

Letter of Warning¹

"Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and say to them, 'If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman; and he sees the sword coming upon the land, and he blows on the trumpet and warns the people, then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his [own] head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.'" Ezek 33:2-6

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There is a sword coming. I have a moral obligation to warn you about it, but what you do with this warning is up to you. I merely have the responsibility to pass along the information. The sword I am referring to is called the **GREAT TRIBULATION**. Many Christians have been taught that they will be raptured out *before* the great tribulation begins, but does the Bible really teach that?

There is definitely a rapture (1 Cor 15:51-52 and 1 Thes 4:16-17) and we, born-again Christians, will definitely be raptured out before God's wrath commences (1 Thes 5:9), but what is the sequence of events during the endtimes? Perhaps the verses between 1 Thes 4:16 and 5:9 will help us.

Remembering, it is man, and not God, who put in the chapter and verse divisions, what does God teach us through Paul? *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of [the] archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Now as to the times and the epochs [of what?], brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;"*

It seems that Paul associates the rapture with the beginning of the "day of the Lord"... **rapture then wrath!** (Any "day of the Lord" passages in the Old Testament will describe it as a day of "wrath".) It says here that it is the "day of the Lord" which comes "like a thief in the night," but if the rapture occurs immediately before it, that still raptures us out before God's wrath begins, and both would come as a thief in the night, right?

What else does Paul say? After telling how God will "give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven... when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day" (2 Th 1:7,10) He continues in chapter 2:1 *"Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for [it will not come] unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."*

Here again he is identifying "our gathering together to Him" [what else could this be but the rapture] with "the day of the Lord," and maintains that this cannot occur until "the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" [also known as the abomination of desolation.] but here he also includes "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Hmmm.

Enough of Paul! What does Jesus say? Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 seem to have a consistent order to them. *"When you see the abomination of desolation"... "then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall" [worse than the holocaust?...] "but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short"... "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 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." (Matt 24)... "from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven." (Mark 13.)*

Sounds like the rapture to me, with the **trumpet**, and with **people gathered from both the earth and heaven**. When you were a kid, before you learned "theology," isn't that what you thought? Of course you could do as others have done and have two or more raptures (one book I've read even speaks of seven raptures) but that has always bothered me.

...and while I'm belly-aching, let me tell you something else which has always bothered me... some people, most people I've talked to, have the sign in the sun, moon, and stars happening *three times* in order to make their chronology

¹ C:\My Documents\SCHOOLofLocalChurch\Lessons\20Prophecy&End-Times\Articles\PostTrib4.doc

work. Is that kosher? Well, what do you think? Just draw the occurrence in each of the three passages below onto the timeline.

A) Matt 24:29 *"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, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky..."* (see also Mark 13:24 and Luke 21:25.)

B) Acts 2:20 *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.* (see also Joel 2:31)

C) Rev 6:12 *And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth [made] of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.*

How many did you get? If you got more than one, does that seem right to you, or does it bother you too? If Jesus is right (isn't He always?) then this sign happens AFTER the "great tribulation", and how long does He say that the "great tribulation" lasts? Well, He doesn't come right out and say, but He does tell us that it is "cut short," and then He comes back, right? (see Matt 24 and Mark 13.)

By the way, did the Bible ever say that the great tribulation is God's wrath? According to the writers of Acts and Joel, this sign in the sun, moon and stars occurs BEFORE the "day of the Lord" comes. Well, that seems to fit with what Paul was saying, **rapture then wrath!**

Then we have this account in the Revelation. The sign occurs after the 6th seal is opened. Could this be the same sign? Well, do the fifth seal martyrs say that God's wrath has already begun on the earth (6:10) or do they ask Him when it will begin? (Besides, how many people really think that, in His wrath, God martyrs His own people?) Well then, **when** is wrath first mentioned in the Revelation? Answer: Rev 6:16, after the sixth seal is opened and the signs in the sun, moon, and stars has begun.

Another little detail which seems to indicate one sign rather than two or three... When do the men first become fearful in the Revelation account? (see Rev 6:15-17.) When do men first become fearful in Jesus' account? (Luke 21:25-26) When did those in Noah's day (who were "marrying") and those in Lot's day (who were "buying" and "planting") realize what was going on? (Mt 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-33) They didn't realize anything until the very day that God's wrath came! And of course it comes as no surprise that men are fearful of the day of the Lord! (Isa 13:6-8)

Something else that has always bothered me is how many people take Rev 7:1-8 out of sequence and put it earlier so that there will be someone to witness to the 5th seal martyrs. If we leave the 144,000 and the great multitude (the rapture?) in their place sequentially (the scripture itself says "After this" denoting some kind of sequence), it would mean that the wrath (trumpets and bowls) could not begin (Rev 7:3) until the sealing of the 144,000 and the arrival of the great multitude in heaven... **rapture then wrath!**

"Well," you say, "if the Lord's sermon on the Mt. of Olives describes the same events as the Revelation, then shouldn't there be more than a couple of items in common?" Look for yourself and see!

Compare:			
Rev 6:1-2	Mt 24:5	Mark 13:5-6	Luke 21:8
Rev 6:3-4	Mt 24:6-7	Mark 13:7-8	Luke 21:9-10
Rev 6:5-6	Mt 24:7	Mark 13:8	Luke 21:11
Rev 6:7-8	Mt 24:7-8	Mark 13:8	Luke 21:11
Rev 6:9-11	Mt 24:9-14	Mark 13:9-13	Luke 21:12-19
	Mt 24:15-20	Mark 13:14-18	Luke 21:20-21,23
	Mt 24:21-22	Mark 13:19-23	Luke 21:22-24
Rev 6:12-17	Mt 24:29-30	Mark 13:24-26	Luke 21:25-27
Rev 7:9-17	Mt 24:31-35	Mark 13:27-31	Luke 21:28-33

