

The Events of the Tribulation

The book of Revelation contains a great deal of fascinating information regarding the seven-year Tribulation. However, Revelation can be difficult to read and even more difficult to understand. What I'd like to do here is summarize this information and present a brief outline of the events that will take place. Entire books have been written about this subject, but my goal is simply to offer a quick and simple summary.

For the purposes of this paper I'm going to focus only on what Revelation says about the Tribulation. I realize that the book talks about a lot of other topics as well (such as the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State), but I will save those subjects for another time.

The First Half of the Tribulation

The Tribulation begins when the Lamb (which symbolizes Jesus) opens seven seals. Each one of these seals contains judgments, which are usually called the Seal Judgments. We'll talk about those in a minute, but first there is one other item to discuss:

Before the First Seal: the two witnesses begin their ministry. This isn't mentioned until much later in Revelation, but since their ministry spans the entire first half of the Tribulation it seemed like a good idea to mention this up-front. The Lord will appoint two witnesses that will preach the gospel:

Revelation 11:3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

There has been a lot of speculation about who these two witnesses might be, but since the Bible doesn't actually tell us I will leave that subject alone. What we are told is that they will prophesy for 1,260 days, which is the same as 42 months or three-and-a-half years. During that period they will be immensely powerful, unstoppable proclaimers of the gospel:

Revelation 11:5: "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

As you can see, these witnesses are given *tremendous* power. People will try desperately to kill these witnesses, but they will fail and all those who seek to harm them are killed by being burned to death. They will be a voice of truth that the antichrist will be unable to silence.

During the course of their ministry a great many things happen. In Heaven Jesus Himself begins opening the seven seals:

The First Seal: the Antichrist launches his war. We can see that here:

Revelation 6:1: “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

The person on the white horse is the antichrist. At the beginning of the Tribulation the antichrist launches a war and begins conquering other nations.

The Second Seal: a world war begins. The war that the antichrist starts quickly turns into a full-scale world war:

Revelation 6:3: “And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”

Here we see that what started out as a smaller conflict has blossomed into a war that consumes the entire planet. Peace is taken from the earth and the nations of the world attack each other.

The Third Seal: global famine. The world war triggers a worldwide famine, and food prices skyrocket:

Revelation 6:5: “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”

The penny mentioned here is actually a day's wage. Food prices have risen so greatly that it takes an entire day's wage just to buy a single measure of wheat. The global war is coupled with a terrible global famine.

In Bible times, oil and wine were often used as medicines. It is possible that, although there will be a terrible famine, there will be medical help readily available.

The Fourth Seal: hundreds of millions of people die. The world war results in the death of 25% of the planet's population:

Revelation 6:7: “And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”

Given that the world's population is currently 7 billion people, that would mean that almost *two billion people* will be killed. The passage goes on to explain how they will die: as a result of military conflict, by starving to death, and by wild animals (which tend to enter human-populated areas whenever there is a massive famine that robs them of other food sources).

The Fifth Seal: intense persecution of Christians. During the Tribulation many people will come to know the Lord. However, they will be intensely persecuted and a great many of them will be killed:

Revelation 6:9: “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

All throughout the Tribulation Christians are massacred in huge numbers, and this starts at the very beginning of the Tribulation period.

As an aside, there are people who believe that the Rapture takes place in the middle of the Tribulation. They say that the first half of the Tribulation is a time of peace and harmony, and the real horrors don't begin until after it is halfway over. Therefore, God doesn't take the Church home until then.

The reason I have trouble taking this viewpoint seriously is because the first three years of the Tribulation are *not* a time of peace. As we've seen, soon after the Tribulation begins *a billion people are killed*, and countless *millions* of Christians are executed for their faith. In fact, after the sixth seal is opened even the *lost* realize that the time of God's wrath has come! If God is going to rescue the Church from the time of His wrath then the Church will need to be Raptured *before* the Tribulation begins, not after it's already started.

