbols. Now, we are going to see, we are going to get to the end of this and not exactly know what he's talking about, but we have a better picture.
2. Guilty of immorality with kings and nations. What does immorality mean most of the time in the Bible, besides sexual immorality? Idolatry, betraying God, his people betraying God.
3. Rides on the beast, seven heads and ten horns with blasphemous names on its head, refers back to the Antichrist and his kingdom.
4. Adorned in purple and scarlet, golden pearls

5. Name is a mystery.
6. Made desolate, naked and burned by her lovers, yuck.
7. **READ 17:16-18.** So, look at this, go back, **17:6-11.** Can I have a second interpreter, please? Can we have interpreting angel No. 2 to come and... **17:12-14.**

Slide 73:

So, what are the seven hills? This is the seven hills on which the woman sits. The woman is the great city who rules over the kings of the earth, at least here in the end times, in the tribulation period. So, some have said it's Babylon, because it says, "She has a name on her head that says 'Babylon,'" right? "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." So, therefore, let's take it literally. But, wait, the angel hasn't come to the interpretation of the mystery yet. In fact, because it's called a mystery to – in my understanding of mystery, Babylon, literal, actual Babylon in Iraq is the only possibility that it's not, because it's mystery Babylon. The name is mystery. No. It can't be Babylon, and besides, the seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.

So, I want you to ignore this, because this is where they're digging. These are digs and such, excavations. But, look at this. Ah, look at that mountainous region. Look at all the hills of Babylon. I'm going to pan over so you can see the – Saddam Hussein's reconstructed Babylon, the tourist trap he was trying to build. Hilly? There are no hills! This is the **plains of Shinar**, where Babel was built, the plains. It's flat, flat as a pancake. There's no mountains, no hills, nothing. I know people who insists this is literal Babylon. This is Babylon. It's going to be rebuilt. It's going to rule over the kings of the earth. It's a tourist trap. It's like saying Disneyland is going to rule the world. Well, kind of certain sense, they do, but anyway, the seven hills are a symbol for the seven kings. Seven hills are seven – the seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. No hills, unless they're manmade hills or excavations or tells. Those are not hills.

Slide 77:

Rome, this has been a very, very common interpretation, Rome, because Rome is a city on seven hills, what it's called.

Slide 78:

HILLS OF ROME

1. Quirinal
2. Viminal
3. Esquiline
4. Caelian
5. Aventine
6. Palatine
7. Capitoline

Here are the Seven hills. So, seven hills, this is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth. In John's day, that was the city that was ruling over the kings of the earth, right? Makes perfect sense. In fact, when Constantine founds Constantinople, even though it didn't really have seven hills, he called it the city on seven hills. It became synonymous with that city that is supposed to have ruled over the kings of the earth, and a lot of ancient cities they say it was built on seven hills. It was the number of perfection, but Rome actually was, and so the – many people in church history have said, "Well, this is Rome." The Roman Empire falls. Well, guess what? Who's the prostitute who is centered in Rome? The Roman Catholic Church, gold and wine and apparel and riches, and all the kings of the earth commit fornication with her, idolatry. It's the false religion of Roman Catholicism, they say.

Slide 79:

So, one itty, bitty little problem with that. That's the Vatican! It's across the river on a completely different hill called the Vaticanus. That's a problem, slightly. So, they want to be very literal about the seven hills on which the woman sits even though the woman sits west – northwest of the seven hills. She doesn't actually sit there, so they want to be literal sometimes and figurative other times.

Here's, actually, this is the Circus of Gaius and Nero, not... that's not that kind of circus. It's a stadium, an arena where they killed Christians. We have no good evidence that any Christians were martyred in the Coliseum. That notion came way after the Coliseum was even functioning as an arena, very late and unsubstantiated, probably absolutely false. How many of you are disappointed? Christians died here. This is where Peter was martyred, Ignatius and many of the early Christians. This was the Circus of Nero. Here is what it looked like at the time.

Slide 80:

If you were to stand there today – if you were to stand there at the time and then suddenly get cast forward 2,000 years or less, this is what you'd see. So, the Vatican, the – St. Peter's cathedral here, is built right at the top of that location. Why? Because they're building it on the shrine where Peter himself was buried, and he probably is there, because they put the bodies in the hill right next to the stadium after they killed them, so that's why it's there. So, sorry, the Vatican is not in Rome or on the seven hills. It's on its own hill.

Slide 81:

Identifying Marks of the Beast

Seven Hills (17:9):

Jerusalem? Northeast Mt, Temple Mt, Ophel Mt, Fort Antonia Mt, Northern Mt, Northwestern Mt, Western Mt

Jerusalem and it – this is strange, but Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurcanus from the first to second century, maybe a little later, this came up, but he's interpreting rabbinically what the fish is showing Jonah when he's down for three days under the water.

Slide 82:

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurcanus: "So, the fish showed him what was beneath the temple of God. As it is said, he went down to the bottom of the *mountains*. Hence, we may learn that *Jerusalem stands upon seven hills.*"

So, the fish showed him – him, Jonah – what was beneath the temple of God. As it is said, "I went down to the bottom of the mountains. Hence, we may learn that Jerusalem stands upon seven hills."

