

Chapter One, Part Two of the Serial Publication in Video and PDF

The
PRODIGAL SON
PROPHECY

God's Amazing Plan for the Restoration of the Two
Hebrew Houses and the Salvation of the Gentiles

By Dr. Scott Lively

SECTION ONE

A FRESH LOOK AT END-TIME PROPHECY

A Christian Lawyer and Pastor Examines the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible "De Novo" from the Hebrew Cultural Perspective of the First Century Church

...

THE SEVEN STAGES OF THE LAST DAYS

“And one of the elders said to me, ‘Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals’ ” (Revelation 5:5).

The 15-step chronology of Matthew 24-25 unfolds in six stages, followed by a seventh: the Millennial Kingdom.

In Matthew 24-25, which includes the Olivet Discourse, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Parable of the Talents, and the Separation of the Sheep and Goats, Jesus presents the teaching of the last days in a series of seven individual segments that align with the Seven Seals of Revelation. Again, the unrelated teaching in Matthew 26:1 begins with *“When Jesus had finished all these words...”* (referring back to the previous chapter) making clear that Matthew 24 and 25 are to be taken together as one complete teaching about the last days.

1-4) The Beginning of Birth Pangs: Matthew 24:4-13

“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs” (Matthew 24:5-8).

“Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, ‘Come.’ I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, ‘Come.’ And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him. When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, ‘Come.’ I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.’ When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, ‘Come.’ I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:3-8).

In these four segments, which address “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” Jesus compared the last-days events to the delivery of a woman in labor. The “beginning of birth pangs” is expressly analogized to the initial contractions that signal the start of labor. By doing so, He indicated the clear chronological sequence of the events. As any mother (or involved father) knows, once the actual contractions begin they do not stop until the entire process climaxes with the birth of the baby. That climax is represented in this lesson by the resurrection and rapture of the church, in which the believers are delivered from our bodies of flesh into new glorified forms, like a baby emerging from the womb.

It is a simple yet elegant presentation of the facts as only Jesus can tell them. And if we start with this premise, we will find that all other prophetic Scriptures can be comfortably harmonized with this chronology.

5) The Time of Testing: Matthew 24:9-28

The word tribulation comes from the word “tribulum,” which is an ancient Roman threshing sledge, designed to separate chaff from wheat at the time of harvest (Job 41:30, Isaiah 41:15). Thus, the time of tribulation in the Bible is not a time of God’s wrath but of His testing when believers (the wheat) are separated from their attachments to the things of this world (the chaff), prior to being taken up by Christ at His return.

In our timeline, the 5th stage of the end begins just before or upon the unveiling of the Antichrist and his “Abomination of Desolation“ .

“Then [following the ‘beginning of birth pangs’] they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains...For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 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” (Matthew 24:9-22).

This corresponds to the 5th Seal of Revelation 6:9-11 (described from the perspective of the spiritual realm):

“When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those

who dwell on the earth? ‘ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.”

During this period of “great tribulation,” defined by widespread apostasy and martyrdom, there will also occur an end-time revival which I believe will be a single global event designed both to harden the world against the church and to coalesce the remnant of believers in preparation for the final separation of the wheat and tares.

6. The Return of Christ

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31).

This corresponds to the sixth seal of Revelation 6:12-17:

“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”

In our analysis of Revelation, as plotted on our chart “Yeshua’s Chronology of End-Time Events in Revelation 6-20” (below), the first five of the seven trumpet judgments occur during the period of the fifth seal, immediately preceding the return of Christ.

What John is describing as he reports his vision -- “Hail and fire,” “a flaming mountain”... appears to be a series of meteors both large and small striking the earth.

Importantly, there was apparently no word for “asteroid” or “meteor” at the time the Bible was written, and thus “stars” should be interpreted as “asteroids” (i.e. “small stars”), or “meteors” (asteroids that have entered our atmosphere). This would explain the geologic upheavals, the darkening of the sky by massive volumes of dust and debris, and the attempts of people to hide in clefts and caves. Even the appearance (to people on the earth) of the sky being rolled up like a scroll would be explained if a large-enough meteor struck the earth so as to briefly slow its spin. The

optical illusion created during that shudder would match the Bible's imagery. (Alternately, of course, God could accomplish these results supernaturally if He chose to.)