I think you have the picture... Did I take things out of order? (or perhaps this just be a coincidence?) Then you say, "But His coming wouldn't be imminent if all of this is true." Well, considering Dan. 9:24 specifically states that the 70 weeks (including the 70th week or seven years) includes 6 events specifically for the Jews and Jerusalem ("your people and your holy city") could His coming at the rapture have been imminent before the Jews were back in their land? Besides, does the Word of God really teach that this day will be a complete surprise? *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief"* (1 Thes 5:4) *"even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, [right] at the door"* (Mt 24:33 see also Mk 13:29) *"But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."* (Lk 21:28)

"But," you say, "that day could be calculated from the covenant or the abomination of desolation." (Dan 9:27) The end of the seven years will indeed be calculable, but will the day of this sign, the return of Jesus, and the rapture be at the end of the seven years? Jesus says that it will occur *"immediately after the tribulation of those days"* and remember He also teaches us that the great tribulation is "cut short." If it is cut short from the 42 months allotted to the Beast (Rev 12:12; 13:5) then it will last **less than 3 1/2 years** for us.

This would really solve a sticky problem which most people ignore. Matt 24:36-37 reads, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be..."* The very words *"that day and hour"* would make us ask "what day and hour" and cause us to look for the antecedent in this passage to which *"that day"* is referring. It seems to say that no one will know the exact day and hour of the coming of the Son of Man. In fact it goes to great lengths to say that. (Keep reading in Matthew, in Mark 13, and in Luke 17.) Of course many think it refers to the rapture, but if the rapture is the antecedent, where is it in these passages? Could it be Mt 24:31, Mark 13:27, and Luke 21:28? (And don't forget, if the antecedent was His coming with great power and glory at the end of the seven years, then how is it you can not calculate that day from the covenant or the abomination of desolation?)

I know this is probably quite a departure from your present understanding of the sequence of end times events. When I realized that this was the only way to line everything up without moving scriptures around and having multiple occurrences of certain events, I was excited in the discovery, but I was also a bit upset. First of all, I used to be "pre-trib" and I would much rather be raptured out *before* the great tribulation begins. (I invite anyone to help me return to my pre-trib beliefs:-) Secondly, as far as I knew, I was the only one on the face of God's green earth who believed the way I did, and I wasn't pre, mid *or* post! I didn't even know *what* I was! Finally, a book came out titled, The Prewrath Rapture of the Church by Marvin Rosenthal. I not only had found another Bible student who had come to the same conclusions I had, but I now had a label, "Prewrath."

If this scenario is really the true meaning of what the Bible says, then that means that Christians will indeed go through the great tribulation (and then be raptured out before the day of the Lord's wrath begins.) And how does Jesus describe the great tribulation? *"...there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall."* I guess that would mean that it is **worse than the holocaust**. And what is the nature of the great tribulation? Read Rev 12:12-13:18 (Thank God it is cut short for us!)

The reason I am writing you is this. When someone knows about a coming storm, a coming disaster, he has an obligation to warn others. I'm sure that the holocaust victims would have preferred to have had advance warning so that they could have sought the Lord as to what type of preparations to make or actions to take. The weather service regularly warns people who are in the path of a hurricane. Some take shelter elsewhere, some stock up and board up, and some do nothing. The weather service is not responsible for preparing the residents, but they are responsible for getting the report out.

Well, that is my job. Sometimes I have been very frustrated when people I love look at me and tell me that they don't want to hear about it because they don't really care, and others just smile and say that the Lord will take care of them. Well the Lord will take care of us, but the blessing in the Revelation is for those who read and HEED. In my frustration, I have asked the Lord "Do I really have to warn others? Shouldn't that be somebody else's job... some man who has been to seminary... someone who is well respected and well known, and NOT some female whose only credentials are an ability to read and a stubborn belief in the inerrant Word of God." Then He seemed to answer me from the very scripture in which I had first received the calling, Ezek 33:3-6. He reminded me that just as He had called me to blow my French Horn (modern day descendant of the shofar) in my congregation in worship and praise to Him, and just as He had called me to blow the shofar calls in The Atlanta Passion Play, He had indeed called me to again blow the shofar (Hebrew word translated as "trumpet" in this passage) this time in warning to my brothers in Messiah.