The Sixth Seal: a terrible earthquake. All throughout the Tribulation God sends earthquakes to judge the nations. This earthquake, although terrible, is actually not as bad as one that happens later in the Tribulation. Still, it is devastating:

Revelation 6:12: “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”

The earthquake is so bad that “every mountain and island” are moved. The catastrophic 2011 earthquake in Japan managed to move the entire island of Japan a few inches. This earthquake, however, moves more than just Japan; it moves *everything*.

Along with the earthquake are other devastating signs: the sun stops shining for a period of time

(just as happened in ancient Egypt during the plagues), the moon turns red, and there is a devastating meteor shower. All of this convinces mankind that God is angry with them and is pouring out His wrath:

Revelation 6:15: “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;
16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

As I said earlier, we can clearly see that the first few years of the Tribulation are *not* years of peace and happiness. Things are so bad at this point that people are *begging to be buried alive so that they are hidden from the face of God*. Everyone, from the mightiest king to the lowliest slave, is in abject terror of the awful judgments God is pouring out on Earth.

The 144,000 Witnesses: There is one more seal to be opened, but before Jesus opens the seventh seal there is a pause. God uses this time to anoint 12,000 Jews from 12 different tribes:

Revelation 7:4: “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

These people are sealed so that the antichrist cannot harm them, and they are sent to preach the gospel to the whole world. God mightily blesses their efforts, and as a result millions of people are saved:

Revelation 7:9: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;
10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

However, these new converts are promptly executed by the antichrist:

Revelation 7:13: “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?
14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

The preaching of the 144,000 witnesses resulted in a tremendous harvest, as millions of people came to Christ. However, these new converts do not live long because the antichrist ruthlessly hunts them down and kills them.

Therefore, after this has happened the Lord opens the seventh and final seal...

The Seventh Seal: seven trumpet judgments. The seventh seal contains within it seven other judgments, which are usually called the trumpet judgments:

Revelation 8:1: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”

The trumpets are sounded, one by one. (Incidentally, so far we are *still* in the first half of the Tribulation.)

The First Trumpet: one-third of the world's forests are burned to the ground. We see that here:

Revelation 8:7: “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

God used hail on a number of occasions in the Old Testament to perform judgments, and here we see Him doing it again. In this case the reign of hail and fire wipes out every bit of grass and one-third of the world's forests. The first trumpet, then, causes major ecological damage to the world's forests (to say nothing of all those who will die in the fires).

The Second Trumpet: one-third of all sea life dies. That is found here:

Revelation 8:8: “And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

The first trumpet was a land-based judgment; this one is focused on the sea. When the second trumpet sounds a third of the sea becomes blood (just as the Nile became blood during the plagues of Egypt), a third of all sea life dies, and a third of all ships are destroyed. Here we see more massive ecological damage.

The “great mountain burning with fire” may be some sort of meteor, or it might refer to something supernatural. Whatever it is, the effect it has on the ocean is clear and devastating.

The Third Trumpet: one-third of all fresh water is contaminated. Whereas the previous judgment was against the sea, this one is against mankind's fresh water supply:

Revelation 8:10: “And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.”

It appears that a meteor falls to the earth and contaminates one-third of the rivers and other sources of water. This causes a tremendous loss of life.

So, up to this point, one-third of the world's oceans have been destroyed, one-third of all forests have been burned to the ground, and one-third of mankind's fresh water supply has been poisoned. I do not know how many people will die as a result of this, but it is surely a tremendous number – and that doesn't even count all the people that are executed for becoming Christians.

The Fourth Trumpet: one-third of the Earth's supply of light is removed. During this time something happens to block out a large amount of light:

Revelation 8:12: “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”

As we can see, one-third of the light from the sun, moon, and stars is blocked. This makes the days and nights noticeably darker. The passage does not say how long this lasts, or if the effect is permanent. What we do see is that the Lord is systematically devastating the environment: the oceans, the land, the rivers, and even the sunlight are cursed by one-third.

