

## **The Abomination that Causes Desolation**

### **The Great Tribulation (2<sup>nd</sup> 3½ Years)**

- Jesus continues His description of the abomination that causes desolation in the Olivet Discourse
  - These are events that occur during the second half of the seven-year tribulation period, which is known as the Great Tribulation.
  - ““So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place’ (let the reader understand), ‘then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! A man on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house. And a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For at that time there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn’t taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again!’” (Matthew 24:15-21)
- Satan being thrown out of heaven marks the beginning of this period.
  - “Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels also fought, but he could not prevail, and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9)

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- At this point Satan indwells the Antichrist.
  - “The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.” (Revelation 13:2)

- The Antichrist exalts himself above all other gods.
  - “The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.” (Daniel 11:36-37)
- The Antichrist breaks the seven-year covenant with Israel.
  - “Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it.” (Isaiah 28:18)
- The Antichrist begins the three-and-a-half-year persecution of the Jews.
  - “When the dragon saw that he had been thrown to earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent’s presence to her place in the wilderness, where she was fed for a time, times, and half a time. From his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river flowing after the woman, to sweep her away in a torrent. But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. So the dragon was furious with the woman and left to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and have the testimony about Jesus.” (Revelation 12:13-17)

- “A mouth was given to him to speak boasts and blasphemies. He was also given authority to act for 42 months. He began to speak blasphemies against God: to blaspheme His name and His dwelling—those who dwell in heaven. And he was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them. He was also given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. All those who live on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered.” (Revelation 13:5-8)
- The Antichrist replaces the ten-nation Roman alliance and expands his authority by creating a new global kingdom.
  - “The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, trample it down, and crush it.” (Daniel 7:23)
  - “The beast that was and is not, is himself an eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction.” (Revelation 17:11)
  - The Antichrist will assassinate the leaders of three countries and all other nations will immediately relinquish their power to him.
    - “While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. There were eyes in this horn like a man’s, and it had a mouth that spoke arrogantly...The 10 horns are 10 kings who will rise from this kingdom. Another, different from the previous ones, will rise after them and subdue three kings.” (Daniel 7:8,24)
  - He is now the sole ruler of the global government for the next three-and-a-half years.
    - “A mouth was given to him to speak boasts and blasphemies. He was also given authority to act for 42 months.” (Revelation 13:5)

- “He will speak words against the Most High and oppress the holy ones of the Most High. He will intend to change religious festivals and laws, and the holy ones will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time.” (Daniel 7:25)
- This new kingdom will have global control.
  - Politically
    - “And he was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them. He was also given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation.” (Revelation 13:7)
  - Religiously
    - “All those who live on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book[h] of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered.” (Revelation 13:8)
  - Economically
    - “And he requires everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to be given a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark: the beast’s name or the number of his name.” (Revelation 13:16-17)
- One of the Antichrist’s first acts after assuming global power is to destroy the temple, which brings sacrifices to an end.
  - “Then I was given a measuring reed like a rod, with these words: ‘Go and measure God’s sanctuary and the altar, and count those who worship there. But exclude the courtyard outside the sanctuary. Don’t measure it, because it is given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months.’” (Revelation 11:1-2)

- This is noted by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse as the abomination that causes desolation
  - “So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15)
- Jesus also states that the Jews will need to flee Jerusalem and hide from Satan’s wrath.
  - “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! A man on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house. And a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For at that time there will be great tribulation, the kind that hasn’t taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again!” (Matthew 24:16-21)
  - Throughout this period, the Antichrist will kill two thirds of the remaining Jews.
    - “Sword, awake against My shepherd, against the man who is My associate—this is the declaration of the Lord of Hosts. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will also turn My hand against the little ones. In the whole land—this is the Lord’s declaration—two-thirds will be cut off and die, but a third will be left in it. I will put this third through the fire; I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say: They are My people, and they will say: Yahweh is our God.” (Zechariah 13:7-9)
  - When Gentiles that have come to believe in Jesus as their savior help to save the Jews, Satan turns his wrath on them as well.

- “But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. So the dragon was furious with the woman and left to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and have the testimony about Jesus.”  
(Revelation 12:16-17)
- Many scholars believe that the fleeing Jews will possibly hide in Petra, 80 miles to the south of Jerusalem.
  - This site has superior defensive capabilities offered by the terrain.
  - Old Testament prophetic scripture that seems to indicate that Jesus will return to the mountain wilderness of Bozrah.
    - “When My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens, it will then come down on Edom and on the people I have set apart for destruction. The Lord’s sword is covered with blood. It drips with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom. (Isaiah 34:5-6)
    - “Who is this coming from Edom in crimson-stained garments from Bozrah—this One who is splendid in His apparel, rising up proudly in His great might? It is I, proclaiming vindication, powerful to save...For I planned the day of vengeance, and the year of My redemption came. (Isaiah 63:1,4)
  - However, Petra has been judged as was Sodom and Gomorrah such that “no one will live there; no people will dwell in it (Jeremiah 49:18).”