Slide 83:

Hills of Old Jerusalem

1. Northeast Hill
2. Old Mount Zion
3. Ophel Mount
4. Fort Antonia Mount ("Baris")
5. Northern Hill
6. Northwestern Hill
7. Western Hill (New Mount Zion)

So it's very hard to see this nowadays, because so many things have been built and destroyed and built and destroyed, but you have, in the boundaries of the day, northeast hill, old Mount Zion and then mount – the Ophel mount upon which the palace was built. Those things all look like one big ridge right now, but they were more distinct back in the first century. Fort Antonia mount, barely discernible today. The rest of these you can still see them sort of – northern hill, northwestern hill. Some of them have names; some of them don't

Slide 84:

SEVEN HILLS (17:9):

- ROME? Palatine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Caelian, Aventine
- JERUSALEM? Northeast Mt, Temple Mt, Ophel Mt, Fort Antonia Mt, Northern Mt, Northwestern Mt, Western Mt

SEVEN KINGS: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Antichristendom

EIGHTH KING: The Beast, Antichrist Resurrected

TEN HORNS: Antichrist's Allies

Seven kings – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, anti-Christendom. So, five have fallen – one, two, three, four, five. One is Rome. The other has not yet come. When it comes, it will remain a while. The eighth king, then, would be the beast. So he's one of the seven. He's slain in battle, rises again, and there is a regime change policy sort of thing taking place. He's of the seven, but he's also the eighth. I think it's the same figure. Now, before he's friendly and good, sort of. Now, he's absolutely horrible and evil. Something happens at the midpoint. And the ten horns are Antichrist's allies. It fits in my understanding of the centrality of Jerusalem, setting himself in the temple, claiming to be God. I mean, everything is centered on Jerusalem, but his capital is in Babylon. His capital is in New York or in Rome, or maybe it's Jerusalem is the city on seven hills. We don't know for sure, thus it is a mystery.

Slide 85:

God next led John to reveal the destruction of the commercial and economic system that Babylon also symbolizes to inform his readers of its end in the future. "Wall Street" identifies a particular geographical location in New York City, but it also represents an economic and commercial system that has its center there. Likewise "Babylon" has throughout history represented a particular economic and commercial system that originated in the geographical city of Babylon as well as a particular religious system.

Many commentators believe chapters 17 and 18 describe the same thing, namely, the destruction of Babylon. What Babylon symbolizes in this chapter is somewhat different from what it symbolizes in chapter 17. Nevertheless, the literal city is also in view in both chapters since it is the historical and philosophical headwaters for both systems.

I expect that the literal city may be rebuilt and may suffer destruction at the end of the Tribulation. However, I also believe that what is in view here is more than just the literal city. It is also what the city has stood for and promoted throughout history, namely, a satanic system marked by every form of idolatrous humanism. It seems that the Babylon John described in this chapter is the commercial system of buying and selling goods to make a profit. As religious Babylon includes all forms of religion (non-Christian as well as Christian religions), so economic Babylon includes all types of economies (capitalism, socialism, communism, etc.). This economic system will have its headquarters (at least ideologically) in Babylon on the Euphrates River during the Tribulation, and it will burn up.

Slide 86:

John wrote the record of his vision of events surrounding the Lord Jesus' second coming to share the future vindication of Jesus Christ with his readers. The chapter has two parts: the rejoicing triggered by Babylon's fall (vv. 1-10), and the events surrounding the Lamb's return to the earth (vv. 11-21).

The second coming of Jesus Christ is the hope of believers that God is in control of all things, and is faithful to the promises and prophecies in His Word. In His first coming, Jesus Christ came to earth as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, just as prophesied. Jesus fulfilled many of the prophecies of the Messiah during His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. However, there are some prophecies regarding the Messiah that Jesus has not yet fulfilled. The second coming of Christ will be the return of Christ to fulfill these remaining prophecies. In His first coming, Jesus was the suffering Servant. In His second coming, Jesus will be the conquering King. In His first coming, Jesus arrived in the most humble of circumstances. In His second coming, Jesus will arrive with the armies of heaven at His side.

The Old Testament prophets did not make clearly this distinction between the two comings. This can be seen in Isaiah 7:14 9:6-7 and Zechariah 14:4. As a result of the prophecies seeming to

speaking of two individuals, many Jewish scholars believed there would be both a suffering Messiah and a conquering Messiah. What they failed to understand is that there is only one Messiah and He would fulfill both roles. Jesus fulfilled the role of the suffering servant (Isaiah chapter 53) in His first coming. Jesus will fulfill the role of Israel's deliverer and King in His second coming. Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7, describing the second coming, look back to Jesus being pierced. Israel, and the whole world, will mourn for not having accepted the Messiah the first time He came.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the angels declared to the apostles, "'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:11). Zechariah 14:4 identifies the location of the second coming as the Mount of Olives. Matthew 24:30 declares, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." Titus 2:13 describes the second coming as a "glorious appearing."

The second coming is spoken of in greatest detail in Revelation 19:11-16.