However, as bad as things have been up to this point, things are about to become tremendously worse:

Revelation 8:13: “And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”

The Fifth Trumpet: an army of demons is set free. So far the earth has been plagued with war, famine, hail, earthquakes, and devastating ecological disasters. All of that pales in comparison to what comes next, when God sets free an army of imprisoned demons to torment mankind:

Revelation 9:1: “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”

Let me say right off the bat that these are not actual locusts, but demons. We know this because the locusts have a king:

Revelation 9:11: “And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit,

whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

However, Proverbs actually says that real locusts *don't have kings*:

Proverbs 30:27: “The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;”

Besides this, who is the king of the creatures? A demon named Apollyon. Who opened the door to the bottomless pit? An angel that fell from Heaven – in other words, a demon. It's worth noting that the bottomless pit is a place where demons are imprisoned, and is the very place where Satan will be bound for 1000 years. These are not insects, but demons – an immense army of demons. These demons are told to harm only those who are not saved. So they begin tormenting mankind:

Revelation 9:5: “And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

When these demons “sting” someone they inflict terrible, excruciating pain that lasts for five months. This pain is so great that people will try to kill themselves *and they will fail*. People will desperately long to die so that they can escape the unbearable pain *but they will not be able to die*.

But the demonic invasion is not over yet...

The Sixth Trumpet: demons execute one-third of mankind. Keep in mind that earlier the effects of a global war wiped out 25% of mankind, so these demons kill 33% of whatever survivors have managed to stay alive up to this point:

Revelation 9:13: “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.”

The world's population is around 7 billion people. Earlier a quarter of these people were killed, so that left 5.25 billion people. If one-third of these survivors are executed, then that means the world's

population is down to 3.5 billion people. These two judgments alone have seen the death of *half* of the world's population. Billions of people have died – and we are still in the first half of the Tribulation!

What this passage pictures is a massive army of 200 million *demons*. These are not Chinese soldiers, nor are they humans at all. This is a demonic army that is controlled by four demons that had been imprisoned for a long time, waiting for the day when they would be set loose to kill nearly *two billion people*. The demons will use fire, smoke, and brimstone to slaughter people in horrific numbers.

It is terrifying to imagine an army of demons ravaging the entire planet, killing people by the millions, but that is what is going to happen. One might imagine that many people would cry out to God for forgiveness and mercy, but that doesn't happen. Instead people simply harden their hearts:

Revelation 9:20: “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

The Second Half of the Tribulation

Believe it or not, we are only now just getting to the second half of the Tribulation.

The Death and Resurrection of the Two Witnesses: The ministry of the two witnesses only lasts for the first half of the Tribulation. When that period of time is over the antichrist will kill them, and the world will rejoice over their death:

Revelation 11:7: “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”

The dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days, as the entire world looks at the bodies (presumably on live TV) and rejoices. Their rejoicing is cut short, however, because God resurrects them:

Revelation 11:11: “And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”

After they ascend into Heaven the Lord sends an earthquake that devastates Jerusalem (which is under the antichrist's control at this point):

Revelation 11:13: “And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

In the earthquake a tenth of Jerusalem is devastated and 7000 people die.

Satan is Cast From Heaven: A lot of people think that this happened before mankind walked on the Earth, but that is not the case. This actually happens at the midpoint of the Tribulation:

Revelation 12:7: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

As soon as Satan and his demonic army is cast out of Heaven he begins waging war against the Jews, which brings us to our next point...

The Conquest of Jerusalem: After the sixth trumpet sounds, but before the seventh and last trumpet sounds, there is a pause in the action as Jerusalem is conquered:

Revelation 11:2: “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”

This verse tells us that the Gentiles will conquer Jerusalem and control it for 42 months, or three-and-a-half years. In other words, the Gentiles (meaning the antichrist, since he is the world ruler at this time) will control Jerusalem for all of the second half of the Tribulation. This is convincing evidence that we have finally entered the second half of the Tribulation.

