

Telos: Getting a Birdseye View of Revelation - I

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Introduction

Getting the “big picture” of what might be happening during the end times helps many people better understand *Revelation*. God has revealed so much about end times to us in the Bible, that we are easily overwhelmed by all the information. Trying to sort it all out feels like putting together a 10,000 piece puzzle without the box lid! Our goal today is to start to put that puzzle together to find the big picture by beginning with some of the “edge pieces” found in scripture.

Round One; The 70th Week - the Big Picture (10 minutes)

Many students of end times believe **Daniel 9:27** describes the last seven (7) years of time. A common understanding of these last seven (7) years, when considering many other Bible verses, suggests the following sequence of events.

(A) A leader, who later turns out to be the Antichrist, brokers a peace treaty between Israel and her enemies. Israel feels safe, (**1 Thessalonians 5:1-3**) so she rebuilds her temple in Jerusalem and resumes sacrificial worship.

(B) About three and a half (3 ^{1/2}) years later, Antichrist breaks the treaty, invades Israel (**Daniel 9:27**), and makes Jerusalem his capital. Israel and the world discovers the “peacemaker” is really the Antichrist, when he chooses to live in the rebuilt temple, claiming he is the Messiah, God incarnate (**2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4**). He orders everyone to worship him as God.

(C) Now claiming to be God, the Antichrist is an “abomination” to all true believers. Rejecting his claims of divinity, faithful Christians and Jews refuse to worship him, although many others are deceived. (**2 Thessalonians 2:3-12**)

(D) Angered by his rejection, Antichrist begins a campaign of persecution and martyrdom of Christians and godly Jews. (**Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-17**) This intense persecution is called “the Great Tribulation”. (*NOTE: the last seven (7) years is NOT the Great Tribulation, it only contains the Great Tribulation.*)

(E) Supernatural wonders, such as darkening of the sun, a blood-red moon, falling stars, and catastrophic earthquakes are the sign that Jesus is coming when they announce the Lord’s return. (**Revelation 6:12-17**)

(F) The Great Tribulation ends when Christ returns to the earth, with all his angels (**Matthew 24:31**), to rescue His suffering Church (**1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9; Romans 5:9**). The rapture of Christians ends their Great Tribulation and is preceded by the resurrection of the righteous dead (**1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**).

(G) With the Church now delivered, God’s wrath brings judgement to the world, similar to His judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Revelation 8-11**) and to His plagues of Egypt (**Exodus 7-12**).

(H) During this time of divine wrath, a godly, but as yet, non-christian, remnant of Israel makes its escape to the desert and remains in hiding from Antichrist and his allies (**Zechariah 14**).

(I) In desperate straights, the remnant of Israel begins a time of intense prayer and scripture search. In time, they realize they’ve rejected Christ; they repent from their unbelief (**Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 10:20-23**). Three (3) days later, Jesus appears to

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them, they embrace Him, and all Israel is save (**Hosea 5:15-6:3; Romans 11:25-27**).

(J) Israel's salvation paves the way for the final showdown between the Lord and Antichrist. The wrath ends with a massive battle at Armageddon and Antichrist looses (**Revelation 16:12-16**). Antichrist, the false prophet, and Satan are banished to Hades. (**Revelation 16:16-21**)

(K) Christ begins His earthly reign with the redeemed remnant of Israel and the resurrected-raptured Church. (**Zechariah 14:9; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 19:5-9; 20:6**)

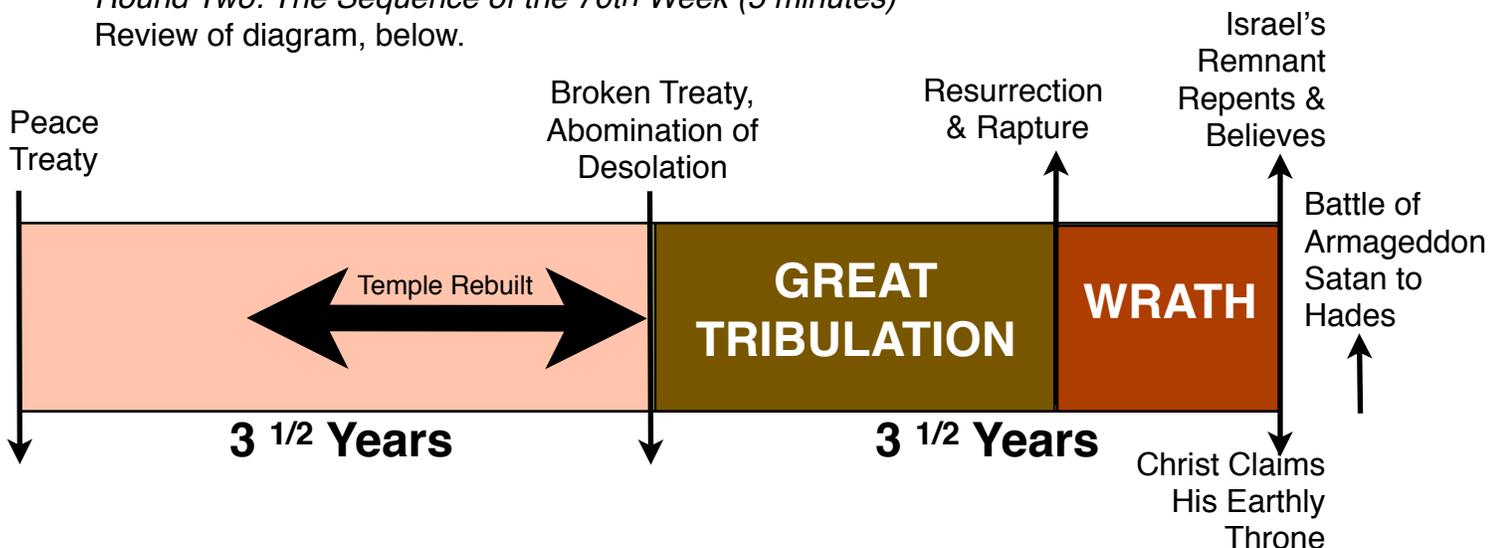
Group Discovery One: (20 minutes)

