

# Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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## What to Watch For

by Dan Trygg

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ ...The Lord is NOT slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”  
II Peter 3:3,4,9

This week, someone asked me to help them understand some of the difficult passages in the Revelation given to John. Following is an attempt to put together, chronologically, the timeline of events that the Bible indicates will happen as we approach the end of the age. This listing combines teachings from a number of passages dealing with end time events. **When we are attempting to understand a difficult passage, we must interpret it in light of other clear passages.** It is obvious that Revelation is full of figurative language, rich in symbols and word pictures from elsewhere in the Scriptures. **A good “go-to” place to begin to get a skeleton for understanding end time events is Matthew 24. Jesus lays out the big picture for us there.** Everything else will fit within those broad parameters. Note that He also uses references to OT passages (cf. vs. 15 – references to Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). You cannot understand NT teachings about the end of the age, without being familiar with the OT passages they refer to.

**Matthew 24:4-13 list general signs that will occur throughout the age.** We are not to be surprised or alarmed when we see these things happen. They do not indicate the end. **Verse 14 is the only clear indicator of what must happen before the end shall come.** Vss. 15-20 seem to be directed to those who are in Judea. I think this has two fulfillments: an immediate one that happened when Jerusalem was surrounded by armies in 70 AD; and another one, which will happen at the end. The “abomination of desolation” also has more than one fulfillment.

**In Daniel 9:24-27, we find that there are 70 weeks (of years) for the Jewish people and the 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.” **There will be a decree to restore and rebuild the city and the sanctuary. From that decree (Ezra 7 – 457 BC) until Messiah the Prince shows up will be 69 weeks (of years), or 483 years.** This means that Messiah would show up in 26 AD. (Guess Who *that* was!?) **Then Messiah will be “cut off and have nothing”.** And “the people of the prince who is to come” will destroy the Holy City and the sanctuary. This prince is the Antichrist. He will come far in the future from Daniel’s time. **The Antichrist will make a firm covenant with the many for one week (seven years).** [This is where the 7 year tribulation period prophecy teachers talk of originated.] **In the middle of the week (3 ½ years), he will cause sacrifice and grain offering to cease.** Then will come someone who will “make desolate”, until a complete desolation is accomplished. Dan 11:31 and 12:11 mention the sanctuary being desecrated, the sacrifice stopped and some kind of “abomination of desolation” being set up. There have been fulfillments of this in history, but there seems to be another, still to come.

**Ok, that is all important background for Matthew 24 and Revelation.** Back to Matt. 24:21, “...*then* there will be a *great tribulation*, such as has not occurred since the beginning of time...” (This apparently coincides with the “abomination of desolation”, because *that* is the cue for believers in Judea to flee.) Somewhere, **at this time, the horrific plagues we read about in the book of the Revelation occur.** Jesus said, “Unless those days had been cut short, *no life* would have been saved” (Matt. 24:21,22). **What kind of plagues are we talking about?** Horrific war, famine, and pestilence that will *kill one fourth of the earth* (Rev. 6:8). There will be a resurgence of persecution against Christians, followed by terrible earthquakes, so that people will attempt to hide themselves from the wrath of God. Fire will fall from the sky, so that *a third of the earth will burn up* (8:7). A huge meteor will fall into the sea, and *kill a third of the sea life*, and *destroy a third of the ships* (8:8,9). A comet will fall on a third of the rivers and springs, poisoning the waters (8:10,11). Then the atmosphere will be darkened, so that the sun, moon and stars will be dimmed. **So far, these are simply horrific natural disasters.** Next, however, **there will be a demonic assault upon the non-Christians** for five months, stinging them with venomous torment (9:1-12). People will long to die, but will not. Then, there will be a demonic assault of another kind that *will kill a third of humankind* (9:13-19). In spite of these horrific plagues, unbelievers will *still* not repent of their rebellion against God, or of their evil deeds. Then, in Revelation 10, John is exposed to “seven peals of thunder”, spoken by an angel. When he went to write what the angel said, he was told *not* to record them. **This is important... we do not have all the information!**

In 11:1, John was told to measure the temple of God. **The temple will be rebuilt! There will also be two prophets sent from God to prophesy at Jerusalem for 3 ½ years.** At the end of that time, the Antichrist will kill them, but God will raise them up in front of their enemies, and bring them to heaven. At that time, **there will be a**