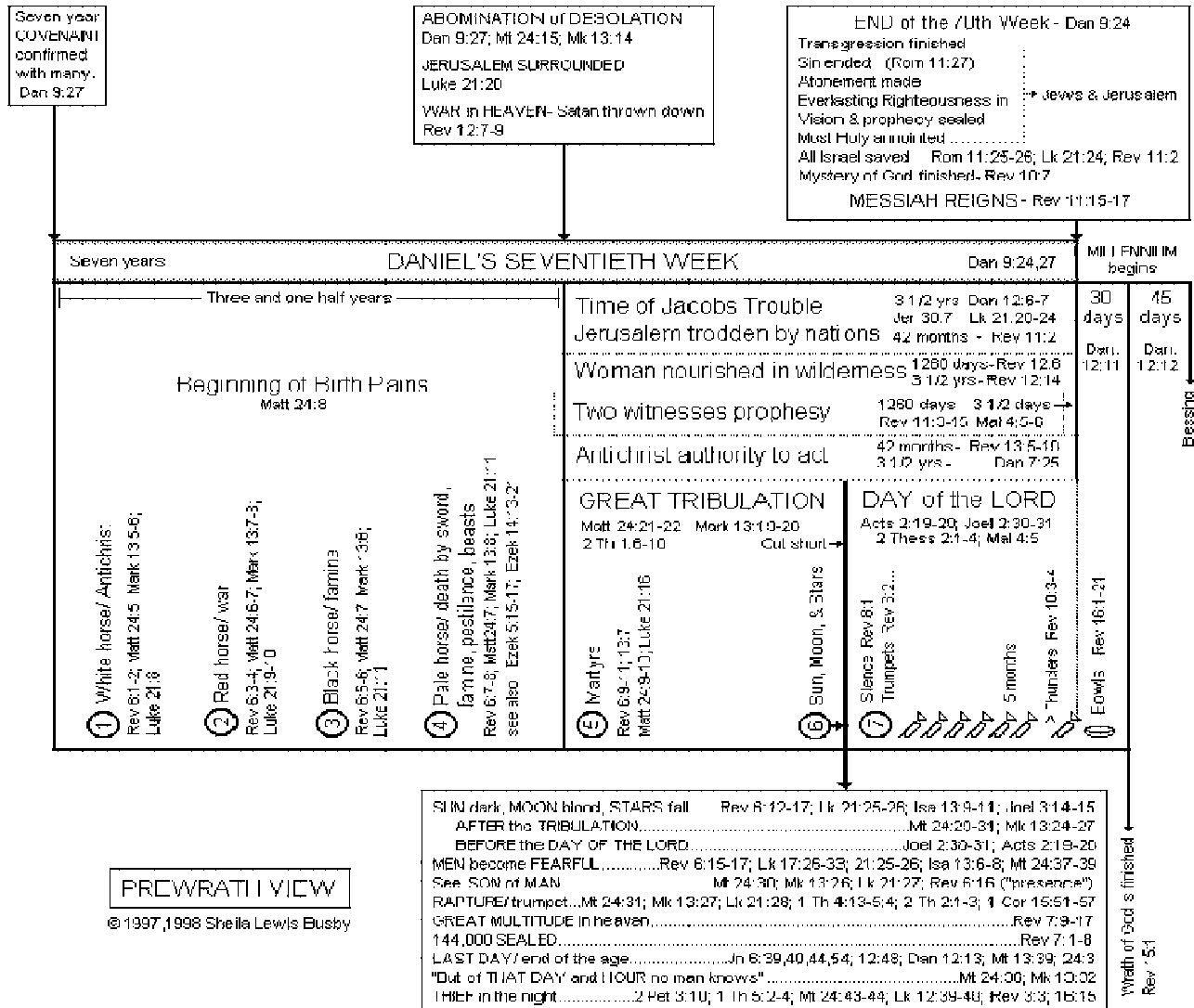
This letter to you is my warning. If I am wrong, then you can say "I told you so" on our way up to meet the Lord in the air:-) But if I am correct, then you will see some man rise to power and confirm a seven year covenant with Israel (remembering that every agreement with Israel is not front page news.) You will see a temple built and sacrifices begun, and then Elijah as well as another prophet/witness will appear, there will troop movements toward Jerusalem, then the "antichrist" will seat himself in the temple, and... well, you know the rest.

I would encourage you to ask the Lord about this, and then get out your Bible and search diligently to see if these things are so (especially you men who have been entrusted with the safety of your families and congregations.) I shudder to think what will happen to the average Christian who has been led to expect a PreTrib rapture, when the antichrist is revealed. Will they flee from those pastors who were mistaken, straight into the eager arms of the false teachers and false prophets so often warned about? I don't know. My only obligation is to warn you. Now I will consider the warning sounded. **What you do with it now is up to you!**

I have developed a TIMELINE which attempts to visually illustrate my understanding of the sequence of endtime events. I invite you to E-MAIL me with your questions and rebuttals. If I can't find solutions to them in the Word, then maybe I need to reconsider some or all of my scenario.

Please stay in touch with your ideas, discoveries, inside information, etc. I plan to develop a unit to be taught on how to prepare for and persevere during the great tribulation (hereafter known as "SUCCESS" for "Secrets of the Underground Christian Community's Endtime Survival System:-) It will include things like the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den and the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as well as the viewing of The Hiding Place, etc. Who knows, I may throw in a kudzu recipe or two. The Lord will lead each family in any preparations which may be needed, but I'll post whatever ideas we (that includes you) can come up with. We'll see what develops.

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." Thank you, Lord, for your Word and for your Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth and disclose to us what is to come. In Him, Sheila Lewis Busby



What "Day and Hour"?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone..." What is the antecedent for "that day and hour" in Matt 24:36 or Mark 13:32? I am asking from a grammatical viewpoint, not theological viewpoint since many theologians make assumptions about timing which I feel are unjustified by the scriptures. Let's read both passages first, and watch carefully to see if you can find the day to which we are referred.

Matt 24:1 (NASB) And Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He answered and said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down." 3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what [will be] the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "And 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. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are [merely] the beginning of birth pangs. 9 "THEN they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who

endures to the end (end of what?), **he shall be saved.** 14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. 15 "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), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; 21 for **THEN there will be a GREAT TRIBULATION**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect **those days shall be cut short.** 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There [He is,]' do not believe [him.] 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 "Behold (**WARNING**), I have told you in advance. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, [or,] 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe [them.] 27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall **the coming of the Son of Man** be. 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29 "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, 30 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 (who?) will see the **Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "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. 32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: **when** its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, (**then**) you know that summer is near; 33 even so you too, **when** you see all these things, (**then**) **recognize that He is near, [right] at the door.** 34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

36 "But of that day and hour (WHAT day and hour?) no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 "For **the coming of the Son of Man** will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall **the coming of the Son of Man** be. 40 "Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. 41 "Two women [will be] grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. 42 "**Therefore be on the alert**, for you do not know **which day your Lord is coming.** 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the **thief** was coming, he would have been **on the alert** and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason **you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think** [He will.]