Incidentally, this conquest is a part of the antichrist's effort to exterminate the Jews. Satan tries very hard to wipe out the race that produced the Messiah:

Revelation 12:13: And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Because of the intense persecution that will arise God will divinely protect the Jews by bringing them to a hiding place in “the wilderness” and sheltering them there for three-and-a-half years. Enraged, the devil will turn his attention to persecuting Christians.

The Death and Resurrection of the Antichrist: At some point during the middle of the Tribulation the antichrist is killed and then miraculously resurrected. This causes the entire world to worship Satan:

Revelation 13:3: “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

The only ones who will not worship him are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Everyone else is deceived.

God allows the antichrist to continue for 42 months, or three-and-a-half years. This represents the entire second half of the Tribulation – the same period of time when the Gentiles will control Jerusalem, and the same period of time when the Jews will be hiding in the wilderness. In the first half of the Tribulation the antichrist wages a world war; in the second half he controls the world. In fact, God even gives him the power to overcome the saints, and he kills them in large numbers:

Revelation 13:7: “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

This is when the 144,000 witnesses are murdered. Their ministry, like that of the two witnesses, only takes place during the first half of the Tribulation.

The False Prophet and the Mark of the Beast: It is at this point – in the second half of the Tribulation, after half of the world's population has been killed and after the world has suffered unimaginable ecological devastation – that the false prophet begins his work:

Revelation 13:12: “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast.

should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

Here we see that the false prophet does amazing signs and miracles in order to convince everyone to worship the idol that he set up in the Temple in Jerusalem. He then goes further and forces everyone to take the famous Mark of the Beast, which is either the antichrist's name or the number of his name (666). The only ones who do not do this are those whose names are written in the Book. Everyone else takes the Mark and is damned forever.

Once you take the Mark it is too late for you: it is an unforgivable sin. No one who takes the Mark or worships the beast can be saved. That is the point of no return:

Revelation 14:9: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The Seventh Trumpet: God takes over control of the world. After all of the judgments that have happened one might expect the seventh trumpet to consist of more horrors, but instead something unexpected happens:

Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Keep in mind that at this point Jesus has not yet returned to Earth; the Second Coming is still some time away. But yet, when the seventh trumpet sounds the Lord's reign over the Earth begins. The angel is very clear about this: "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ". The twenty-four elders (which represent the Church) echo this:

Revelation 11:16: "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

Remember, when these things are said the antichrist is still ruling over the world. Yet, his days are numbered because the Lord has assumed control and is about to put events into motion that will result in the antichrist's defeat.

The Lord then appoints seven angels to pour out seven vials of wrath upon the Earth:

Revelation 15:1: “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”

The vials are:

The First Vial: painful sores. The first vial (or bowl, as they are sometimes called) of wrath causes terrible, painful sores to appear on all those that took the Mark of the Beast:

Revelation 16:2: “And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.”

No Christians are affected, but all those who worshiped the Beast are infected with this painful disease.

The Second Vial: all sea life dies. Earlier we saw a judgment where one-third of all aquatic life was killed. Here God wipes out the rest of it:

Revelation 16:3: “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.”

At this point there is no sea life left anywhere on Earth. All of the oceans have become blood and everything in them is dead.

The Third Vial: all fresh water becomes blood. In an earlier judgment one-third of the world's freshwater supply was poisoned. Here *all* of the world's freshwater supply is turned to blood:

Revelation 16:4: “And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.”

Notice that the passage does not say that they became *as* blood, or they looked like blood, or they turned red. This verse says that they actually *became blood*. There is a specific reason for this:

Revelation 16:5: “And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.
6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.”

In other words, those who are left on the earth have proven their bloodthirstiness by killing millions upon millions of Christians. As punishment for this God has turned their entire water supply into blood. They desired the blood of His children so God has given them blood to drink.

But God is still not done. This is only the third vial; there are still more.

The Fourth Vial: scorching heat. In an earlier judgment we saw that something blocked out one third of the world's sunlight. Here we see the reverse. Something happens to the sun that causes it to become far more active:

Revelation 16:8: “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.”

