

"THE TRIBULATION FILES"

Part I. Setting the Stage

Purpose

The goal of this short three part study is to put the current events that we read about in the context of Bible prophecy regarding the "End times". It is not intended to be a thorough study of "Eschatology" or a definitive "proof" that these are the events that the Bible is referring to, but only that it is a real possibility. It is our hope that through this study, you will become more knowledgeable about Bible prophecy, increase your desire to read God's Word, and draw closer to the Lord... knowing that He is closer to returning than ever before.

Why Study Prophecy?

There are three basic reasons why we should study Prophecy:

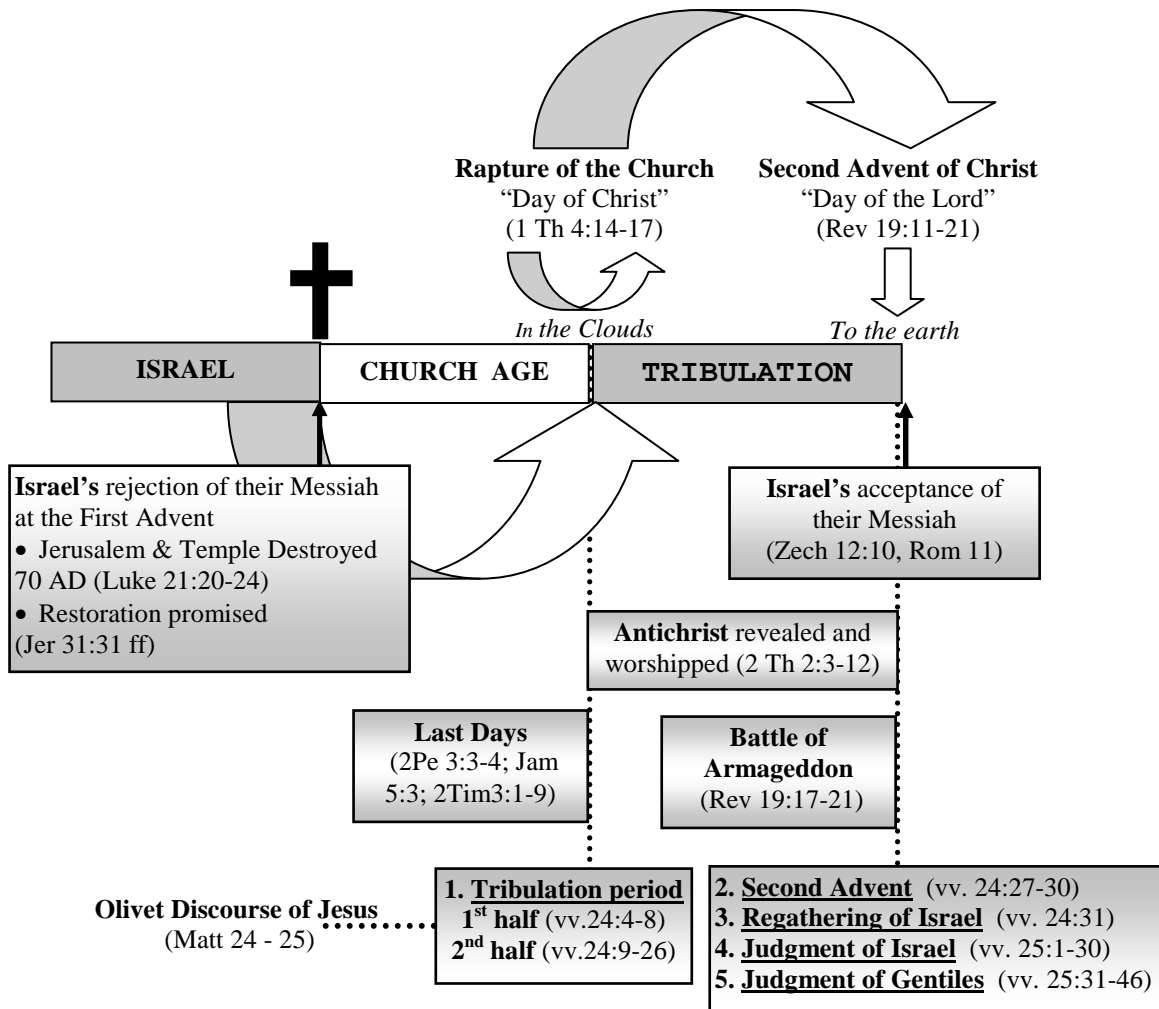
IT IS WRITTEN. (God said it, so it must be important.) Approximately 1/3 of the Bible deals with prophecy. (eg. Events that at the time that they were written about had not yet happened.)

