

Definitions of Major Endtime Events

"Beginning of Birthpains"

- Catastrophes on Earth caused by sin including wars and famines.
- Purpose: Make the people of the world desperate enough to allow the antichrist to rise to power and rule over them.
- Descriptions: Matt 24:4-8; Rev 6:1-8.

"The Abomination of Desolation"

- When the antichrist enters a rebuilt Jewish temple, desecrates it, and claims to be God on Earth.
- Purpose: Trigger the Great Persecution.
- Descriptions: Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev 12:7-12.

"The Antichrist"

- A future man indwelt by satan
- He is not only against Christ but desires to replace Him.
- He will "bless" the world and destroy the Church and Jews.
- The first "sign" of him will be as a leader of a 10 nation coalition that destroys the Great Prostitute which is probably the U.S. (Rev 17:16-17)
- A subsequent "sign" of him will be a peace treaty with Israel. (Dan 9:27)
- His revelation to the world will come 3.5 years after this treaty at "The Abomination of Desolation" (2 Thess 2:3-4)
- Descriptions: Dan 7:7-27; 9:27; 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev chs. 12-14.

"The Great Tribulation"

- Better to call it the "Great Persecution." "Great Tribulation" implies a difficult time for the whole world which includes the wrath of God but this is incorrect. During this time the antichrist will be returning the Earth to "peace and safety" (1 Thess 5:3) and it will be tribulation/persecution specifically for the Church. And the persecution of God's people is not the wrath of God.
- Begins with "The Abomination that Causes Desolation" and lasts exactly 1260 days (cf. Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5)
- Purpose: Purify the Church from false believers. Test and purify the Church to become what Christ wants her to be- loving, dedicated, holy, sacrificial, and united.
- Descriptions: Matt 24:9-14, 16-28; Rev 6:9-11; chs. 12-14; Dan 7:19-25; 12:1.

"The Rapture"

- The catching up of remaining Christians by Angels when Christ returns.
- The word "rapture" comes from the Latin translation (*rapere*) of the Greek verb *harpagēsetai* which Paul uses. The word literally means to "snatch away."
- Purpose: Remove the Church from the Earth before the wrath of God begins.
- Descriptions: Matt 24:29-31; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:52; Rev 7:9-14.

"The Day of the Lord"

- God's punishment of His enemies on Earth, commencing with the Return of Christ and including the wrath of God on unbelievers and concluding with the Battle of Armageddon.
- There are not 2 "comings" as in Pretrib view, but one *parousia* ("arrival and subsequent presence") which includes several appearances of Christ on Earth (cf. Matt 24:29-30, Zech 14:4; Isa 63:1-6; Rev 19:11-21).
- Descriptions: Isa 13:6-13; Rev chs. 8-9, 15-16

"The Millennium"

- The 1000 year reign of Christ on Earth after God's punishment of the Earth.
- Descriptions: Rev 20:1-10; Isa 65:17-25; and much of OT prophecies regarding Israel.

4 Primary Views of the Sequence of Endtime Events

1) Prewrath Rapture of Church

- Fits the sequence taught in Matthew 24, 1 Thess 4, 2 Thess 1-2, & Rev 6-7
- Places return of Christ and rescue of Church after Great Persecution but before the wrath of God begins.
- It has been the historical view of the Church
 - Irenaeus (c. 180 A.D.) "And they [the ten kings] . . . shall give their kingdom to the beast [antichrist], and put the Church to flight." (*Against Heresies*, V,26,1)
 - Augustine (c. 400 A.D.) "But he who reads this passage [Daniel 12] even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of antichrist shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church" (*City of God*, XX, 23).
 - Martin Luther (c. 1530) "[The book of Revelation] is intended as a revelation of things that are to happen in the future, and especially of tribulations and disasters for the Church." (*Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 481)
 - Modern supporters: John Piper, D. A. Carson, Wayne Grudem. Book: *The Rapture Question Answered*, Robert Van Kampen.

2) Pretribulation Rapture of the Church (Dispensationalism)

