

## Making Sense of End-Time Events

Hello, and welcome back. It seems like there are a lot of questions about end-time events. Is there a "pre-tribulation" rapture? Does the church - those who are "in Christ" - escape the great tribulation? Is the great tribulation the wrath of God? When does the sign of the "Son of man" appear? When are the two witnesses and the antichrist "beast" active? What is the "hour of temptation"? So to help answer these questions I've created a timeline that you may find helpful.

In the book of Revelation, chapter 6, a book or "scroll" is introduced. It has seven "seals." Imagine a rolled up scroll, with a wax seal holding the outer end in place. In order to open the scroll to read it, that first seal needs to be broken, so that the scroll can be unrolled and read. Well, this scroll has six more seals at various points inside. So, the scroll is effectively divided into seven consecutive sections. So, for example, before the events described in the second section can begin, the events described in the first section have to be "read" or have to occur. The scroll describes a series of 7 consecutive groups of events - "seals," they're called - in end-time prophecy.

The final, seventh seal is sub-divided into seven consecutive "trumpets" or trumpet soundings. These are described beginning in Revelation chapter 8. Why trumpet soundings? Well, in the Old Testament, seven trumpet soundings led to the fall of Jericho. In the Revelation, seven trumpet soundings lead to the fall of "Babylon the great" - this world's system of corrupt religion, education, government, finance, etc . . . all to be replaced by the Kingdom of God here on earth.

So here's the timeline, showing only the fifth, sixth and seventh seals, and showing the seven trumpets that comprise the seventh seal.

		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
		Seven Trumpets						
5th Seal	6th Seal	7th Seal						

There are many events in 5th, 6th and 7th seals. In this timeline we'll just address the following major events; we'll use the Bible to determine in what order they occur and approximately where they should be placed in the timeline:

- the resurrection and rapture of the church
- the darkening of the sun and moon
- the wrath of God
- Jesus' arrival at Jerusalem with the "saints"



Continuing in verses 7 and 8, still in the sixth trumpet:

- "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.

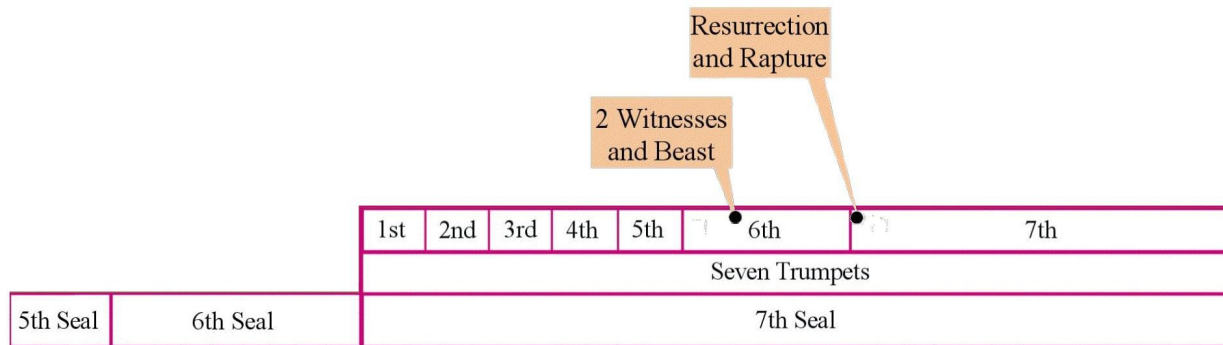
And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. " (Revelation 11:7,8)

The sixth trumpet, also called "the second woe," ends a few verses later, as the seventh trumpet is announced:

- "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

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." (Revelation 11:14,15).

(Note: 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet = 1<sup>st</sup> "woe"; 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet = 2<sup>nd</sup> "woe"; 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet = 3<sup>rd</sup> "woe")



The beast rules for 42 months, as described in Revelation 13:5. Those 42 months must begin either during the sixth trumpet, or earlier.

It's not clear whether the witnesses' 1260 days and the beast's 42 months are simultaneous or sequential. But it is interesting to note that 1260 days is equal in time to 42 months. 42 months times 30 days per month equals 1260 days. 42 months is also equal to 3 1/2 years: the "time, times and half a time" that the "little horn" in Daniel 7 is in power. Taken sequentially, the 1260 days plus 42 months would equal 84 months. That's 7 years.