IT COMFORTS US. When we read about God's plan for those accept Jesus and the fate of those that don't, we see His Love for us. (1 Th 4:18) (There is something comforting to know that the events happening today all fit together as part of God's plan. Unbelievers don't have such a frame of reference. To them, these seem like random events with no rhyme or reason. This uncertainty causes worry.)

IT CONVERTS. Biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled provide proof that the Bible is God's Word and is true. (There are nearly 300 prophesies regarding the coming of the messiah, and all of them were fulfilled literally in Jesus during His first Advent). Daniel's prophecy about the messiah was literally fulfilled right down to the day... the same day that Jesus entered Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday.

God's Timeline

Note: This chart is a partial view of End Times events and only depicts those topics that will be covered by this study.



Last Days (Signs of the Times)

Bible Reference: **Matthew 16:2-3**

(Matt 16:2-3) "He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; [3] and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times."

Jesus said that we won't know the exact day and hour that the Lord will return for His Church at the Rapture, but He DID say that we can know the season... that there will be signs.

Prophecy: **Knowledge/Information will Increase**

Bible Reference: **Daniel 12:4, 9-10**

(Dan 12:4,9-10) "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase... [9] And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. [10] Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

Today: **The Internet is the Information Superhighway**

Access to information is greater than at any other time in history.

TV: 1935 = 1st TV station on air / 2006 = 8464 stations.

News: 1950 = 1800 newspapers / 2006 = 300,000 news websites, blogs, newspapers, and print publications. As of April 2006 there are 80,000,000 websites on the Internet.

Bibles: 1455 = first printed Bible / 2001 = 61,000,000 Bibles sold/given out each year.

"but the wise shall understand", those who seek the Lord's guidance through His word will understand what this information explosion is all about.

Prophecy: **People will mock the return of Jesus**

Bible Reference: **2 Peter 3:3-4**

(2Pe 3:3-4) "knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, [4] and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

Today: **Preterists/JW's deny bodily return of Jesus. Post-millennialists believe that Jesus can ONLY return if we do our part. Post-millennialists believe that Jesus will only return when the entire world has been converted to Christianity.**

Many "Christians" today deny that Jesus will physically return. Others, like Joel Osteen and Pat

Robertson believe that He will return only IF we believers work towards it. Thinking that we can "force" Jesus to return sooner or later makes a mockery of His omnipotence and sovereignty.

Prophecy: **People will fall away from the truth (Apostasy)**

Bible Reference: **2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1**

(2Th 2:3), "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,"

(1Ti 4:1), "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,"

Today: **Non-Christian religions are growing faster than Christianity.**

More and more people are seeking spiritual answers to the confusion of today's complex world. But in growing numbers, they are rejecting the truth of the Gospel to follow the easier false beliefs.

Christian churches are growing on average 1-2% per year.

Non-Christian religions & atheism, 8% and more, Wicca grows by over 40% a year.

The Muslim religion is growing at approx. 6% per year.

Factor into that 1-2% of Christian church growth is growth in churches who claim to be Christian but don't necessarily adhere to orthodox Christianity. Many of the mega-churches and TBN-associated churches are included in that 1-2%. Bible-based Christian (orthodox) churches are actually slightly shrinking in number.