Mark 13:1 (NASB) And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" 2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down." 3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, 4 "Tell us, **when** will these things be, and what [will be] the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" 5 And Jesus began to say to them, "**See to it that no one misleads you.** 6 "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am [He!]' and will mislead many. 7 "And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, **do not be frightened**; [those things] must take place; but [that is] not yet the end. 8 "For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will [also] be famines. **These things are [merely] the beginning of birth pangs.** 9 "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to [the] courts, and you will be flogged in [the] synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. 10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 "And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but [it is] the Holy Spirit. 12 "And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father [his] child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. 13 "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. 14 "But **WHEN you see the abomination of desolation** standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), **THEN** let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 "And let him who is on the housetop not go down, or enter in, to get anything out of his house; 16 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 17 "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 18 "But pray that it may not happen in the winter. 19 "For **those days will be a [time of] tribulation** such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. 20 "And unless the Lord had shortened [those] days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, **He shortened the days.** 21 "And **THEN** if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, [He is] there'; do not believe [him,] 22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray. 23 "But take heed (**WARNING**); behold, I have told you everything in advance. 24 "But in those days, **AFTER that tribulation**, the **sun** will be darkened, and the **moon** will not give its light, 25 and the **stars** will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "And then they will see the **Son of Man coming** in clouds with great power and glory. 27 "And **THEN** He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to

the farthest end of heaven. 28 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: **when** its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, (**then**) you know that summer is near. 29 "Even so, you too, **when** you see these things happening, (**then**) recognize that **He is near, [right] at the door**. 30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. 32 "But of that day or hour (WHAT day and hour???) no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father [alone.] 33 "**Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the [appointed] time is**. 34 ["It is] like a man, away on a journey, [who] upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, [assigning] to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to **stay on the alert**. 35 "Therefore, **be on the alert--** for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning-- 36 lest **he come suddenly and find you asleep**. 37 "And what I say to you I say to all, '**Be on the alert!**'"

Did you find it? Did you find the day that "that day" was referring to? The reasons I bring it up are these:

The phrase "But of that day and hour no one knows..." is most often quoted as a proof text for the imminent (pretrib) rapture of the church. YET, these same people believe that the **coming** described in these passages is not the rapture (nevermind that the elect are gathered from earth and heaven after a trumpet call)! How can we find an antecedent if they claim the rapture is not even described in these passages? We can't!

They also believe that the "*Second Coming in clouds with great power and glory*" occurs at the END of the seven years, thus the date of the Second Coming would be calculable. If we could assume this, then they would be correct in saying "that day and hour" could not refer to the second coming with great power and glory. HOWEVER, Mt 24:22 and Mk 13:20 say that those days ("those days" referring to the great tribulation) are **cut short!** I realize that people argue about what that means (the scriptures don't go into any detail), but if we can just accept by faith (since we believe the word of God to be inerrant) that they ARE cut short, then we could have an uncalculable second coming with great power and glory to which "that day and hour" could refer. This alone would not disprove a pretrib rapture, but it sure puts a dent in the doctrine of imminence so often given as a proof of a pretrib rapture.

I believe that the Jesus goes to great lengths to tell us that "that day" is referring to the day of His coming in great power and glory. Look again at the scriptures and see just how many times "**His coming**" is referred to, both before and after "that day".

Mt 24:27, 29, 30, 33, 37, 39, 42, 44. Oh, and look at the thief comment in verse 43. There are multiple WARNINGS in Matthew and Mark concerning being **alert!** "*Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.*" **Why would He repeatedly warn us if we weren't going to be here?** He even says in Mk 13:36, "*lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.*" Asleep?! Sounds like our favorite "like a thief in the night" passage, 1 Thess 5:4 "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.* 5 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* 6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as [do] others; but let us watch and be sober.*" Looks like our "like a thief in the night" passage doesn't refer to an imminent return either. Hmmmmm.

The omniscient God could have chosen any number of things to write to us in His Word. HOWEVER, out of all of the knowledge in the world, all of the scientific discoveries, all of the the medical wisdom, He chose to warn us repeatedly about the end times. A full one quarter of the Bible is concerning the last days, yet we just skip over so much of it BECAUSE we think it won't personally affect us or our families. When are we going to WAKE UP! The study of theology is just fine and dandy, but when our theology causes the Bible to contradict itself, who are we going to believe? Can an inerrant Word contradict itself? Can we pretend that we don't need an antecedent for "that day and hour" and ignore Christ's repeated warnings? Shall we just hope everything will "pan out" in the end?

Pretrib Rapture Problems

The Bible says that "*there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.*" Does that mean that the great tribulation will be worse than the holocaust? Could it mean that it will be worse than what some Christians are going through around the world today? Unfortunately, most believers have never really looked for themselves to see what the Bible has to say about these things. The PRETRIB viewpoint has been taught from the pulpit, in the seminaries as well as from the notes contained within the covers of the Bible itself, but does it deserve closer scrutiny by those charged with the welfare of families and even entire congregations?

Here are a few of the more glaring problems: Most believers in the pretrib rapture theory would have that celestial event in which the the sun turns dark, the moon to blood and stars falling occurring three times. I believed in the pretrib theory myself for years, yet I don't think I ever stopped to ponder this. What do you think? Read these scripture passages, and decide what YOU believe!

- A) Matt 24:29 "*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, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky...* (see also Mark 13:24 and Luke 21:25.)
- B) Acts 2:20 "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.* (see also Joel 2:31)

C) Rev 6:12 *And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth [made] of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.*

Compare Matt 24:31 *"And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect..."* and 1 Cor 15:52 *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the dead in Christ shall rise..."* Should we make these two separate incidences also? The elect being gathered could be Israel... oops, the parallel passage in Mark 13:27 says they are gathered from earth **and** heaven. If this isn't the rapture, what is it? E me! Pretribbers have to explain where the fifth seal martyrs (Rev 6:9-11) come from. If we are gone, who witnesses to them? "The 144,000 Jewish witnesses, of course." Just one problem (well, maybe two:-), they aren't even mentioned until **after** the sixth seal. "Oops! I guess we'll have to take the chapters out of order to make the theory work..."

Sorry, I don't buy that either. What is the very first phrase of Chapter 7? *"After this..."* After what? After the sixth seal has been opened. I think we had better leave the 144,000 where God put them. By the way, which verse is it that says they are witnesses? My translation says they were "bond-servants", but doesn't actually specify what type of service they render. E-mail me if you know what scripture describes this, or if you can explain how these martyrs got saved in the first place. Otherwise, we must be prepared for the possibility that this could be us, or our children. Are your children, your family, your friends ready to lose their lives for the sake of the Word of God and their testimony of Jesus? Are you?