I believe the return of Christ will occur on a Feast of Trumpets and trigger the resurrection and rapture. During the Ten Days of Awe that begin with the Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah aka Rosh Hashanah) and end with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the Bride of Christ/Messiah will celebrate the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and the testing of the works of the believers in the heavenly realm.

Meanwhile, those "left behind" on the earth (the wicked, the 144,000 Torah-faithful Hebrews sealed against death, and the "foolish virgins"/"lazy servants" who thought they were saved but weren't) will (for ten days, not seven years -- Revelation 2:10) experience the Wrath of God poured forth from the Seven Bowls during the Ten Days of Awe. These seven bowls of judgment are contained within the sixth trumpet.

7. The Millennial Kingdom

Again, we must remember here that the Seven Trumpets of Revelation are contained within the Seventh Seal like a "wheel within a wheel." Only the 7th Trumpet describes that seventh stage of the end, the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 11:15, "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.'"

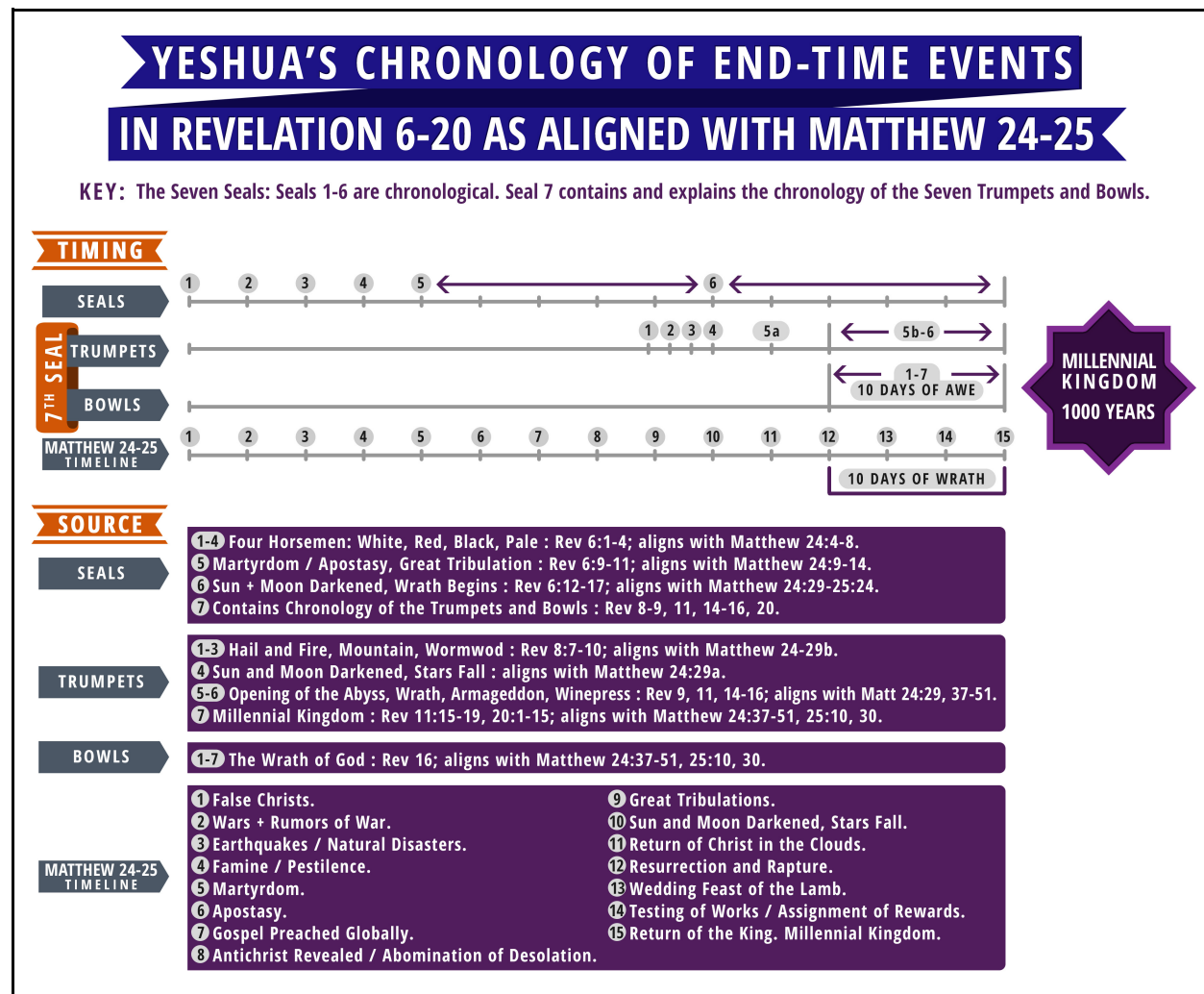
Matthew 25:31 "*But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'*"