This time period appears to be "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the whole, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10). Everyone will have to choose what to believe: the testimony of the two witnesses, or, the lies of the beast and the miracle-working false prophet. The beast will "make war" on true believers, so we do know for sure that there will be believers present during the reign of the beast:

- "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" (Revelation 13:7; also Daniel 7:21, 25)

Most will choose the beast and receive "a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads"

(Revelation 13:16), showing their allegiance to the beast: by the things they do and by the things they believe and profess. For them, the wrath of God is promised, to be delivered by seven angels:

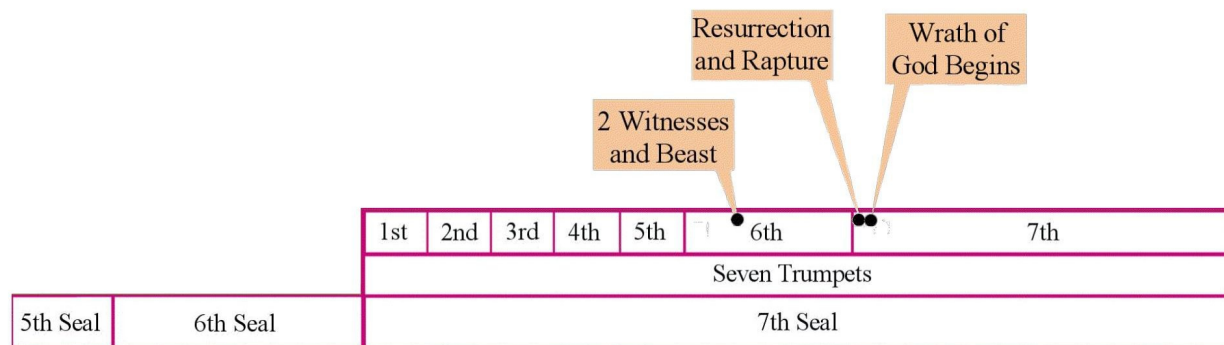
- "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." (Revelation 15:1)

- "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

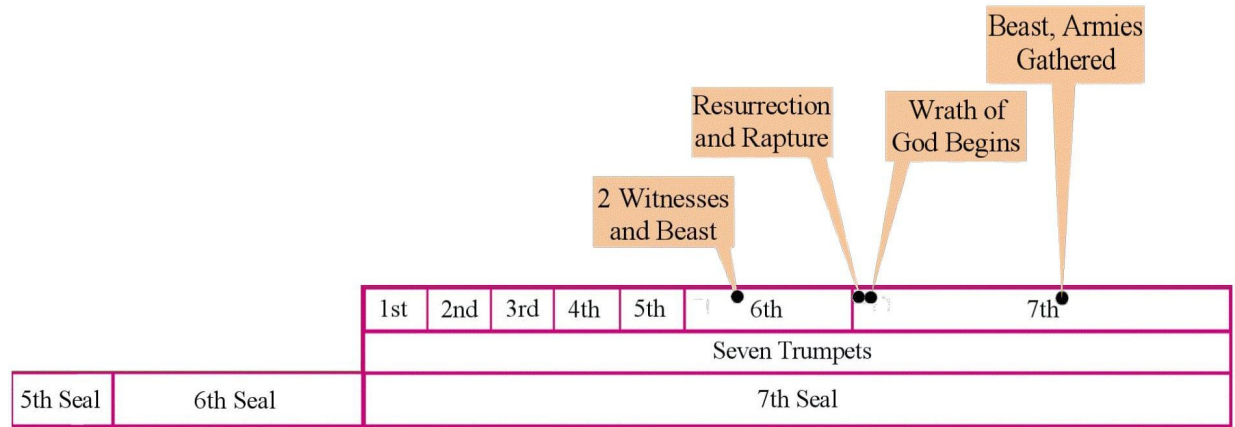
And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:1,2).

Since that wrath comes on those who had received the mark of the beast, it is apparent that the wrath comes after the beast has been in power for some time, perhaps toward or at the end of his 42 months.