Prophecy: **People will gather around them false teachers**

Bible Reference: **2 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 4:3-4**

(2Pe 2:1-2), "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. [2] And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed."

There will be Christians who will find themselves in churches that aren't teaching God's Word.. These churches will not be fully Biblical. They'll have false doctrines that seem minor on the surface but will pave the way for even greater heresy... eventually including the denial of the deity of Jesus.

(2Ti 4:3-4), "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; [4] and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

Today: **Fewer Christian churches accurately and completely teach God's Word.**

Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church denies the need for a person to repent of their sins. They say that all one has to do is "accept Jesus as their savior". Without an acknowledgement of their sins, why do they need a savior? These megachurches for the most part (there are some exceptions) are experiencing dramatic growth because they preach a "cotton candy" gospel message... a message that doesn't mention sin or the need to repent. *(It's a lot easier to "accept Christ" if you don't have to give up the stuff you like to do, even if the Bible says so.)* But that kind of acceptance is not the kind that saves anyone from the penalty of sin.

Prophecy: **People use deceptive means to accumulate wealth**

Bible Reference: **James 5:1-6**

(James 5:1-6), "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! [2] Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. [3] Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. [4] Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. [5] You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.[6] You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you."

Today: **Increasing number of stories involving financial fraud.**

Enron scandal – company lied about financial picture, insiders cashed in, 1000's of employees and investors lost their entire life's savings, pensions, and other investment accounts as a result.

Oil - Exxon Chairman received a compensation package totaling \$400 Million. At a time when fuel prices are skyrocketing, those with power and influence in the oil industry are reaping record profits. Exxon's reported profits for 2005 were \$36 Billion... more than any other company, ever.

Illegal Immigrants – The influx of illegal immigrants into the US is largely caused by availability of cheap jobs. Although these US employers pay less than the Federal minimum wage, these wages are higher than what these workers could make in their own country. [The businesses who hire these illegals, don't pay taxes on those wages.](#)

CEO salaries -

In Japan, a CEO makes 11 times more money than the low-end worker.

If the average worker makes \$30,000, then the CEO would make \$330,000.

In Germany, a CEO makes 13 times more money than the common worker.

If the average worker makes \$30,000, then the CEO would make \$390,000.

In the US, a CEO makes between 400-1000 times more money than the common worker.... That's the average, the upper limit is far higher.

If the average worker makes \$30,000, then the CEO would make \$12,000,000 - \$30,000,000.

The hunger for, and pursuit of, the accumulation of wealth is out of control. It has gone beyond simply having a decent life and a little money in savings.

It's about having the biggest vehicles (like the Hummer), having the biggest houses (called McMansions because of the size and number of these huge homes)

Prophecy: **The Last Days will be Perilous times**

Bible Reference: **2 Timothy 3:1-5**

(2Tim 3:1-5), "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: [2] For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, [4] traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

Today: **Male Cosmetics industry is largest ever, fastest growing.**

(...men will be lovers of themselves.)

Today: **Rap culture & American Consumerism glorify attainment of material wealth.**

(...lovers of money, boasters, proud) Designer clothes, flashy jewelry, luxury cars, big houses, expensive entertainment equipment, etc. all are for the purposes of bragging about their accomplishments.

Today: **Anti-Christian books are popular.**

(...blasphemers) Books like the "DaVinci Code" and "Gospel of Judas" deny Jesus.

Today: **Greater number of reports of children abusing parents.**

(...disobedient to parents) Example: A 6 yr old Port Charlotte, FL boy was arrested for kicking his pregnant mother in the stomach.

Today: **Greater sense of entitlement.**

(...unthankful) Children don't appreciate the things they have as much as previous generations did. Computers, iPods, cellphones, cars, etc. They don't think that they need to earn them... they believe that they simply DESERVE THEM.

Today: **Comedians are mostly "Crude" and "Angry".**

(...unholy, unloving, unforgiving)

Today: **An end to civility in society.**

(...without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, headstrong, haughty) People are more opinionated. They don't feel the need to respect differing opinions. Good manners are not practiced anymore. People use cellphones in movie theatres and libraries without considering others.