Importantly, this is not describing Heaven, which is as yet a future destination for those who will spend eternity with Christ, whose reign will continue for all time. First, however, the earth must have it's Sabbath!, its seventh millennium that corresponds to the seventh "day" of creation. The earth will enjoy 1000 years of Christ's bodily reign on the planet earth, which has been regenerated to be similar to it's pre-sin, Edenic state. And we who have been "glorified" upon the advent of the rapture will rule and reign with Him during this time (2 Timothy 2).

As Jesus told the Apostles in Matthew 19:28: "*Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

The promise is repeated for all the faithful in Revelation 20:4-6:

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”



YESHUA'S CHRONOLOGY OF END-TIME EVENTS IN REVELATION 6-20

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus provided much more information about how the end-time events unfold, and how they relate to Old Testament prophecies. He first unsealed the events in a summary form, and we can see that the first six seals follow the exact pattern of the Gospel accounts. I have added my own conjecture about what this might look like in a present-day context, but I acknowledge that there are other equally plausible theories.

The Seven Seals

Seal #1. White Horse: The Antichrist spirit, bearing the symbol of the bow -- rainbow? -- begins accumulating power as well as conquering the world through guile and deception.

Seal #2. Red Horse: Wars and rumors of wars trigger massive political upheavals which in turn trigger global economic collapse.

Seal #3 Black Horse: Global breakdown of social order results in widespread famine and starvation. Natural disasters compound the problems.

Seal #4. Pale Horse: Disease, pestilence, genocide, sectarian massacres, wild animals will kill many millions of people.

Seal #5. Martyrs Under the Altar: Description of the tribulation, including martyrdom, apostasy, the great end-times revival (of the remnant of true believers who preach the Gospel to the entire world), the exposure of the Antichrist, and the "Great Tribulation" under his evil reign.

The martyrdom is exemplified by the beheading of Christians (which will likely occur on a massive scale by Islamists who take advantage of the global chaos to rampage against all "infidels").

The fifth seal represents the time of great testing in which the sheep and goats are divided, and the final generation of believers prove their allegiance to Christ by "enduring" under suffering without renouncing Him (which is the recurring theme and exhortation of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3).

Seal #6 Return of Christ: The coming of the groom to rescue His bride is announced by the darkening of the sun and the moon. He appears in the clouds and sends His angels to gather His elect from the four corners of the world. The dead will be resurrected and rise first, and then we who are alive will join them in the air (per 1 Thessalonians 4:15-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Seal #7 Detailed overview. The 7th Seal is not a subsequent event, but a broader and more detailed overview of what was summarized in the first six seals. Importantly, it contains the story of the

Seven Trumpets, the first three which occur during the time span of the 5th Seal, the next three which occur during the 6th Seal, and the 7th, final Trumpet which announces the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. In turn, the Seven Bowls of God's Wrath all occur during the time span of the 5th and 6th Trumpets. In other words, like the "wheel within a wheel" revealed to Ezekiel, the Seventh Seal contains the Seven Trumpets, which in turn contain the Seven Bowls.

The Seven Trumpets

The seven trumpets begin during the 5th Seal, continue through the period of the 6th Seal, and end with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. There is no clear indication of the precise starting point of the trumpets on the Matthew 24-25 timeline, but considering that they involve the most dramatic events of the Great Tribulation, they probably begin toward the end of it, on the cusp of the time of Wrath.

All of the first six trumpets may occur in a very short window of time – a period of weeks or even days, though the first three could span a period of months or even more than a year. The first three trumpets involve the pummeling of the earth by a series of meteorites of increasing size and import: hail and fire mixed with blood, a great mountain, and lastly the "star" Wormwood. Importantly, there is no separate word for meteor or asteroid in the Bible, but we can infer from the context that "Wormwood" is not a star like the sun, but merely a larger form of the same type of objects striking earth during the first two trumpets.