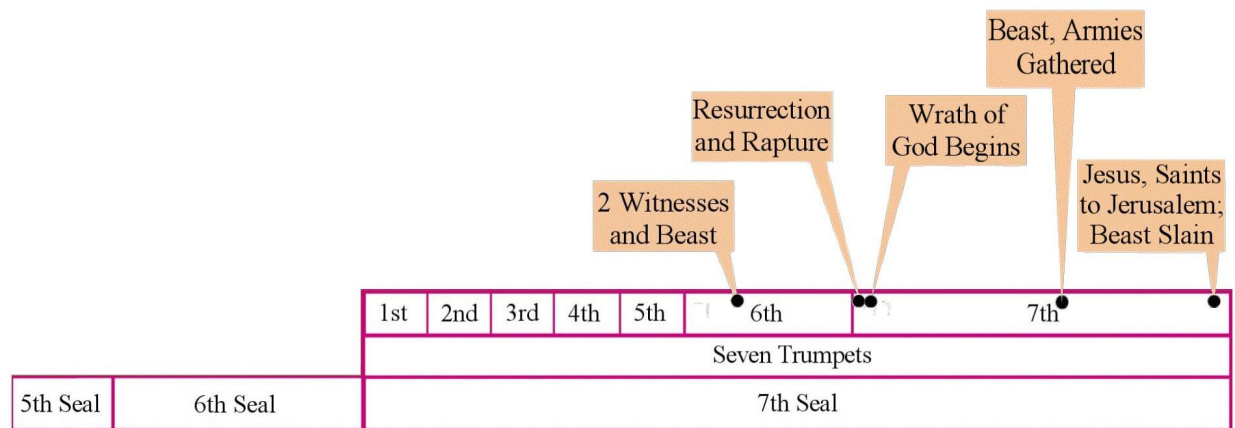
This wrath is presented Revelation 15 and 16, after the seventh trumpet has sounded (Revelation 11:15). No one "in Christ" will be subjected to God's wrath. At the sounding of the seventh trump those who were physically alive "in Christ," along with the resurrected dead in Christ, rose to "meet the Lord in the air." They won't be around when the wrath is poured out.



Later, as the 6th vial of wrath is poured out, we see the beast and his armies gathering at a place called Armageddon, in preparation for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:12-14).

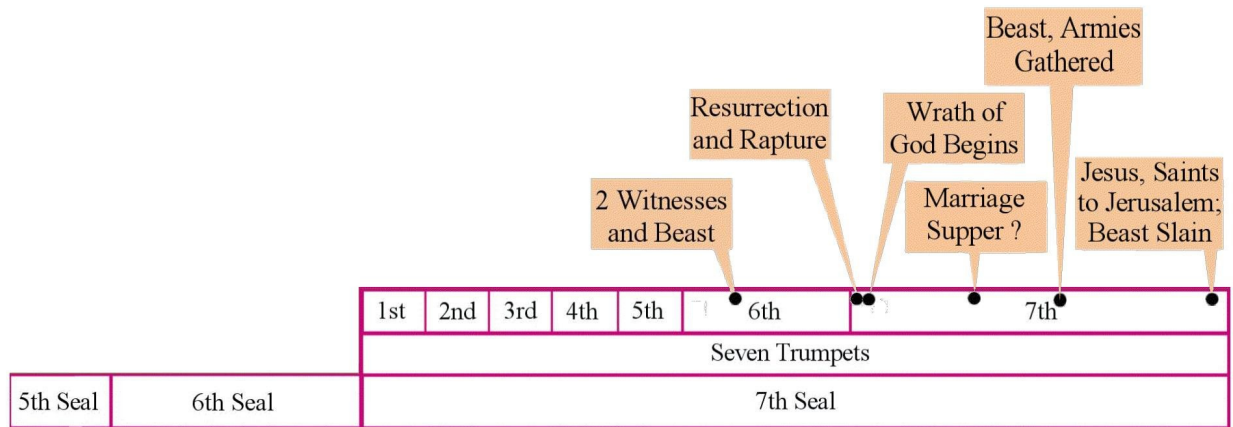


That battle occurs upon Jesus' arrival at Jerusalem, with His saints, as described in Revelation 19:11-21 and Zechariah 14:5. The beast and false prophet and their armies are destroyed.



Then the 1000-year rule of Christ and His saints, right here on earth, begins (Rev 20:6, Isaiah 2:1-4, Daniel 2:44, Daniel 7:14, Luke 22:28-30 and many more).