I think that it is safe to say, that by any interpretation of Scripture, that we are truly living in the Last Days... and that these are the Signs of the Times.

The Rapture

Bible Reference: **Matthew 24:36-42; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17;**

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

The "Rapture" is the event described in the Bible where all true believers (both alive and those who have died) will be snatched into the air, into Heaven to be with Jesus before His physical return.

(1Th 4:14-17), "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. [15] For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

It is important to note that the word "Rapture" does not appear in the Bible. The English word "Rapture" comes from the Latin word "*rapio*" which means "caught up".

(Mat 24:36-42), "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. [37] But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [38] For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, [39] and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [40] Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. [42] Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."

When the Rapture happens, we're not going to have any immediate sign before it happens. It's just going to happen. No one knows what day it will happen... anyone who claims to know is making that claim on their own belief, not based on the word of God.

(1Co 15:51-53), "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

So not only will we be caught up to be with the Lord, but at that time our mortal, earthly bodies, will be changed to immortal bodies that won't age and won't die.

As fantastic as this sounds, it is all true. The whole Bible is true. You can read the Old Testament and all that was written is true. The prophecies that were fulfilled, were fulfilled literally.

All prophecy up to this point in time has been fulfilled. The next event in God's prophetic timeline IS the Rapture! So although we are witnessing the Signs of the Times and Living in the Last Days, we should be hopefully anticipating the return of Jesus!!!

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Part II. Rise of the Antichrist

Recap

In Part I. we covered the "Last Days" and the Rapture of the Church. This section picks up right after the Rapture and will cover the political landscape of the Middle East, the impending Gog/Magog war, and the rise of the AntiChrist onto the International scene.

Post-Rapture World

Many believe that when the Rapture happens, airplanes will fall from the sky (because Christian pilots will have been taken), automobiles, trucks, and buses will go careening out of control as Christian drivers are taken. Many believe that the ensuing mayhem will be so devastating that it will incapacitate the United States. (They believe this explains why there is no mention of the US in the book of Revelation)

But will it actually happen that way? The Bible doesn't say. Consider the events of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. In less than an hour after the initial attack, all flights were grounded. Many people

returned to their homes to watch the news. Many experts believe that the next terrorist attack on US soil will be on a larger scale than 9/11. What if the Rapture were to occur within hours of a major (possibly multinational) terrorist attack?

After such attack, planes would be grounded. The government could order civilians to stay off public roads. So there wouldn't be the wholesale devastation as many believe. And since many people will be either at home or work, the number of non-believers who witness their friends and coworkers disappear will be dramatically reduced. These eyewitnesses could be easily dismissed as crackpots and nutjobs. The purpose for presenting that alternative scenario is to remind us that if the Bible doesn't make reference to something in particular then the possibilities are greater than what some/many Christian think. Don't think within the box!

Middle East is Key!

Prophecy: **The Middle East will be a hotbed for conflict**

Bible Reference: **Gen 16:10-12, 17:20, 21:8-13, 25:18**

(Gen 16:10-12), "Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." [11] And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. [12] He shall be a wild man; **Arabs/Muslims do seem to be wild** His hand shall be against every man **they do seem to attack everybody**, And every man's hand against him. **The world seems to be taking up arms against them** And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." **The greatest concentration of Arabs is in the areas surrounding Israel**

Today: **Every day there are events happening in the Middle East that are of International newsworthiness.**

Regardless of how the aftermath of the Rapture unfolds, we know that the Middle East is the area where the action will be. Those unfamiliar with the Bible are puzzled about the ongoing conflict in the region. But it was foretold in the Bible. Before the modern day nations existed, before Islam was invented... even before Moses delivered the nation of Israel out of bondage in Egypt! We need to go back to the book of Genesis and the birth of Abraham's son by Hagar, Ishmael. (Gen 16:10-12)

Interesting Note: The fact that there exists a Middle East conflict today is proof that the Bible is true! There is no other place on Earth where things have remained unchanged over the 1000's of years. It is NOT coincidence that the only place still experiencing conflict is the one foretold by the Bible. (BEFORE there were Muslims, terrorists, etc.)