The 4th Trumpet, the darkening of the sun and moon, clearly aligns with Matthew 24:29 and heralds the great pivotal moment of the return of Christ in the clouds. Once again, there is no clear indication of the time between the darkening of the sun and moon and the appearance of Christ. It could be almost immediate, or span a period of days, weeks or months, though it seems likely to be a shorter rather than longer span of time.

The Biblical description of the 5th Trumpet in Revelation 9:1-11 is the most challenging to our timeline. It involves the opening of the Abyss and the emergence of Satan to command the legions of the wicked. The passage neatly aligns with our timeline in numerous respects if we assume this trumpet describes the very last days of the Great Tribulation – but can be no less than 3 ½ days prior to the Resurrection and Rapture, since it must include the finalization of the ministry of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11:7-12. Revelation 11:12 describes the ascension of the Two Witnesses after their 3 ½ days lying dead in Jerusalem following their murder by Satan. Their ascension seems to coincide with the Resurrection and Rapture on the Feast of Trumpets. In summary, Satan enters the world stage as King of Evil just before Christ, the King of Peace, departs with the righteous to celebrate the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in the heavenly realm, leaving the wicked to suffer the consequences of their rebellion during the 10 Days of Awe/Wrath on earth.

Additionally, Revelation 9: 4 mentions the people sealed against death (the 144,000 Jews), left behind

with the wicked to endure the Wrath, perfectly consistent with our timeline.

However, the 5th Trumpet passage also introduces a very cryptic reference to scorpion-like locusts whose stings produce torturous pain that lasts “*for five months*.” Since our timeline limits the Wrath to just ten days, this “five month” reference is problematic but not fatal. Since we know that many people survive the Wrath to repopulate the earth in the Millennial Kingdom, it is entirely plausible that the five months extends into the new millennium for those survivors inflicted with this agony.

Alternately, the “five months” could be a symbolic reference to the five days that fall between the Day of Atonement (Christ’s “touchdown” on the earth on the last of the 10 Days of Awe/Wrath) and the Feast of Tabernacles (which is symbolic of the Millennial Kingdom, when God dwells with men) on the Biblical calendar of Leviticus 23.

We have long considered that the actual or final fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles as a prophetic *Moed* (appointed time) could be interpreted to be our entrance into Heaven at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, rather than at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. If so, the official start of the Millennial Kingdom wouldn’t necessarily fall on the Biblical calendar in the same way that Trumpets and Atonement do. In other words, Trumpets and Atonement will necessarily be fulfilled in the same year, just ten days apart, but Tabernacles might not technically be fulfilled for another thousand years. Even though Christ’s reign in Jerusalem would seem to complete the prophetic calendar, it might serve as just a next-to-last iteration of the Tabernacles pattern, the last being Heaven itself. If that were so, then we could consider the Millennial Kingdom to start the moment Christ sets foot on the Mount of Olives, and the “five months” to be a variation on the theme of the five days in the Tabernacles pattern.

In any case, it is reasonable to assume that there would be a natural transition from the old world to the new during the first weeks, months and years of the Millennial Kingdom, which would logically include the physical healing process of the survivors of the time of Wrath.

The Seven Bowls

The 6th Trumpet, described in Revelation 9:13-21, occurs during the 10 Days of Wrath when the seven bowls of wrath are poured out on the earth. The bowls are thus contained in the 6th Trumpet, which marks the transition from Tribulation (the trial) to the Wrath (the sentence on the guilty).

The seven bowls are described in Revelation 16:1-21.

DECIPHERING THE REVELATION CHRONOLOGY

The Book of Revelation can be said in one sense to be the “graveyard” of prophecy gurus since it’s apparent complexity from a “Greek” perspective has produced innumerable false theories and interpretations. Its heavy emphasis on symbolism and lack of a clear and self-evident chronological sequence lends itself to imaginative, sometimes fanciful speculation. However, from the first century Hebrew cultural perspective, the challenge of understanding Revelation is not nearly as daunting or problematic.

There are three keys to understanding Revelation. The first and master key is recognizing that Revelation should be recognized as an expanded and annotated version of the Olivet Discourse, which establishes a clear chronological timeline.

The second key is discerning the four types of passages in Revelation which reflect two alternate vantage points (either inside or outside of time) and two alternate locations of the events being observed (either on earth or in heaven). Thus, each of these four types of passages describe either:

- 1) The view of events on earth from the vantage point of earth,
- 2) The view of events on earth from the vantage point of heaven.
- 3) The view of events in heaven from the vantage point of earth, or
- 4) The view of events in heaven from the vantage point of heaven.