- Places the rescue of the Church before the "beginning of birth pains" and the Great Persecution" in a "silent and secret" rapture. And then another return of Christ after the Great Persecution.
- Most popular in American Church.
- **Arguments for Pretrib view:**
 - Dan. 9:27 says the last "7 years" is for the Jews and the claim is that God's plan for Israel and Church is completely separate. But the view allows for saved Gentiles after the Rapture and in the last "7 years" and Paul said God's plan for Israel and the Church will be brought together (Eph 2:14-16; Rom 11:11-31).
 - The claim that the Rapture and 2nd coming are described differently. But the descriptions are simply giving more details of the extended event of what Christ does when He returns.
 - The claim that the "restrainer" (2 Thess 2:6) of the antichrist is the Church or Holy Spirit suggests that its removal symbolizes the Rapture. But biblical evidence points to Michael (Dan 12:1; Rev 12:7; 20:1-3).
 - The claim that the Church is not mentioned in Rev after ch. 3. But Christians and "saints" are repeatedly mentioned as being persecuted by antichrist (Rev 12:17; 13:7, 10; 14:12)
- View is dangerous as it leaves church unprepared and susceptible to "Thessalonian deception" (2 Thess 2:1-3).
- **Additional arguments against the Pretrib view:**
 - The Great Tribulation is described as antichrist's wrath, not God's wrath (cf. Rev 6:9-10).
 - The NT promises the Church will be persecuted.
 - The Rapture is not described as a "secret, silent" event ("loud command" etc. 1 Thess 4:16).
 - The Apostles Peter and Paul did not believe in an "any moment" Rapture (John 21:18; 2 Tim 3:1).
 - Paul clearly said the Day of the Lord, (the day that Christ returns and we are gathered to Him) will not occur until the antichrist is revealed (2 Thess 2:1-3).
 - D. A. Carson notes regarding the Pretribulational view: "It finds no support until the nineteenth century. The [Pretribulation] approach to the Olivet Discourse must be judged historically implausible in reference to both the history of Jesus and the history of interpretation." (*Expositors Bible Commentary*)
- Modern adherents include graduates from Dallas Theological Seminary (e.g. Charles Swindoll, David Jeremiah) and John MacArthur. It has been widely promoted by the fictional *Left Behind* series of books and movies.

3) Pan-tribulation Rapture

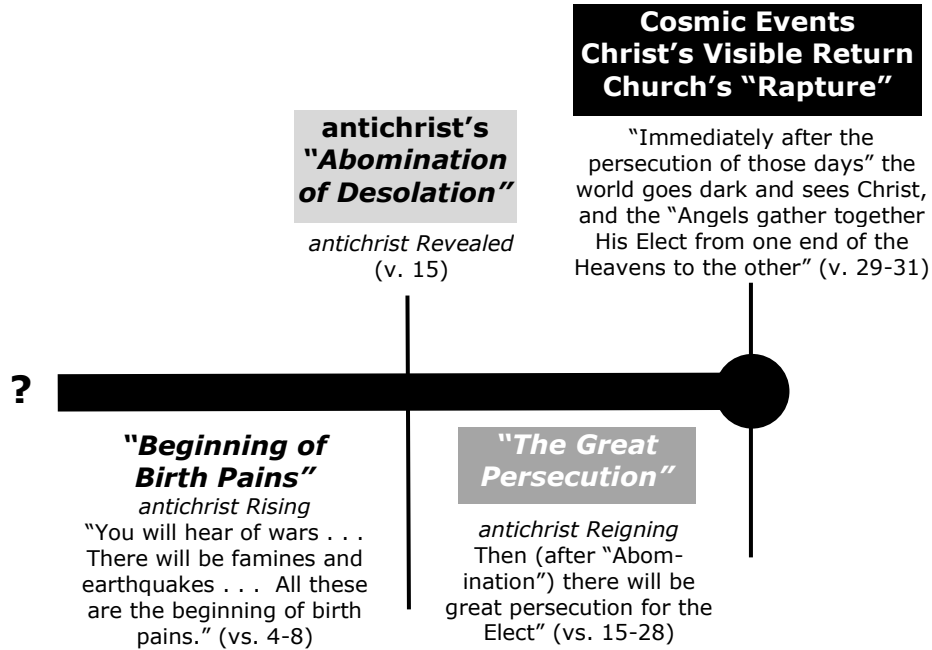
- Does not think there is a clear teaching on the sequence of Endtime Events and is content to believe "it will all pan out in the end."
- But this dishonors the Lord and His Apostles who were very intentional about teaching a specific sequence of Endtime Events and warned the Church not to be deceived.

4) Preterism (Amillennialism)

- Believes everything in OT prophecies and Revelation has already been symbolically fulfilled in the Church age.
- Most popular view in American seminaries, especially Reformed. R. C. Sproul primary promoter.
- Sufficient argument against: 1/3 of all the prophecies in Scripture have already been fulfilled and they were fulfilled literally/physically, not symbolically/metaphorically. The remaining 2/3 will also.