- Petra is abandoned today, and its ruins have remained uninhabited for centuries, in fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy.
- The final battle of the Great Tribulation is the Battle of Armageddon occurs in the plains around Megiddo.
  - Armageddon is from Hebrew: הר מגידו Har Megiddo.
  - It is much more likely that the Jewish remnant flees to a defensible location around the ancient city of Megiddo than an abandoned fortress that is located in Jordan over 200 miles to the south.



- The most logical location would be the ancient fortress at Masada, which is only 35 miles northeast of Megiddo.



- Masada was built in 31 BC by Herod the Great as a ‘place of refuge’ in case there was a revolt against him.
  - It was the last holdout of a group of Jewish Zealots who hid there following the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD during the Roman conquest of Israel, finally falling in 73 AD.
  - Masada is built on a high elevation. The fortress contains a number of barracks, armories, and defensive structures. It also has huge storehouses and cisterns, which contained months’ worth of food and water. The primary defense of Masada was a single-file ‘snake path’ up the 1,300-foot mountain. The path was extremely easy to defend from vantage points above.
  - Masada still plays an important role in Israeli culture
    - New IDF soldiers climb the ‘snake path’ up the mountain to the fortress at night upon the completion of basic training where they are sworn in, declaring “Masada shall not fall again.”
- The False Prophet is raised up to perform signs and wonders in an attempt to give credibility to the Antichrist and to force people to worship him.



- “Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.” (Revelation 13:11-17)
- It appears that it is at this point that the fate of people that have not turned to Jesus as their savior is sealed.
  - “The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan’s working, with all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders, and with every unrighteous deception among those who are perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth in order to be saved. For this reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe what is false, so that all will be condemned—those who did not believe the truth but enjoyed unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)
- The False Prophet is described as having “two horns like a lamb (Revelation 13:11).”

- Two religious leaders will provide authority to the False Prophet to help spread this new false religion.
  - The leader of the harlot will be one of these horns.
  - The other would be a leader of another surviving religion other than Judaism.
- This is similar to the 10 kings of the Roman alliance provided power and authority to the Antichrist.
  - “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.” (Revelation 17:13)
- The result, though, will be that anyone following any other religion will be killed and the harlot destroyed.
  - “The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.” (Revelation 17:16)
- There are indications that the resurrection of the Antichrist will occur and the False Prophet will use the authority given to him to effectively use this and other signs to deceive the people into worshiping the Antichrist.

- “He exercises all the authority of the first beast on his behalf and compels the earth and those who live on it to worship the first beast, *whose fatal wound was healed*. He also performs great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in front of people. He deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs that he is permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image of the beast *who had the sword wound and yet lived*. He was permitted to give a spirit to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could both speak and cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” (Revelation 13:12-15)
- The False Prophet sets up an economic system and everyone must worship the Antichrist to be able to buy or sell anything.
  - “And he requires everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to be given a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark: the beast’s name or the number of his name.” (Revelation 13:16-17)
- Another possible aspect of the great deception described in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 could be a result of Satan and his demons being cast down to earth after their defeat in the war in heaven (Revelation 12:7-12).
  - It is possible that these demons could manifest themselves as extraterrestrials.
    - They would promote the lie that they created life on earth and that the account in Genesis 1-2 that God created the universe is false.
    - Their appearance would hasten the destruction of the harlot religion and they would promote the False Prophet’s plans to compel mankind to worship the Antichrist.

- This, in turn, would also aid the Antichrist in his plans to overthrow the last vestiges of the Roman alliance, leaving the Antichrist in total control of the government.
- The 144,000 witnesses that had been sealed and protected by God (Revelation 7) are now “redeemed from the human race as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb (Revelation 14:4).”
  - Scripture is silent as to whether these witnesses are raptured or martyred by the Antichrist for their testimony.
  - They most likely stand before the Bema Seat of Christ, but scripture is silent on this point.
    - This fact is supported in that they are seen in heaven with Christ and are referenced as the ‘firstfruits.’
      - “Then I looked, and there on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father’s name written on their foreheads...These are the ones not defiled with women, for they have kept their virginity. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were redeemed from the human race as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:1,4)
  - Some scholars believe that this group of 144,000 believers is different from those referenced in Revelation 7.
    - This scene is in heaven, not earth, and they have both the Father and Son written on their foreheads, rather than just the Father as stated in Revelation 7.
    - However, Revelation 14:3-4 states that they had already been redeemed.
    - Also, having come to Christ during the Tribulation, they would also be sealed with the names of both the Father and the Son at this point.