Most of the confusion in interpreting Revelation derives from the fact that the heavenly perspective is not time-bound and thus events observed or occurring there can’t always be plotted on a linear time scale without reference to something else that is. In other words, the events of Revelation are not presented in strict chronological order but can be organized on a timeline by aligning the symbols and phrases in the passages describing observations or events in heaven with those observed or occurring on earth -- using the timeline of Matthew 24-25 as the template on which they all are plotted.

The third key to understanding Revelation is identifying the meaning of the symbols and phrases from their context in the Old Testament.

The two following charts lay out the Revelation chronology as it aligns with Matthew 24-25.

DECIPHERING THE REVELATION CHRONOLOGY

THREE KEY FACTS

- 1 Revelation is an expanded version of Yeshua's timeline in Matthew 24-25.
- 2 The story is told from four perspectives.
- 3 Passages from the heavenly perspective are not time bound and thus may be out of chronological sequence, but contain markers (symbols and phrases) that allow the events they describe to be plotted on the earthly timeline.

FOUR PERSPECTIVES

- A Earth seen from Earth.
- B Earth seen from Heaven.
- C Heaven seen from Earth.
- D Heaven seen from Heaven.

EVENTS OF REVELATION AS THEY APPEAR IN THE TEXT

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>1</p> <p>CHAPTER 1:1-9</p> <p>Introduction and Notice of John's Vision to the Seven Churches.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>CHAPTER 1:10-19</p> <p>The Lord's Instruction to John about Conveying His Message.</p> | <p>3</p> <p>CHAPTERS 2-3</p> <p>Warnings: Some Will be "Left Behind" with One Last Chance.</p> | <p>4</p> <p>CHAPTER 4-5</p> <p>Jesus Presented with Sealed Scroll in the Throne Room of Heaven.</p> | <p>5</p> <p>CHAPTER 6-7:8</p> <p>Jesus Opens the Six Seals and Shields the 144K from Wrath.</p> |
| <p>6</p> <p>CHAPTER 7:9-8:4</p> <p>Future Worship in Heaven of Those Now Suffering on Earth.</p> | <p>7</p> <p>CHAPTER 8:5-9:21</p> <p>Seventh Seal Shown to Contain Seven Trumpets. Six Now Sound.</p> | <p>8</p> <p>CHAPTER 10</p> <p>John Receives and Seals Up Prophecy of Seven Thunders.</p> | <p>9</p> <p>CHAPTER 11:1-14</p> <p>The Two Witnesses During the Kingdom of the Antichrist.</p> | <p>10</p> <p>CHAPTER 11:15-19</p> <p>Seventh Trumpet Declares Start of the Millennial Kingdom.</p> |
| <p>11</p> <p>CHAPTER 12</p> <p>Vision of Last Days as Displayed in Constellations of the Night Sky.</p> | <p>12</p> <p>CHAPTER 13</p> <p>The Beast: Cryptic Description of the Antichrist and his Kingdom.</p> | <p>13</p> <p>CHAPTER 7:9-8:4</p> <p>The Lamb and the 144,000 in the Throne Room of Heaven.</p> | <p>14</p> <p>CHAPTER 14:8-20</p> <p>Five Angels, Five Events: Gospel Preached thru Winepress.</p> | <p>15</p> <p>CHAPTER 15</p> <p>Seven Angels Receive the Seven Bowls of Wrath.</p> |
| <p>16</p> <p>CHAPTER 16</p> <p>The Pouring Out of the Bowls of Wrath on the Earth.</p> | <p>17</p> <p>CHAPTER 17</p> <p>Profile and History of Babylon the Great.</p> | <p>18</p> <p>CHAPTER 18</p> <p>Punishments of Babylon the Great Ending with Seventh Bowl.</p> | <p>19</p> <p>CHAPTER 19:1-10</p> <p>Exultation in Heaven Over Babylon's Destruction.</p> | <p>20</p> <p>CHAPTER 19:11-16</p> <p>The King of Kings Returns to Claim His Throne.</p> |
| <p>21</p> <p>CHAPTER 19:17-21</p> <p>Defeat of the Wicked, the Beast and False Prophet.</p> | <p>22</p> <p>CHAPTER 20:1-10</p> <p>Beginning and End of the Millennial Kingdom.</p> | <p>23</p> <p>CHAPTER 20:11-15</p> <p>Great White Throne Judgment.</p> | <p>24</p> <p>CHAPTER 21:22:5</p> <p>The New Heaven and Earth in Eternity.</p> | <p>25</p> <p>CHAPTER 22:6-21</p> <p>Concluding Summary and Warnings.</p> |