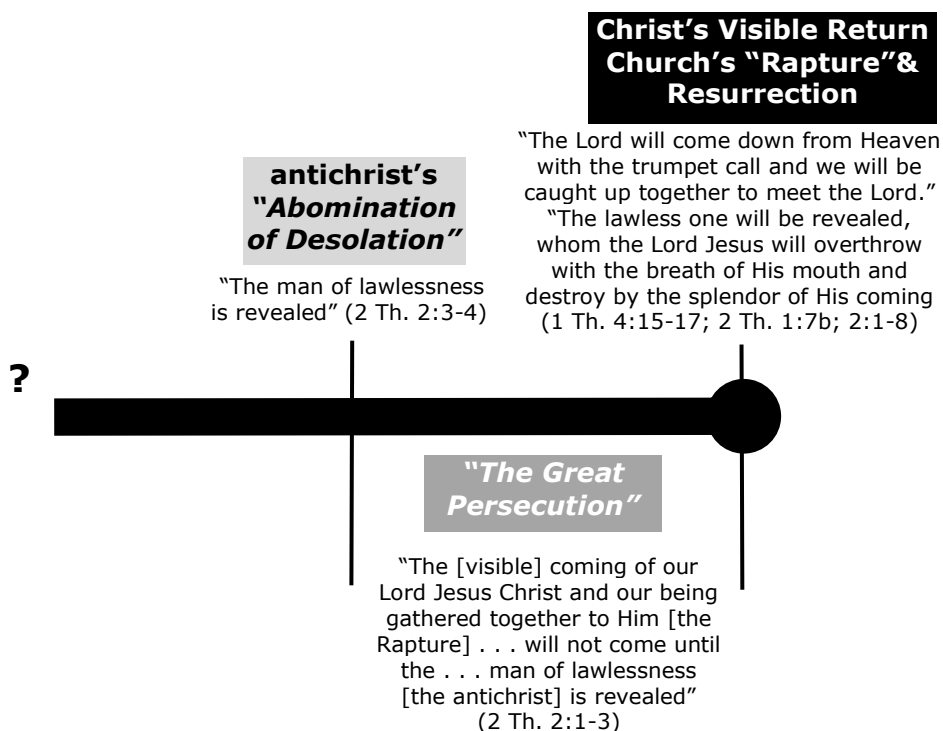
Sequence of Endtime Events According to Jesus

(Matt 24:1-31)



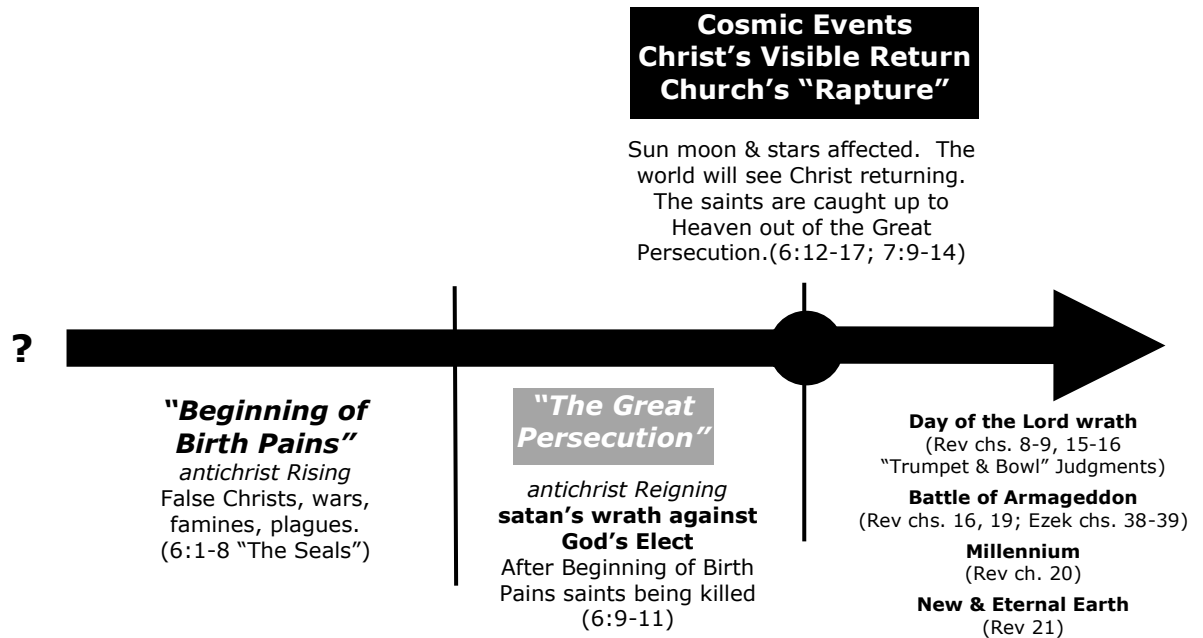
Sequence of Endtime Events According to Paul

(1 Thess 4, 2 Thess 2)



Sequence of Endtime Events According to Revelation

(Chs. 6-7)



Sequence of Endtime Events According to Daniel

(chs. 7, 9, 12)