Most pretribbers base their beliefs on 1 Thess 5:9, *"For God has not destined us for wrath..."* This is fine and dandy if you use the scriptural meaning of "wrath." We prewrathers are most thankful for this promise. However, shouldn't we figure out what God meant by "wrath" before we go betting our family's safety and even their very lives on it? So many believe that "wrath" = "tribulation" but does it? John 16:33 says, *"In the world you shall have tribulation..."* Are we destined for tribulation? Yes! (Read the letters to the churches in Revelation 2 & 3). But are we destined for wrath? No! Maybe you just believe that "wrath" = "seven year tribulation" but does the Bible ever mention a "seven year tribulation"? What about Daniel 9? Look it up. Does it anywhere mention "tribulation"? Does it anywhere mention "wrath"? No and no! But wait... what about the abomination of desolation? That **is** mentioned here and it is also mentioned in relation to tribulation, isn't it? What does Matthew 24:15-21 say?

"Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place... for then there will be a great tribulation..." (see also Mark 13:14-19).

It seems the "great tribulation," a specific time of tribulation, occurs **after** the abomination of desolation has occurred. Daniel 9:27 says the abomination is in the middle of the week (seven year period). Do Daniel, Matthew or Mark say the beginning of the "week" is *tribulation*? Do they ever say that it is *wrath*? I was really looking for a scripture reference that would establish that this seven year period really was "wrath" (hey, I wanted to stay pretrib, believe me!). I even looked up every single cross-reference given by Dwight Pentecost in Things to Come, and you know what? They all were referring to "the day of the Lord" wrath. Not a one referred to "tribulation." Evidently, Dr. Pentecost equated "seven year tribulation" with "day of the Lord" wrath. That's why most people would put the sun, moon and stars event related in Acts 2 and Joel 2 at the **beginning** of the seven years.

Anyway, I still can't find any proof that the whole seven years is *tribulation* or *wrath*. If you've found something I haven't, **please e-mail me** the scripture reference and I'll publish it. Until then, it's a problem. But, Jesus is coming like a "thief in the night" (1 Thess 5:2), right? This proves we won't know the day or hour; this proves His coming is "imminent," right? Well, what does it say? *"The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night..."* So, the rapture must come at the beginning of the Day of the Lord for the "thief in the night" to refer to the rapture, right? ("The day of the Lord" is definitely God's wrath. Check out any Old Testament reference.) That's what I believe too, but look at verse 4. *"But you brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief."*

Can we use the "thief in the night" to refer to an imminent (at any moment, "perhaps today") rapture? Keep reading. There's our *"God has not destined us for wrath"* passage. Could it mean we are not destined for "the day of the Lord" wrath? Definitely! The rapture is even alluded to in verse 10! But, is He going to come *like a thief in the night* to **us**? *"But of that day and hour no one knows..."* Matt 24:36. **What day and hour?** Shouldn't "that day and hour" have an antecedent somewhere?

I know, I know, you are saying that the "day and hour no one knows" is referring to the rapture. Right? Well, there's one small problem with that. Pretribbers deny that the rapture is ever mentioned in this passage... in fact, some go so far as to say that this was written for the Jews and not for the Church. (Besides, how many Jewish people do you know who study the New Testament?:-) Where is the antecedent? **What day and hour?** It would appear to be verses 30 and 31, but if that was the rapture, then the rapture isn't pretrib, is it? And if we decide that it **does** refer to those two verses (interpreting them to be Christ's second coming in glory), then how is it we can't know the day? It comes right at the end of the seven year tribulation, right after the sun, moon and stars event, doesn't it? (Or does it?:-) If you figure this out, E me.

Anyway, to me, these are the most obvious problems with the Pretrib doctrine. I just cannot believe in a doctrine that has as many holes in it as this one does, no matter who teaches it.

A WORD OF CAUTION: The rapture debate has gotten quite ugly, in my opinion. Different people write books teaching about **their** beliefs, while "Christian brothers" write books about their **brothers'** books. I have read statements

in two books in particular (you'd recognize both authors' names) in which the authors judge the motives of the other authors. Pretribblers are accused of being escapists or fearful, because they "choose" to avoid the tribulation. They are said to be continuing to teach a false doctrine, even after they learn better, because they would lose a lot of monetary support if they "changed sides." Post-tribblers are accused of being fear-mongers, who can sin and sin until the day just before Jesus comes back. A similar excuse is used against eternal security. (If you knew your family was headed for the great tribulation, would you be encouraged to sin?) Some are accused of outright lying. Others are accused of writing controversial books just for monetary gain. All of this judging is WRONG! To be sure, we must judge the accuracy of the teachings, and discover the truth for ourselves, and even proclaim the truth from the highest mountain tops; BUT to judge the heart motives of others is not even within our capability (God alone knows the intentions of our hearts), and it is just plain wrong! *"Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you..."* Matt 7:1-5.

Let's assume that everyone just wants to know the truth about what God said. We have this in common. With that and a belief in the inerrancy of God's Word, we can work together to put the pieces of this giant puzzle in place in time to do whatever the Lord may call on us to do about it. Let's work together on this!

IS THE DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCE TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

The generally accepted definition of imminence is that Jesus could come "at any moment" meaning there are NO signs to occur, NO prophecies to be fulfilled before Jesus returns for the rapture of the church. However... Christ predicted the destruction of the Temple (Luke 21:6, Matt. 24:2, Mark 13:2.) He also predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8.) Could He return before these things were fulfilled? Jesus told Peter that he would get old and die (John 21:18-19.) Could His coming be imminent as long as Peter was still alive? (Peter was part of the church, wasn't he? Matt. 16:18 & Acts.) Peter even instructed us to wait for and hasten the coming day of God (2 Peter 3:12.) How can we rush a day which may begin at any moment? Is it possible that the Lord's "slowness" (vs. 9) is directly linked to His command for us to...