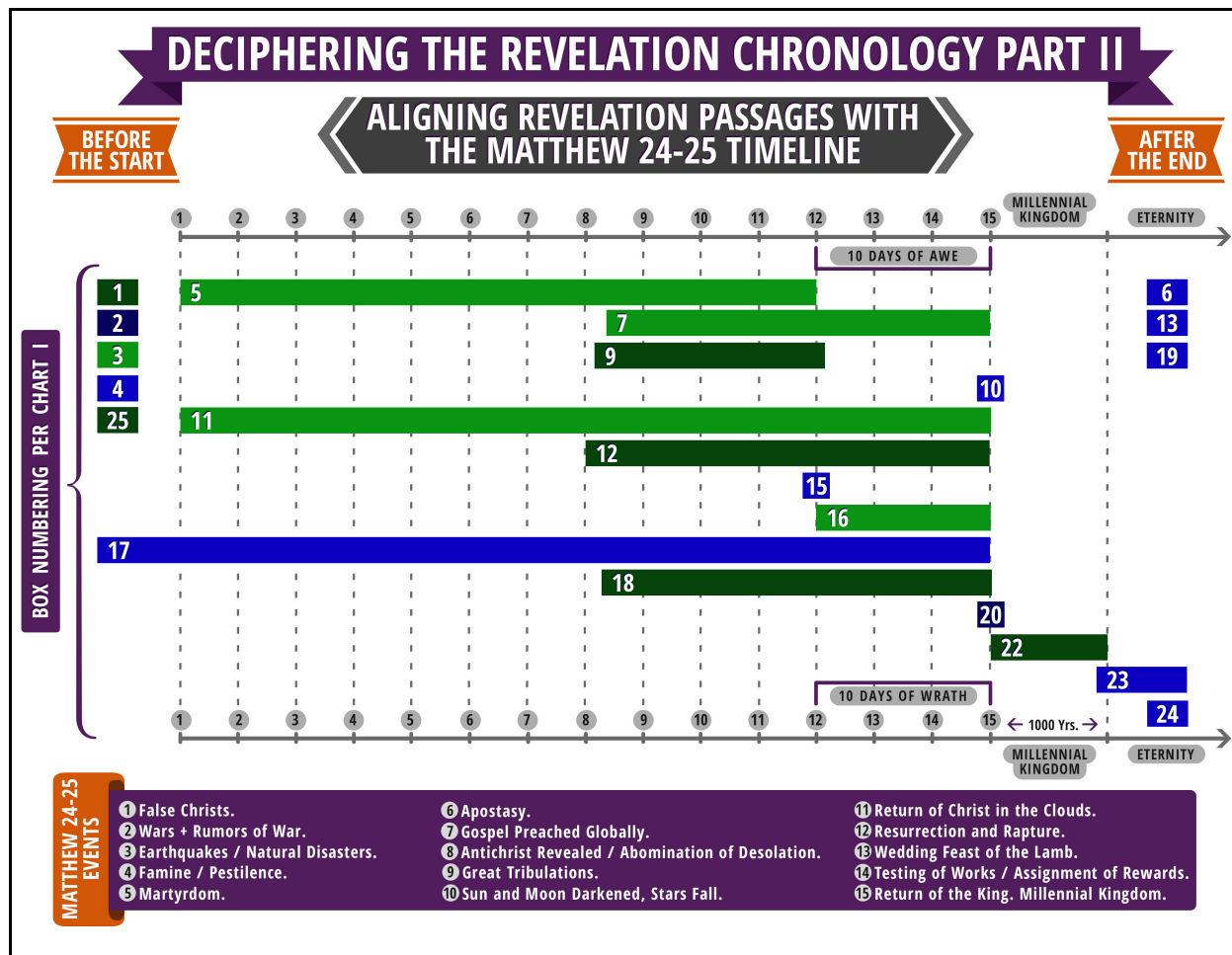


Chart II Help: the numbered spheres at the top and bottom of the timeline graph correspond with the fifteen events of Matthew 24-25 in the purple legend at the bottom, while the numbered bars correspond with the four colored boxes on Chart 1.