Prophecy: Israel will be involved in a significant war prior to the Tribulation (Gog/Magog War)

Bible Reference: **Eze 38, 39**

It is quite possible that in the aftermath of the Rapture, Middle East nations will attempt to take advantage of the ensuing global confusion to wage war on Israel. Ezekiel prophesied about a battle between Israel and Gog/Magog in which Israel will miraculously be victorious. It seems to make sense that this battle occurs prior to the 7 year peace treaty brokered by the Antichrist. But whether it happens before, or immediately after the Rapture is not known.

(Eze 38:1-6), "Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [2] "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, [3] and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. [4] I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. [5] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; [6] Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you."

To understand where future battles will take place and who will be involved, it is important to know the modern names of the ancient Biblical regions.

| Biblical Name | Modern Name |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Persia | Iran |
| Cush | Ethiopia |
| Phut (Put) | Libya |
| Gomer | Germany (Cimmerians) |
| Togarmah | Turkic Tribes / Armenia |
| Meshech & Tubal | Turkey |
| Sheba & Dedan | Saudi Arabia |
| Tarshish | Spain |

So based on these verses, Israel will wage war against the following countries who will be allied against Israel: Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, Germany, Armenia, and Turkey.

(Eze 38:13) makes mention that Saudi Arabia and Spain will sit on the sidelines and will only appear on the scene after the battle to plunder whatever valuable items remain.

It is interesting to note that Saudi Arabia remains one of the U.S.' strongest Arab allies. Could this help explain why Saudi Arabia does not get involved?

POST-BATTLE CLEAN-UP. Ezekiel chapter 39 deals with the aftermath of the Gog/Magog war.

(Eze 39:14-15), "They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. [15] The search party will pass through the land; and when anyone sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog."

This seems to indicate a war where nuclear weapons were used. This description sounds exactly like the U.S. military procedures for dealing with areas of radioactive contamination. Medical science has determined that bone marrow activity returns to normal after 7 months of exposure to radiation. It took 3 months before people could safely return to Hiroshima and Nagasaki after atomic bombs were detonated. It would take approximately 7 months after a modern nuclear weapon was detonated.

Today: **The Middle Eastern countries are preparing for war against Israel.**

Today: **The Iranian president's speeches center around war with Israel.** (rumors of war!)

Today: **Iran is aggressively pursuing the development of nuclear weapons.** (Some experts believe that Iran already possesses nuclear weaponry!)

The Antichrist (Beast)

Bible Reference: **Ez 28:1-10; Dan 7:7-8, 20-26; 8:23-25; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; 2 Th 2:3-10; Rev 13:1-10; 17:8-14**

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will broker a peace treaty with many nations in the Middle East**

Bible Reference: **Dan 9:27**

(Dan 9:27) "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; ..."

The "covenant with many" implies that it is more than just with Israel and another nation... perhaps it will include all the nations involved in the Gog/Magog war.

Today: **The world is seeking someone to bring peace to the Middle East.**

4 of the last 32 Nobel Peace prizes awarded were related to the Middle East. (Except for the Middle East, there was never more than one Nobel Prize awarded for a particular geographical issue)

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will be the head of the revived Roman Empire**

Bible Reference: **Rev 13, 17:8-14**

(Rev 17:9), "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

The seven "mountains" of 17:9 are a reference to Rome. Rome sits on seven hills.

Today: **The boundaries of the European Union are virtually identical to those of the Roman Empire at the height of its power.**

(Rev 17:3) "... And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

The ten horns represents kings/nations. The 10th nation to join the European Union was Greece in 1981. The symbol used on the Greek 2 Euro coin is that of the mythological person, Europa... a woman riding a beast. The continent of Europe was named after Europa.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_Union_member_states_by_accession



Prophecy: **The Antichrist's Government will be global**

Bible Reference: **Rev 13:7**

(Rev 13:7) "It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation."