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:19-20)

In Matt.24:14, Jesus tells us that the gospel will be preached in all of the world as a witness to all the nations BEFORE the end comes. It is obvious from Rev. 7:9 that the job was completed; and Acts 1:8 suggests that it is done by His servants after being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Some people believe that Jesus teaches that His return is imminent in John 14:2-3.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

Does Jesus, in this passage, mention that His coming could be "at any moment" or does He merely teach His disciples that He will be coming back for them? Just a few days earlier, He had told this same group of men of wars and rumors of wars, of the abomination of desolation, of the great tribulation, of signs in the sun, moon, and stars.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke 21:28

Is it possible, as some believe, that the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) was meant only for the Jews and John 14 was meant only for the church when BOTH were spoken to the same group of men only days apart? Some pretribulationists believe that the seven churches written to in Revelation 2 and 3 represent not only seven churches in existence when the letters from Christ were written, but also represent seven periods of Church history. (But since we all want to be included in the Philadelphia church, it must overlap the Laodicean church in order to have the Philadelphian church alive at the rapture.) Little do these sincere pretribulationists realize that by espousing this historical period view of the churches, they inadvertently deny the doctrine of imminence in that the return of Jesus could not have been imminent during the Thyatira period, the Smyrna period, etc. Not until the Philadelphia/Laodicean period could His coming be said to be imminent.

The prophecy of the seventieth week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24) deals with Jerusalem and the Jews. Could Jesus' return to rapture His church be imminent prior to 1948 when the Jews returned to Israel, or, for that matter, 1967 when they recaptured Jerusalem? This argument should receive even more weight considering pretribulationists claim that the seventieth week (called by them, "the tribulation") deals not with the church, but exclusively with the Jews (Dan 9:24.) In answer to His disciples question in Matt. 24:3, *"What shall be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"* He did not tell them that His coming would be imminent or signless. He told of wars and rumors of wars, etc. Then He said,

As soon as [the fig tree's] branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also when you see all these things, you know that He is near, at the very gates.

In other words, we will not know the exact day or hour, but when these things begin happening, His coming is so near that the generation to see the signs will not die before His return. Could His coming be imminent BEFORE these

things have happened? (Matt. 24:32-34,36; Luke 21:28) Many pretribbers quote verses about the "thief in the night" to support their "at any moment" doctrine. In Revelation 3:3 written to the church at Sardis (not Philadelphia or Laodocia), Jesus says,

"Remember then what you received and heard; keep that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you."

However, it is "the day of the Lord" which comes like a thief.

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10. *"For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."* 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

But when we keep reading, we find, *"But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief."* (vs.4) It is in this context that we are commanded not to sleep, but to watch.(vs. 6-7; Mark 13:36) Now if references to the rapture coming as a thief in the night mean that the rapture comes at the beginning of the Day of the Lord (which I believe is the accurate chronology) then what do we do with Acts 2:20 and Joel 2:31 placing the sun turning dark and the moon to blood BEFORE the Day of the Lord? That wouldn't make the rapture signless and imminent would it? And what about Rev. 6:12 placing the sun turning dark and the moon to blood after the sixth seal is opened? Could it be merely a coincidence that this is the very sign Jesus described would precede His coming?

"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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matt. 24:29-31.

This coinciding of the rapture and the Day of the Lord is spoken of in 2 Thess. 2:1-4. "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."

Can rapture be imminent if the Antichrist must be revealed first? Was the rapture imminent before Peter died, before the temple was destroyed, or before Israel became a nation in 1948? Can the rapture be imminent before the sun and moon grow dark and the signs described by our Lord in Matthew 24 come to pass? According to Luke 21:28, it is only *"when these things begin to take place"* that we can *"look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

Is Luke 21:20-24 Historical or Future?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Compare the following passages:		
Matt 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
1-3	1-4	5-7
4-5	5-6	8
6	7	9
7-8	8	10-11
9-14; 10:17-22	9-13	12-19
24:15-22	14-20	20-24
23-28	21-23	17:22-25
29-30	24-26	21:25-27
31	27	28

Is it possible that in these parallel passages, which each describe false christs, wars, famines, martyrs... that suddenly one version skips back to the past, then they all resume with "flee," more false christs, sun/moon/stars, Son of Man coming, gathering, etc.??? Because of context, I seriously doubt it, though there could be a double reference. Matthew and Mark describe a time of tribulation which is cut short, for the sake of the elect. Could Luke (the only

Gentile writer) be speaking of a different time period which is not cut short, but continues "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"? Perhaps it is "the time of Jacob's distress" described in Jer 30:7. Luke 21:24 tells us that Jerusalem will be trodden "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

How long will Jerusalem be trodden? According to Rev 11:2, the nations (Gentiles) "will tread underfoot the Holy City for 42 months." This would appear to be the last half of the seven years if the fleeing in all 3 gospels occurs mid-week at the abomination of desolation, and the occupation continues for 42 months. What else happens when "the fulness of the Gentiles has come in"? According to Rom 11:25-26, the partial hardening of Israel has occurred until that time, but after "the fulness of the Gentiles has come in," "all Israel will be saved." Furthermore, this appears to coincide with the time described in Ezek 36:25-28, when the Lord says, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone [partial hardening] from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

And furthermore (let every fact be established by the testimony of two or more witnesses), this perfectly agrees with the very definition of the seventieth week given in Dan 9:24. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy [place.]" By definition, this must be accomplished before the seventieth week has concluded!

Dan 12:6-7 "And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long [will it be] until the end of [these] wonders?" And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; [3 1/2 years or 42 months] and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these [events] will be completed." It seems that Luke 21:20-24 is not history, but is yet to come!

What is the "Blessed Hope"?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:13

This verse is the only place in scripture that uses this phrase, yet many people are completely convinced that this is a reference to the rapture. And not only that, they use this verse as proof of a two stage return. Is the "blessed hope" the rapture? Sometimes, our "hope" is in the resurrection of the dead.