The sun becomes a great deal hotter and scorches men with unbearable heat. In return they do not repent, but instead blaspheme God with even greater intensity.

The Fifth Vial: painful darkness. After blaspheming God for sending scorching heat, God in turn sends darkness over the kingdoms controlled by the antichrist:

Revelation 16:10: “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

This darkness is apparently connected with pain, because we see mention of pains, sores, and people gnawing their tongues. Yet, there is no repentance; people simply hate God even more.

The Sixth Vial: the Euphrates river is dried up. Given what just happened in all of the other vials this might seem strange, but there is a reason for it:

Revelation 16:12: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

In other words, the Euphrates river was dried up so that the battle of Armageddon can take place. The Lord is gathering the whole world together for one great battle – a battle that Jesus is going to fight *in person*. When the armies of the world gather together to wipe out the Jews that have been hiding in the wilderness, they will encounter something they did not expect: the returned Jesus.

The Seventh Vial: the worst earthquake of all history. Earlier in Revelation we saw a devastating earthquake occur, but that quake is nothing compared to this one:

Revelation 16:17: “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”

This earthquake is so great that it levels all of the mountains, moves every island out of its place, and destroys all the cities of the world. It is the worst earthquake to ever happen in all of history. The loss of life that this causes is surely staggering!

However, there is another part of this as well:

Revelation 16:21: “And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

As if the earthquake itself had not done enough damage, it is followed by a terrible hailstorm where each stone weighs around *seventy pounds*. Imagine an unending reign of giant boulders falling out of the sky, causing untold property damage (if there is any property left standing at this point) and killing massive numbers of people.

Babylon is Destroyed: During the Tribulation the antichrist rules over the world from the rebuilt city of Babylon. For a time this city wields awesome power and wealth. However, at the end of the Tribulation the Lord judges the city and brings it to ruin:

Revelation 14:8: “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

This is talked about much more extensively in chapter 18:

Revelation 18:2: “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

...

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with

her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,
10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon,
that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

...

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the
company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this
great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that
great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!
for in one hour is she made desolate.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea,
saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be
found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard
no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any
more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the
bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were
the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain
upon the earth.”

This is a very long passage to quote, but there were several points that I wanted to emphasize. First, it's clear that at the time of the Tribulation the city of Babylon is a tremendously rich and important city. Verse 17 tells us that she had “great riches”, and verse 23 says that her merchants “were the great men of the earth” and that she deceived the nations. Today the modern city of Babylon is little more than a tourist attraction, but one day it will become the premier city of the world.

The other point I want to bring out is that the destruction of Babylon is complete. In a single hour the city is destroyed, burned to the ground, and becomes a place where only demons dwell. No one will ever live in it again and the city will never be rebuilt. It will be violently destroyed because of the role it played in slaughtering untold millions of Christians. God will judge the city and bring it to an end.

The Marriage of the Lamb: Toward the end of the Tribulation the Marriage of the Lamb takes place, where the Bride of Christ (the church) becomes the wife of Christ. We find this mentioned right after the city of Babylon is burned:

Revelation 19:7: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

While the earth is reeling under the wrath of God, in Heaven the great Marriage is taking place. (Of course, in order for this wedding to take place the entire Church must be in Heaven at the time. This is more evidence for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.)

The Second Coming: After the Marriage has happened the Lord returns to Earth with the armies of Heaven:

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The antichrist has gathered all the nations of the world together for the great battle of Armageddon (which is something we saw when the sixth vial was poured out). The antichrist is expecting to wipe out the last remnant of the Jews, but instead he is going to face Jesus Christ Himself:

Revelation 19:19: “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

The antichrist actually attacks Jesus Himself, and Jesus wipes them all out single-handedly. The antichrist and false prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire, and all of his armies are killed. Jesus has the armies of Heaven with him, but He does not use them; He does all of the fighting Himself. His Word is enough to defeat them all.

After this happens the Lord binds Satan for a thousand years and begins His millennial kingdom, but that is a topic for another time.