The Antichrist's sphere of control will be the entire world.

Today: **The European Union is seeking to add Scandinavian countries, countries in North Africa, Slavic Eastern European nations... even the Vatican and Israel have been mentioned!**

Obviously the European Union is not limited to geography. President George Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox are working to expand NAFTA to form a North America Union similar in structure to the EU. Within a few short years, nearly all of the existing nations will be part of an organized group of nations.

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will establish a world religion**

Bible Reference: **Rev 16:13-14, 13:8-15**

(Rev 13:11-12) "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. [12] And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

The False Prophet will be the religious spokesperson for the Antichrist.

Today: **Sunni and Shi'a Muslims await the appearance of their Savior (The Mahdi).**

Muslims believe that the Mahdi is their savior, will rule the world for 7 years and then the end of the world will come. They believe that Jesus will accompany the Mahdi. Muslims don't believe in Jesus as Christians do. They only believe that Jesus is a prophet. It is not difficult to see the parallels between the Antichrist and the Mahdi and their Jesus as the false prophet! Considering that Islam is the world's fastest growing religion and has spread to all continents, it isn't too difficult to see how it could be the basis for the Antichrist's religious system.

The Political system of the Antichrist

Mark of the Beast, Image of the Beast. Beheadings

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will a mark of allegiance**

Bible Reference: **Rev 13:16-17, 14:9-11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4**
(Rev 13:16-17) ["He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, \[17\] and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."](#)

The Antichrist will require everyone to receive a mark of allegiance to him in order to buy or sell anything.

Today: **RFID.** (Radio Frequency Identification Devices)

RFID devices emit a radio signal that can be used to uniquely identify the person, object, or animal carrying it. They come in different sizes. One is the size of a grain of rice and is currently being implanted in cats and dogs for tracking purposes. There are nightclubs in Glasgow, Rotterdam, and Barcelona that offer the implanting RFID grains under the skin of the right hand of "regulars" so that they don't have to handle money in the nightclub.

[People years ago claimed that Social Security numbers were the mark of the beast, but clearly, RFID is technology that is already being used EXACTLY as the Bible describes.](#)

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will have an image of the beast**

Bible Reference: **Rev 13:14-15, 14:9-11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4**
(Rev 13:15) ["He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.."](#)

The exact nature of this "image" is not known. But it appears that this "image" will appear to be living, speak, and interact with those in its presence.

Today: **Robotics / HDTV / holography.**

Technology companies in Japan and South Korea are making tremendous advancement in the development of robots that look surprisingly human. They have even developed a skin-like covering that can detect pressure (touch) and temperature. As of today, it is possible to create a human-like robot with the functionality of what is described in the Book of Revelation.

It is possible that the "image" of the beast is going to be an interactive HDTV monitor and that John was unable to find the words to describe it. Current HDTV technology can display an image on the screen that looks life-like. ([like there is an actual person in the TV set](#))

Prophecy: **The Antichrist will have Christian's beheaded**

Bible Reference: **Rev 20:4**

(Rev 20:4) "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

This verse is clearly referring to those killed during the Tribulation. It implies that beheadings will be the method of execution.

Today: **Beheadings are now in the news.**

Prior to the attacks on 9/11, beheadings were virtually unheard of for 100's of years. (and only in the context of the French Revolution). Suddenly, the reports of terrorists beheading captives is in the news.

In closing...

As grim as this all sounds, the fact that these things are happening now, that the technology is available now, is a strong indication that the Lord is indeed coming soon, and quite possibly in our lifetime! Look up! For our redemption draweth nigh.