- Acts 24:15 *having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.*
- Romans 8:22 *We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13 *But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*
- 1 John 3:2 *Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

Sometimes our "hope" is in something we will receive here in this lifetime, and sometimes our "hope" is in things we will receive during the endtimes.

- Romans 5:2 *...we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.*
- 1 Corinthians 9:10 *...and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop.*
- 2 Corinthians 1:7 *Our hope for you is unshaken... you will also share in our comfort.*
- 2 Corinthians 10:15 *...but our hope is that as your faith increases, our field among you may be greatly enlarged,*
- Galatians 5:5 *For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness.*
- Ephesians 1:18 *having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*
- Philippians 1:20 *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed...*
- Colossians 1:4 *because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven...*
- Colossians 1:22 *...not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 *...and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19 *For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?*

- 1 Thessalonians 5:8 *But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.*
- 1 Timothy 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,*
- 1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Consider this. In Titus 2:13, does the word "and" <2532> (in Strong's Concordance) necessarily mean that the two are two separate events? The same word "and" is spoken by Paul in Acts 23:6.

- Acts 23:6 *But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope AND <2532> the resurrection of the dead I am on trial."*

Are the hope and the resurrection of the dead two separate events now? And what did Paul have to say about "hope?" Paul, who in Titus 2:13 speaks of the "blessed hope," had already spoken of hope earlier in his letter.

- Titus 1:2 *in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago*

He continues to speak about hope later in the letter. *so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.* Can we assume that out of three references to "hope" in Paul's letter to Titus, the middle reference refers to a different hope without stating so? Now, eternal life for us will be realized at the rapture, but the rapture will only be the first moment of eternal life for us. Our hope would not change if we were to endure tribulation before being raptured. Even if we could show that "blessed hope" definitely does not refer to the rapture, it would neither prove nor disprove the pre-tribulation view. The point here is this. If we have no proof that the phrase, "blessed hope," refers to the rapture, and if it cannot be shown that the word "and" necessarily separates two separate events, then Is it a good idea to base doctrine of a two stage return on such flimsy proof?

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Could JERUSALEM be Mystery Babylon the Great?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

1. The only references to great <3173> city <4172> in the Greek are in the Revelation. The first reference definitely refers to Jerusalem *"where their Lord was crucified."* Revelation 11:8 *and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great <3173> city <4172> which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.*
Check out the others.
 - Revelation 16:19 *The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered great Babylon, to make her drain the cup of the fury of his wrath.*
 - Revelation 17:18 *And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth."*
 - Revelation 18:10 *they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come." 16 "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" 19 And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste. 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more;*
2. Jerusalem is guilty of all of the blood of the righteous, saints, and prophets...
 - Matthew 23:34 *Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 that upon you may come ALL the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechari'ah the son of Barachi'ah [A to Z], whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! 38 Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"* (see also Luke 11:49-51)
while it is Babylon who is found drunk with the blood of the saints, prophets, and all slain upon the earth.
 - Revelation 17:5 *and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations." 6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her I marveled greatly.*
 - Revelation 18:21 *Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more... 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of ALL who have been slain on earth."*

- Revelation 19:2 *for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."*
- 3. Because of her guilt, Jesus warns Jerusalem of her house being left desolate, and tells His disciples of its destruction.
- Matthew 23:37 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! 38 Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. Matthew 24:1 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down."*
The disciples first question to Him... WHEN will this [destruction of the temple] occur?
- Matthew 24:3 *As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?"*
- Luke 21:20 *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. 21 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

I am continually astonished when people view Luke 21:20-24 as a past occurrence. Considering the fact that the preceding verses as well as the following verses are nearly identical to the accounts in Matthew and Mark, and considering the fact that Dan 11:45 has the Antichrist camped out *"between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain"* around the time of the beginning of the great trib (see 12:1), and considering Rev 11:2 says the outer court of the temple is given to the nations (Gr. *ethnos*) who *"will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months,"* I think it is entirely probable that Jerusalem's desolation is yet future, and she *"will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles (Gr. *ethnos*) until the times of the Gentiles (Gr. *ethnos*) be fulfilled."* Could this desolation Jesus warns of be a part of the destruction of Mystery Babylon the Great?... initiated by the abomination of desolation?

- 4. The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, warns "the daughter of Zion", pictured here as a harlot, and describes her desolation.
- Jere 4:27 *For thus says the Lord, "The whole land shall be a desolation, Yet I will not execute a complete destruction. 28 "For this the earth shall mourn, And the heavens above be dark, Because I have spoken, I have purposed, And I will not change My mind, nor will I turn from it." 29 At the sound of the horseman and bowman every city flees; They go into the thickets and climb among the rocks; Every city is forsaken, And no man dwells in them. 30 And you, O desolate one, what will you do? Although you dress in scarlet, Although you decorate [yourself with] ornaments of gold, Although you enlarge your eyes with paint, In vain you make yourself beautiful; [Your] lovers despise you; They seek your life. 31 For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, The cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, Stretching out her hands, [saying,] "Ah, woe is me, for I faint before murderers."*

Compare this account to the description of Mystery Babylon in the Revelation.

- Reve 16:19 *And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.. 17:4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality... 16 And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.*

Could this merely be a coincidence?

- 5. Both Jerusalem and Babylon are destroyed by forces coming from the north.
- Jer 1:14 *Then the Lord said to me, " Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. 15 "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north ," declares the Lord; "and they will come, and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about, and against all the cities of Judah... 7:34 "Then I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will become a ruin... 26:2 ...'Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, who have come to worship [in] the Lord's house... 9 ...'This house will be like Shiloh , and this city will be desolate, without inhabitant'*
- Jer 50:1 *The word which the Lord spoke concerning Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet...3 "For a nation has come up against her out of the north ; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it.*
- 6. Jerusalem and Babylon both drink from the cup of the Lord's anger.