- This interpretation does not seem necessary, nor correct.
  - It does not seem reasonable to introduce a new group of witnesses through an obscure reference to what was written on their foreheads, which could be easily misinterpreted.
  - Having this be the same group of 144,000 witnesses makes more logical sense in the grand scheme of the prophetic timeline.
  - The work of spreading the gospel that had been performed by these 144,000 witnesses is now open to be performed by three angels that bring even greater authority to the message, and therefore more condemnation on those that reject it.

- “Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He spoke with a loud voice: ‘Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’ A second angel followed, saying: ‘It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, who made all nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath.’ And a third angel followed them and spoke with a loud voice: ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or anyone who receives the mark of his name. This demands the perseverance of the saints, who keep God’s commands and their faith in Jesus.’” (Revelation 14:6-12)

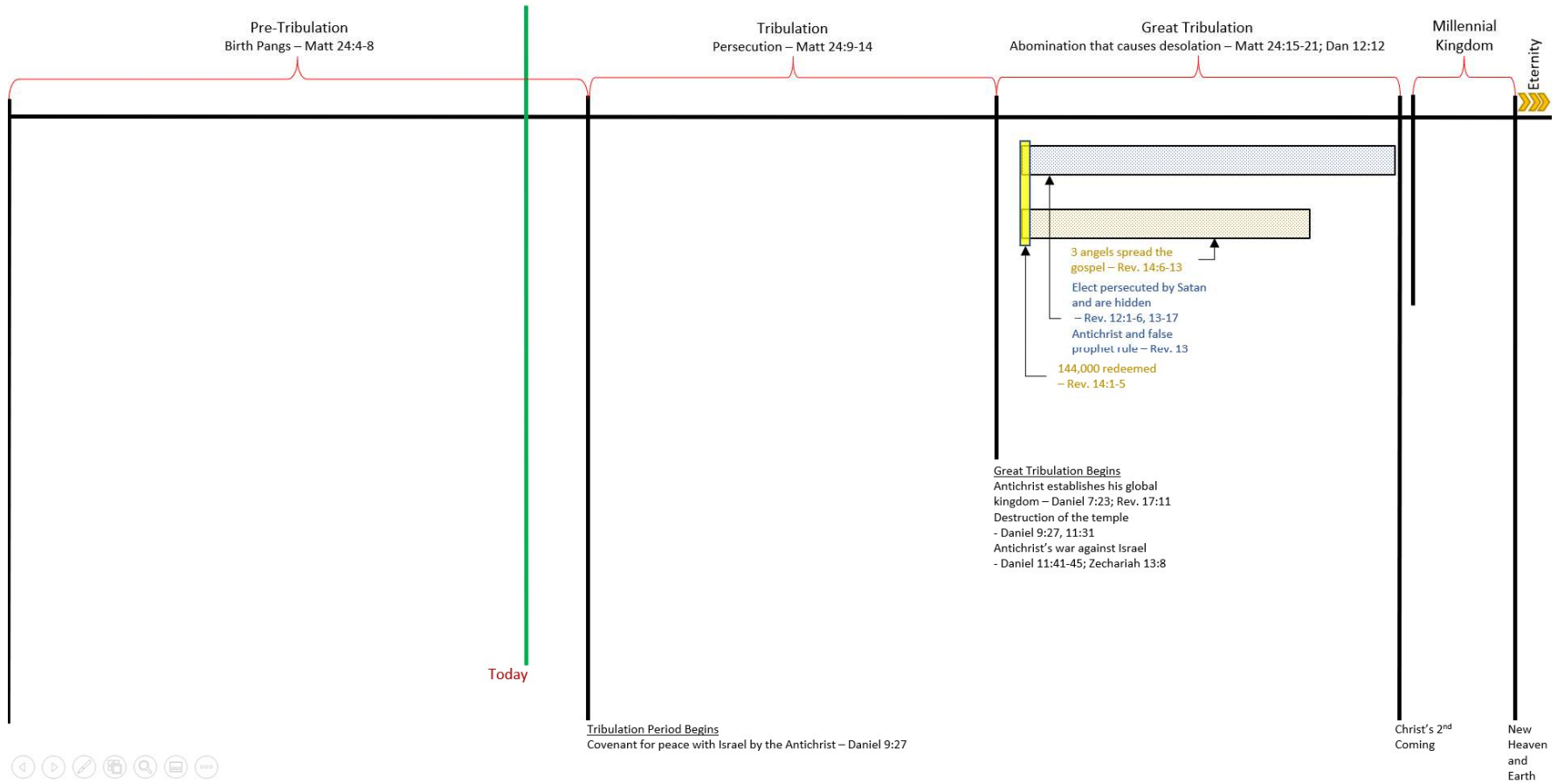


Figure 1: Timeline of the Abomination that Causes Destruction Events

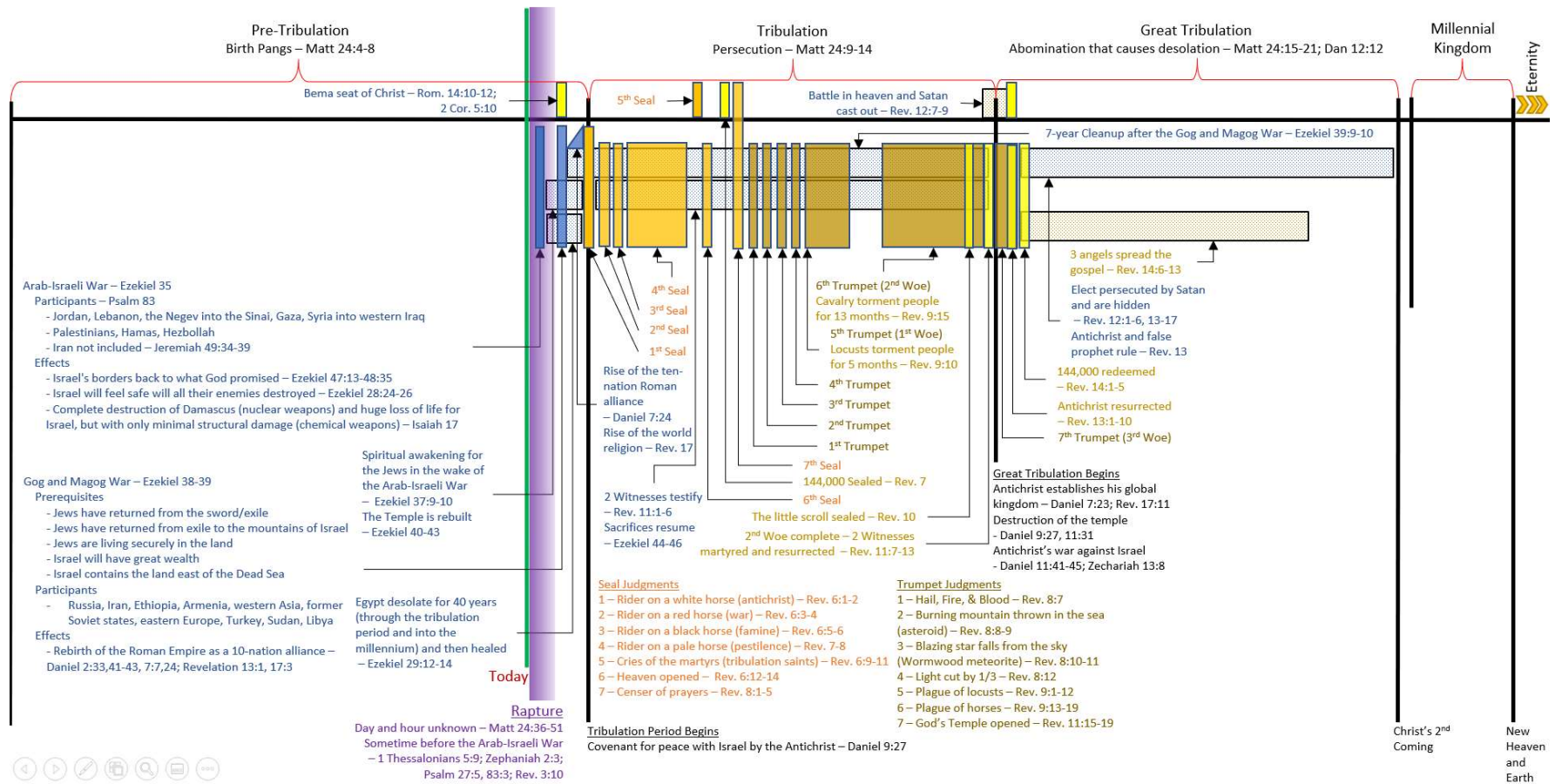


Figure 2: Timeline of End-Times Events