In the first chart we have divided the text of Revelation into twenty-five consecutive segments based upon the perspective of each passage. A few of these passages could conceivably be categorized differently or subdivided further, but since those changes would not substantively affect our conclusions regarding their place in the chronology we're satisfied with this arrangement. They are arranged in the order in which they appear in the text and color coded based on their perspective.

In the second chart we have arranged each segment to show its place on the Matthew 24-25 timeline. **Importantly, the numbers in the colored bars (light green, dark green, light blue, dark blue) represent the twenty-five segments from Chart 1, while the numbering on the timeline (small grey circles) represent the fifteen events of Matthew 24-25. Keeping this in mind will prevent confusion in reading the charts.**

For example, the first four colored boxes contain passages from Chapters 1-4 of Revelation, all of which occur *before* the Matthew 24-25 timeline begins. Colored box #5 (light green) begins the story of the four horses which align with the four events Jesus called “the beginning of birth pangs” (1-4 of the Matthew 24-25 timeline). Since these events have no clear end-point but could continue until the appearance of the Messiah, colored box #5 spans 1-12 of the Matthew 24-25 timeline. Colored box #6 (light blue) describes a vision of future worship in Heaven by people whose time-bound activities are yet to play out on earth. Thus, that box is placed *after* the end of the Matthew 24-25 timeline.

Colored box #7 contains the story of the first six Trumpets. The start of these occurs at some point following the event called the Abomination of Desolation and encompasses all of the Great Tribulation and the Wrath, so it is placed on the chart accordingly. Colored Box #17 contains the profile and history of “Babylon the Great,” which begins long before the Matthew 24-25 timeline begins and ends with the Return of the King. Colored box #23 contains the story of the Great White Throne Judgment told in Revelation 20:11-15. The events it describes begin toward the very end of – but still during – the Millennial Kingdom, just prior to the final judgement, and is placed thusly on the chart.

Obviously, the topic is complex despite the assistance of these charts, but the entire book of Revelation can be deciphered relatively easily with these tools, once you have mastered their use.

USING BIBLICAL SYMBOLISM TO ALIGN THE OLIVET DISCOURSE AND REVELATION

For simplicity's sake, we will limit this analysis primarily to the symbolism of a few segments of Revelation which describe events in heaven from the perspective of heaven (the dark blue squares on Deciphering the Revelation Chronology, Chart 1), since these are the most difficult to plot chronologically.

In Deciphering the Revelation Chronology, Chart II, we show that the fifteen events of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25 begin with Box 5 from Chart 1. Because Revelation is an expanded and augmented version of the Olivet Discourse it addresses additional matters that occur before and after the Olivet timeline.

It is like a modern book in which the Matthew 24-25 timeline is the main body, and additional materials are tacked on to the front and the back. The preliminary materials include a Preamble (Box 1), a General Introduction (Box 2), a Special Introductory Note to a Specific Class of Readers (Box 3), and a Foreword (Box 4).

Box 4 is the first example of events in heaven seen from heaven from Chart 1, and the final preliminary word before the Revelation version of the Matthew 24-25 chronology begins.

The key symbolism of the scroll in Box 4 is a direct reference to Daniel's final prophecy in Daniel Chapter 12:1-13, of which we will quote the most relevant portion:

*"At that time Michael, the great prince who stands watch over your people, will rise up. There will be a time of distress such as never has occurred from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. And many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, but others to shame and everlasting contempt. Then the wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. **But you, Daniel, shut up these words and seal the book until the time of the end.**"*

Of all the references to scrolls in the Bible, this is the only one that matches Revelation 4 and 5 (Box 4). The passage concisely summarizes the entire end-times chronology, with specific references to tribulation, resurrection/rapture, the great white throne judgement, and eternity, in that order.

Box 5 then addresses the theme of tribulation with the very obvious "beginning of sorrows"/four horsemen alignment of Matthew and Revelation.

Box 6 (Revelation 7:9-84) is the next event in heaven as seen from heaven, describing the great ingathering of saints before the throne of God. The key symbols here include the "ingathering to God's presence" theme which is associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, itself a metaphor for the

Millennial Kingdom. The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23:38-42, with an essential element being palm branches (23:40). It's "ingathering" theme is emphasized in Exodus 23:16b.