Read **Matthew 24:3-31** (verses supplied in handout). As a group, consider the discussion questions, below.

1. Read “**E**”, above. Which verse(s) in **Matthew 24:3-31**, describes the heavenly signs that will *immediately precede* Christ returns for His Church (“His elect”)?
2. Read “**C**” and “**D**”, above. Compare this verse to **Revelation 6:9-11**. Do you see the similarities? What more have you learned about this event?
3. From your reading of **Matthew 24:29-31**, do you think the “Great Tribulation” occurs *before* or *after* Christ’s return? Why?
4. What other reasons do you have for thinking Christians will, or will not, have to endure the Great Tribulation? Explain?
5. Read **Revelation 7:9-16**. Who do you think is being described in these passages? How did they get there?
6. Compare **Matthew 24:15** to **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**. Do you think these two verses are describing the same event? If so, why? In not, why not?

Round Two: The Sequence of the 70th Week (5 minutes)

Review of diagram, below.



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Group Discover Two: (10 minutes)

Paragraphs “A” through “K”, above, list some of the important events in the order in which scriptures seems to suggest they will take place. Using them as a guide, place the following hypothetical news tweets in the chronological order in which they might take place by numbering them “1” through “6”.

_____ **Extra! Extra! Great World Leader’s Army Conquers Israel! Jerusalem Falls After Extensive Bombardment. Rebel Jews Flee to Desert!**

_____ **Breaking News! Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood Falls on Earth. One-third of Earth, Trees, and Grass Burned Up! Great Leader Blames Jews for Disaster! Vows Their Destruction!**

_____ **PEACE AT LAST! Great World Leader Negotiates Treaty Between Israel and Muslim Nations! Peace Guaranteed by NATO and U.S.! Israel to Rebuild Temple on Mount! PEACE AT LAST!**

_____ **Sun Black, Red Moon, Earthquakes - Richter Scale 10+ Around the World. Great Leader Blames Christians. Vows to Hunt Them Down. Christians Mysteriously Escape!**

_____ **PRAISE THE LORD. JESUS REIGNS IN JERUSALEM. ANTICHRIST AND SATAN DEFEATED. SAINTS RULE WITH CHRIST!!!**

_____ **Extra! Jewish Rebel Army Amasses Against Great Leader at Megiddo. Final Showdown Hoped to End Terrible Plagues! Great Leader Curses New Charismatic Jewish Commander!**

Homework: Read paragraphs “A” through “K”, above again, but this time, look up each of the scripture verses mentioned in the paragraphs. Try to redraw the diagram, shown above, from memory.

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Matthew 24:3-31, NIV

Matt 24:3 ¶ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Matt 24:4 ¶ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you.

Matt 24:5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Matt 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Matt 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

Matt 24:8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Matt 24:9 ¶ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Matt 24:10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,

Matt 24:11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

Matt 24:12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

Matt 24:13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Matt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matt 24:15 ¶ "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

Matt 24:16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Matt 24:17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.

Matt 24:18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.

Matt 24:19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

Matt 24:20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

Matt 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

Matt 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

Matt 24:23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.

Matt 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

Matt 24:25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

Matt 24:26 ¶ "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.

Matt 24:27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Matt 24:28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

Matt 24:29 ¶ "Immediately after the distress of those days ¶ " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

Matt 24:30 ¶ "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.

Matt 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Revelation 6:12-11, NIV

Rev 6:9 ¶ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

Rev 6:10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

Rev 6:11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

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Revelation 7:9-16, NIV

Rev 7:9 ¶ After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Rev 7:10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

Rev 7:11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

Rev 7:12 saying: ¶ “Amen!

Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever. ¶ Amen!”

Rev 7:13 ¶ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

Rev 7:14 ¶ I answered, “Sir, you know.” ¶ And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Rev 7:15 Therefore, ¶ “they are before the throne of God

and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

Rev 7:16 Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

2 Thess 2:1 ¶ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 Thess 2:2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

2 Thess 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for [that day will not come] until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

2 Thess 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.