**great earthquake, and a tenth of Jerusalem will be destroyed.** At the end of Revelations 11, it appears that the end has come. Chapter 12 is an interlude, rehearsing in broad brush strokes the history of the spiritual warfare, and the plan of redemption. It states that Satan has been defeated, thrown down to the earth, and is full of rage at the Jews, and the Christians. **Chapter 13 is somewhat of a *backtrack*, to tell the story of how Satan raised up a “beast”, a leader from among men, to whom the devil will give all his powers.** (This is the Antichrist, the arrogant “little horn” of Daniel 7:8-11,19-26, the “man of lawlessness” of II Thess. 2:1-12.) **He will blaspheme God, and make war with the saints** (who are still *here*, by the way). **Another “beast” will rise up**, who will *look like* a lamb (Jesus), but will *speak as* the dragon (Satan). **He is the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), who will direct everyone to worship the Antichrist. He is the one who will institute a mark to be given on people’s right hand or forehead.** The mark will be the name of the Antichrist, or the numerical equivalent of it, 666. It will be impossible to buy and sell without this mark, ...but to take it, and to worship the Antichrist, is to incur the wrath of God and be cast into the lake of fire. “John writes, ‘*Here is the perseverance of the saints...*’” (14:12). Again, Christians are *still present* this far into the tribulation.

**Next, there will be 7 more judgments.** First, there will be *grievous sores* upon those who take the mark of the beast. Next, the seas will be poisoned, so that *all sea life perishes*. Then, the rivers and springs of water will be turned to blood. Fourth, the sun will become so hot as to scorch people with its heat. Next, the realm of the beast will be swallowed up by darkness. Then, demonic spirits will go out to the kings of the earth to convince them to gather for war at Har-Magedon, in Israel. Seventh, there will be *the greatest earthquake in the history of the world*. Islands and mountains will disappear, and the evil merchant city, called “Babylon” in the vision, will be entirely destroyed.

**Don’t let anyone deceive you, ...when Jesus returns, it will *not* be in secret, but will be as lightning that shines across the sky** (Matt. 24:23-27). Every eye will see Him, coming on the clouds (Rev. 1:7). Some like to emphasize that He will come like a thief in the night (I Thess. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3). **He will not come *invisibly*, but He will come *unexpectedly*.** People will be hoping for peace and safety, but *destruction* will come on them *suddenly* (Lk. 17:24-37). They won’t be prepared to meet their God. Those whose hearts are weighted down with wastefulness, drunkenness, and the worries of *this* life will be oblivious to, or in denial of, the signs of the times. They will be caught suddenly, as in a trap (Lk. 21:34). Paul tells us that **those who walk in the light will not be caught unawares** (I Thess. 5:4,5). We will *recognize the signs* taking place before our eyes, and we will be *ready* (cf. Lk. 21:28).

**According to Jesus, “Immediately after the tribulation, the sun, moon and stars will go dark, and the sign of the coming of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens. Everyone will be able to see the Son of Man coming on the clouds, with power and great glory”** (Matt. 24:29,30). In Revelation 19, Jesus and His angelic hosts, will destroy all the kings and armies assembled against Him at Har-Magedon. The Antichrist and his false prophet will be seized, and cast alive into the lake of fire, and the rest shall be killed. **Then Jesus will send forth His angels with a great trumpet call, and they will gather His chosen from all over the world”** (Matt. 24:31; cf. I Thess. 4:15-17; I Cor. 15:51,52). In chapter 20, all the ones in Christ are raised from the dead to reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

I guess when you look at all of this, it becomes clear that we haven’t really seen *any* of this stuff, yet, ...but the stage sure is set. **Jesus said that when these things happen, they will happen *quickly*** (Rev. 1:1). That said, I think we can safely say we are *not* yet in the final 7 years. **What *should* we be watching for?** The rebuilding of the Jewish temple, natural disasters on a scale we have never seen before, nations gathering to destroy Jerusalem, a world ruler with unprecedented influence, some kind of identifying mark put on (or *into*) the right hand or forehead of people to enable them to buy and sell. **One of the realities that strikes me is that there is no prophetic mention of any nation that could be identified with the United States, in those end time events.** It could be that we are just not involved, or it could be that we are no longer a significant player in world events. That may be difficult to imagine, but 100 years ago, the British Empire was the greatest, most extensive and powerful world influence. Within just a few short years, its political and financial empire had collapsed, its homeland had been assaulted and decimated by German bombers, its world-class navy crippled. The costs of two world wars, and the inability to control its interests around the world, reduced it to nearly a second class power. The arrogant high-handedness of the British psyche became its undoing. In many ways, *we* have stepped into the vacuum left by the collapse of their influences. **We have developed an empire of trade and business dealings that also reaches around the world.** *We have been guilty of abuse and injustice* in our dealings with nations and peoples around the globe, and *the “ugly American” has become the reputation we have earned.* **Meanwhile, as a nation we have minimized God**, excluding Him more and more from public life and national discourse. **We have rebelled against His moral standards, storing up wrath unto ourselves by our immorality and injustice. We are setting ourselves up for judgment!** Addressing *that* should be our *first* priority, even more urgent *for us* than the end time events we have been studying. **We should be calling out to God for mercy and revival! Of course, revival must begin with us.** We must *first* address our *own* lives, our *own* walks with God. **“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God?”** (2 Pet. 3:11-12).