"THE TRIBULATION FILES"

Part III. Return of the King

Recap

In Part I. we covered the “Last Days” and the Rapture of the Church. In Part II we examined the fallout of the Rapture, the Gog/Magog War and the Antichrist’s rise to power and domination of the world. In Part III, we conclude our study by reviewing the judgments, the Battle of Armageddon, and the triumphant return of Jesus. There is quite a bit of symbolism regarding the individual judgments. We will not explore ALL of the possible meanings for the symbols, but we will pick one for each and run with it. You are strongly encouraged to do your own research!

The “Great Tribulation”

As we covered in Part II, the Antichrist will broker a 7 year peace treaty. This will also be the time when God pours out His wrath on the world. It is referred to, as the “Great Tribulation”. The book of Revelation describes 3 waves of judgments during this time period. Each one is more devastating than the previous one. The 3 waves of judgments are the “Seal”, the “Trumpet”, and the “Vial (or Bowl)” judgments.

The “Seal” Judgments

(Rev 6:1-8:5) The “Seal” judgments can be categorized as, “God’s Wrath using human agents”. In other words, He will use mankind to dispense His judgment during this wave. It starts first with the rise of the Antichrist onto the world stage. Next there will be outbreaks of war throughout the world...more than ever before. These wars may effect the ability for nations to produce food, leading to shortages and famine. These shortages may cause some to hoard food and in turn sell it at exorbitant prices. This wave of death will be capped by a massive earthquake.

Prophecy: **Massive earthquake will cause the sun and moon to be obscured and debris to fall from the sky.**

[\(Rev 6:12-13\)](#) "I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. [13] And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind."

Bible Reference: **Rev 6:12**

Today: **Dust, soot, and smoke from massive earthquake in Japan (1995) and terrorist attacks on 9/11 temporarily darkened the skies.**

During strong earthquakes, tons of dust and fine particles are propelled into the atmosphere. Buildings damaged by an earthquake catch fire, sending thick and toxic smoke upwards. During the terrorist attacks of 9/11, dust, smoke, and soot from the collapsed buildings and the resulting fires blotted out the

sun. It looked like nighttime. The refraction of the light through this thick haze made the moon appear reddish in color. As flammable material ignited and exploded, flaming shards fell back to earth... which might look like "stars" to an untrained eye.

The "Trumpet" Judgments

(Rev 8:7-11:19) The "Seal" judgments can be categorized as, "God's Wrath using natural agents". In other words, He will use His creation (earth, sky, etc.) to dispense His judgment during this wave. First tremendous fires will wipe out significant portions of vegetation. Next, volcanic activity will heat the oceans, killing 1/3 of all sea life.

Prophecy: **One-third of drinking water will be made undrinkable.**

Bible Reference: **Rev 8:10-11**

[\(Rev 8:10-11\)](#) "Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. [11] The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter."

Today: **The dormant nuclear reactor at Chernobyl poses a threat.**

What does Chernobyl have to do with this prophecy? The word "Chernobyl" is the Ukrainian word for "wormwood" (a type of grass, absinth). It appears that in this judgment, Chernobyl (and perhaps other nuclear power plants) will explode and the radioactive water used in cooling the reactor will contaminate a third of the fresh water rivers and underground wells. Needless to say, drinking radioactive water results in death.



The Danger in Prophecy Speculation

We must exercise extreme caution when trying to figure out how Biblical prophecy will actually unfold. As time goes by, people develop their ideas about how things **might** play out and then eventually believe that is how they **will** play out.

Many popular prophecy teachers believe that a Chinese army of 200 million soldiers will start a war that will kill 1/3 of mankind. They use Rev 9:13-17 as their proof-text.

(Rev 9:13-17), "Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, [14] saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." [15] So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. [16] Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. [17] And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone."

They look at the number "200 million" and then try to figure out what country would be capable of those numbers and conclude that it must be China. The Bible doesn't mention China directly or indirectly with regard to the 200 million. Does the Bible really mention 200 million?

In the NKJV, verse 16 contains "two hundred million". The KJV contains, "two hundred thousand thousand". If we look at the original Greek for that verse we see, "*duo murias murias*". "*Duo*" means two. "*Murias*" means "myriad, an indefinite number".