- Isai 51:17 *Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk from the Lord's hand the cup of His anger; The chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs.*
- Reve 16:19 *And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.*
- 7. One angel with a bowl said, *"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great HARLOT..."* (Rev 17:1-19:4.) Immediately after that (Rev 19:5...) the BRIDE is ready! Then in Rev. 21:9..., another angel who had a bowl says *"Come, I will show you the BRIDE, the wife of the Lamb..."* Is it merely a coincidence that the bride has made herself ready only after (and immediately after) the harlot is judged?
- 8. Jerusalem is referred to as both a harlot and the Lord's bride.
 - Isaiah 1:1 *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem... 21. How the faithful city has become a harlot, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Ezekiel 16:2 "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations..."* (read whole chapter)
 - Jeremiah 2:2 *"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown... 20. "For long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds; and you said, 'I will not serve.' Yea, upon every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down as a harlot. (see Jer.3.)*
 - Revelation 21:9...*"Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem...*
- 9. Just before the 7th trumpet, the two witnesses/prophets are slain in Jerusalem (see Rev. 11:8 above.) Just after the 7th trumpet is sounded, an angel declares, *"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great..."* (Rev. 14:8.) Is it just a coincidence, or are the two events (prophets being slain and Babylon being judged) related, possibly being a fulfillment of Matt. 23:34-35?
 - Matthew 23:34 *Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, 35 that upon you may come ALL the righteous blood shed on earth...*
- 10. It seems that Jerusalem and New Jerusalem have a lot in common, or perhaps they are one and the same.
 - Isai 52:1 *Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. For the uncircumcised and the unclean Will no more come into you... 7 How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news... 60:3 "And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising... 11 "And your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that [men] may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.*
 - Nahu 1:15 *Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; Pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.*
 - Reve 21:2 *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God (Rev 13:6) is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them... 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... 24 And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. 25 And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

It almost seems as if Jerusalem herself is "born-again"!

11. Why have a "New Jerusalem" if the old one is still around?
12. What is the big mystery in "Mystery Babylon" if it really is the same as historical Babylon?
13. Zechariah 14:3-5 describes a day when Jesus goes to fight the enemies of Israel (Armageddon;) the Mount of Olives is split in two (earthquake?) after His feet touch it; and *"you shall FLEE ..."* Could this flight be in response to His command to *"Come out of her, my people..."* (Rev. 18:4) or *"Depart, depart, go out from there"* Isa 52:11? Could this earthquake be the same as the earthquake which divides the "great city" into three parts after the pouring out of the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:17-19) which also makes mention of the demise of Babylon?
14. Compare Ezekiel 16 and Revelation 18!!!!

I don't really know who Mystery Babylon is. That takes wisdom (Rev. 17:9.) Jerusalem would politically need to become a world capital of sorts (17:18), maybe moving the U.N. there. It would also need to become more of a religious capital (18:9), perhaps moving the Vatican there. Maybe that is how the mother-child worship (thus referring to her as "Babylon") comes to be included in her harlotries. I can't be sure yet, but I just don't feel comfortable with the other explanations I've heard. Just as there were prophecies of Jesus which were only understood in hind sight (Ps 22:16-18; 34:20; 69:21 etc), my guess is that there are other prophecies in the scriptures (maybe even in Psalms) pertaining to Mystery Babylon which will point to her true identity in time for us to heed the Lord's command in Rev. 18:4 to *"Come out of her!"*

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Is the Church MISSING after Revelation 4?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

The words "church" and "churches" are absent from Rev. 4 - 22. Therefore, the church is absent from the earth during that time, right? Well, are you aware that these same words are *also* absent from 2 Tim., Titus, Heb., 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 John, and Jude? Is the church absent then too? Hmmm? Titus and 2 John don't even mention Christians, brother(s), brethren, or saint(s) (although they both mention the word "elect"). Does that mean those books don't even pertain to us? (Sounds silly doesn't it?)

Is it possible that the church *is* mentioned between Rev. 4 and 22?

- Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4 tells about martyrs who are killed for their *testimony of Jesus*. Are they not part of the church?
- Rev. 7:9-17 tells about a multitude in heaven whose robes have been *washed in the blood of the Lamb* (Christians?) whose shepherd will be the Lamb. These are in heaven, granted, but they have come out of the great tribulation, and are there *after* the sun, moon and stars go dark in the sixth seal. (See also Matt. 24:29-31, etc.)
- Rev. 12:17; 13:5-7,10; 14:121 refer to the antichrist's authority over the "saints" and how those who endure will not take his mark. (Can anyone be a "saint" aside from the blood of Jesus? or are there those saved by the blood of Jesus, yet excluded from the church of Jesus Christ?)

"I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

Revelation 22:16

Jesus said that the book of the Revelation is for the church. Why would He say that when we are gone, and the "tribulation saints" aren't even a part of the church? I would be very cautious about basing any theology on what the scripture *does not* say. My final question is this, are you willing to stake the safety of your family during a time of "great tribulation" on this kind of theology? Think about it.

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Is your name written in the Book of Life?

by Sheila Lewis Busby

There is coming a judgment day of God. Those whose names are found written in the BOOK OF LIFE will be saved. A fiery fate awaits all others.

- *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And if any one's name was not found written in the BOOK OF LIFE he was thrown into the lake of fire.* Revelation 20:12,15
- *At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in THE BOOK.* Daniel 12:1

But whose names are in the BOOK OF LIFE?

- not sinners (Exodus 32:33)
- not those who worship the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8)
- not those whose are tricked by the Antichrist's fake resurrection (Rev. 17:8)
- but overcomers (Revelation 3:5; 12:9-12)
- and fellow-laborers of the gospel (Phillipians 4:3)

Where do those whose names are in the BOOK OF LIFE go?

How about Heavenly Jerusalem! *But nothing unclean shall enter [New Jerusalem], nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE.* Revelation 21:27

How can you know if your name is written in the BOOK OF LIFE?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. John 3:16-18

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him. John 3:36

Are there other ways to get to Heaven?

Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."* John 14:6
And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12