This helps us integrate Box 6 into the Matthew 24-25 timeline by association with the Hebrew religious calendar. The Feast of Tabernacles is the last of the seven feasts, beginning five days after Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which we now know is the day in which Christ touches down on the Mount of Olives to reclaim the earth and begin the Millennial Kingdom.

Box 6 is, in essence, a picture of the heavenly version of the Feast of Tabernacles, the perfect final ingathering in the spiritual realm, occurring in the text in the same order as the Hebrew religious calendar on earth. Importantly, per Exodus 23:16, The Feast of Tabernacles pilgrimage encompasses all three of the fall feasts, beginning with the Feast of Trumpets, when the resurrection and rapture will occur for the Bride of Christ (and the 144,000 Jews are sealed against death to survive the Wrath), then the Day of Atonement, then five days later the Feast of Tabernacles itself, representing the start of the Millennial Kingdom. All three together represent the great ingathering.

We shall point out here that the sequence actually begins in Revelation 6:12 with the opening of the 6th Seal. Revelation 6:12-8:2 (especially 6:12-1) clearly aligns with Matthew 24:29-32. Look at the sequence and order of symbols/themes common to both passages: darkness, falling stars, heavens shaken, figs, terror among men, four winds/corners of the earth, trumpets.

Studying the symbols used in the text allows us to recognize that the timeline of Revelation is not actually broken by the shift in perspective. What begins with events on earth from the perspective of heaven (in Box 5) flows smoothly through the events of Box 6 (events in heaven seen from the heavenly perspective): one continuous timeline.

Having proved the point, we will leave it to the readers to further pursue this line of study if they so desire.

THE SEASON OF THE END. MATTHEW 24:32-35

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (32-34).

Jesus gave the parable of the fig tree as the clue which establishes the season in which the last days occur. This delineates the length of the season as the lifespan of the generation living at the time the metaphorical fig tree puts forth its leaves.

Throughout the Bible the fig tree is representative of Israel, most especially the House of Judah which at the time of Christ was largely synonymous with the Kingdom of Judea. In Jeremiah 24:1-10, the

Lord compares two groups of Judeans (good and evil men, respectively) to good and bad figs. Then, Mark 11:12-13 and 20-21 records the cursing of the fig tree by Jesus in the short period between His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Olivet Discourse -- a context heavily emphasizing judgment against Judea.

I agree with the majority view that this prophecy is being fulfilled today, that we are living in the last generation, and that all of the end-times events leading to the start of the Millennial Kingdom will occur within the lifespan of those born in the generation of the fig tree.

There are disagreements as to the starting date of “this generation.” There are three likely options:

A. On or about Hanukkah of 1917, during World War 1, when British General Allenby marched into Jerusalem after liberating the Holy City from exactly 400 years of occupation by the Moslem Ottoman Turks and approximately 1800 years of exclusion of Jews from the land. Subsequently, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued the famous Balfour Declaration inviting the Jewish people to repopulate “Palestine.” The Balfour Declaration was in fact a letter from Balfour to Baron Walter Rothschild, defacto leader of world Jewry at that time.

Significantly, this was at the height of the popularity of the doctrine of “British Israelism,” the belief (held by many, including Queen Elizabeth) that the British monarchy was rooted in and a continuation of the royal lineage of the Judean kings and that the Anglo Saxon people they ruled were the descendants of Ephraim, the dominant tribe of the House (and Kingdom) of Israel. We have not taken a firm position on these claims, the veracity of which is irrelevant to this study – what matters is that the British believed it at the time.

B. May 14, 1948, when the Jewish immigrants in the Holy Land declared the reestablishment of the State of Israel upon the expiration of the British Mandate.

C. June 6, 1967, when the Jews recaptured/liberated East Jerusalem, gaining full control over the entirety of the Holy City for the first time in nearly two millennia. Although the Jews had possession of West Jerusalem from 1948, East Jerusalem and the all-important Mount of Olives was in the possession of Jordan until 1967. The two territories were divided by a vacant strip through the center of Jerusalem called “No Man’s Land.”

Importantly in the study of prophecy, Jerusalem is the Center of the Universe in the priority and perspective of God and therefore is our point of reference for navigating our way, just as sailors plot their course by reference to the North Star. Thus, the liberation of Jerusalem is arguably a more significant spiritual event than the establishment of the State of Israel, and perhaps the most significant spiritual event of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, I have concluded that May 14, 1948 is the most likely starting point, largely because it appears also to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 66:8: *“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.”*