Let's compare another verse in the book of Revelation that mentions the word "thousand"... (Read: Rev 20:4)

(Rev 20:4), "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

The Greek word for "thousand" in this verse is, "*chilioi*" which means "a literal one thousand". Although the English word "thousand" is used in both verses, the underlying Greek words are different. Rev 9:16 describes a number of soldiers that are twice a myriad of myriads... a huge uncountable number. Could it actually be 200 million? Sure... but the Bible doesn't really say that.

The red-blue-yellow described in verse 17 sounds very similar to the Romanian flag (which contains three vertical bars of red-blue-yellow) and one of the flags of Kazakhstan. Could it be possible that this army is from Eastern Europe? (Sure... it might actually be from China... but the Bible doesn't mention it.)

Note, Arizona's flag is also red, blue, and yellow... maybe those Arizonians left behind will be part of that army?

The important point is that while it is nice to listen to prophecy teachers and attend seminars, they don't take the place of studying God's Word directly. We need to know what His Word says, and what it

doesn't, so that we can discern what ideas have a Biblical foundation, and which ones are merely speculation by the author or teacher.

The "Bowl (Vial)" Judgments

(Rev 16:1-16:21) The "Bowl" judgments can be categorized as, "God's Wrath on the followers of the Antichrist and False Prophet". The bowl judgments occur during the latter half of the Tribulation and are more devastating than the judgments before. As with all of the judgments, there may be "natural" explanations for them, or they may be "supernatural"... but in either case it is God that is totally in control of the manner that these judgments are dispensed. The world up to this point in the Tribulation has been near total devastation. But these last judgments will finish the job. First by destroying all life in the oceans.

Prophecy: **The Sun will flare up and severely burn those who remain.**

Bible Reference: **Rev 16:8-9**

(Rev 16:8-9) Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. [9] And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory."

Today: **There is an increase in abnormal solar activity. The protective ozone layer of the atmosphere has been damaged.**

Because of pollution and chlorofluorocarbons, the layer of the atmosphere that protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation is not as effective as it used to be. The increases in the number of reports of skin cancer and other ailments are proof. It's doesn't take a huge stretch of one's imagination to see how the previous judgments could weaken the ozone layer and finally totally destroy it. Without an ozone layer, severe sunburns could reach 1st and 2nd degree burn levels...even from short exposure to the Sun!

The Battle of Armageddon

Towards the final days of the Tribulation, the marriage of the Lamb takes place. Believers are joined with Jesus. (Rev 19:7-8)

(Rev 19:7-8) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. [8] And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

The sequence of events after the marriage of the Lamb and the final battle is not specified. What we do know is that it seems that the Antichrist and his confederation of armies bear down on Israel for one final battle... (Read: Rev 19:11-21)

(Rev 19:11-21) “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. [12] His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. [13] He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. [15] Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. [17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, [18] that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.” [19] And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. [20] Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. [21] And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

We don't know whose blood is on Jesus' robe. Perhaps it is His blood...a reminder to unbelievers of the price He paid to save them, but that they rejected.

<< point out the lack of involvement by believers... it is Jesus alone doing the “fighting”. compare and contrast Jesus suffering and death with His return. >>

(Phi 2:9-11) “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, [10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11] and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

In closing...

This three part study on Biblical Prophecy and how it relates to today's current events has been an interesting one. The correlations that were made between prophecy and the things happening in our world are only speculation. We don't know for sure. How much of what is reported in the book of Revelation is symbolic and how much is literal, is not known. Some things that appear to be symbolic (like the woman riding the beast) may actually be literal (as we saw in the Greek 2 Euro coin and the emblem of Europe).

What we DO know is that things do appear to be lining up for the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation, and the triumphant return of Jesus. That should give us a sense of urgency. Time is short. We should be sharing God's love with those that don't know Him. It should also give us hope that we may soon be in the presence of our Lord and Savior... Jesus.