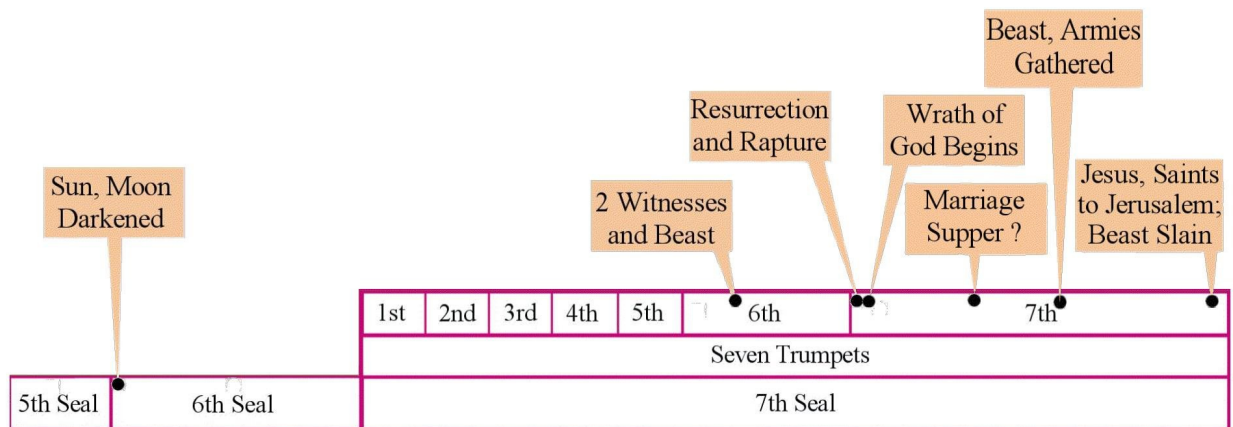
It is interesting to note that the only mention (in Revelation) of the marriage supper of the Lamb is in Revelation 19:9 - just before Jesus returns with His saints to conquer the beast (Revelation 19:11-21). This *suggests* the marriage supper takes place after the rapture to meet Him "in the air" but before the battle . . . in other words, during the time that God's wrath is being poured out. But there is no *statement* in the Bible that that is when the marriage supper takes place.



The "great tribulation" - properly understood - has absolutely nothing to do with the time of God's wrath. As we've seen, God's wrath is poured out after the seventh trumpet has sounded. The "great tribulation" is an entirely different event and is over long before God's wrath. How can we know? Just put the pieces together:

— The sun and moon are darkened at the opening of the sixth *seal*, as clearly stated in 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" (Revelation 6:12)



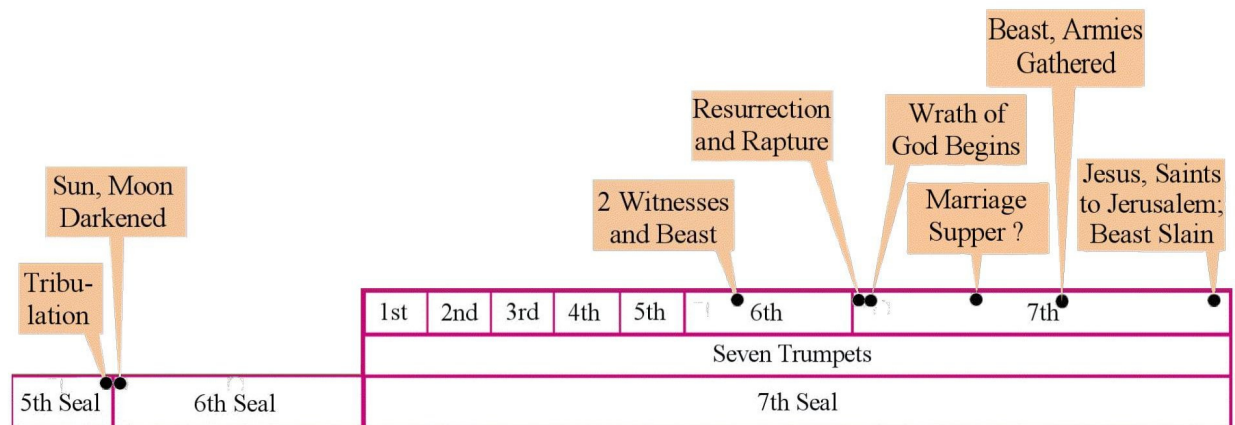
— Jesus said the sun and moon would be darkened "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matthew 24:29)

● "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matthew 24:29)

— Therefore the tribulation - whatever it is - must be over or ending *as the sixth seal is being opened*. So we'll tentatively put the great tribulation here, at the end of the fifth seal, just



before the sun and moon are darkened at the opening of the sixth seal:



— Given that the sixth seal comes *before* the seventh seal (and the 7th seal's seven trumpets) it is obvious that the "tribulation" is over long before Jesus raptures His church. ***The sixth seal, and the first six trumpets of the seventh seal must all occur after the tribulation, but before the "last [seventh] trump."***

Easy mistake that many make: assuming the "tribulation" is the wrath of God. It is not: the wrath of God is poured much later, upon those who accepted the mark of the beast.

— Okay, we have one more event for the timeline: the appearance of "the sign of the Son of man," immediately after the sun and moon are darkened. Here's Matthew 24:29 again, followed by verse 30:

- "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matthew 24:29,30)

While being questioned by the high priest, Jesus gave what seems to be a description of this sign:

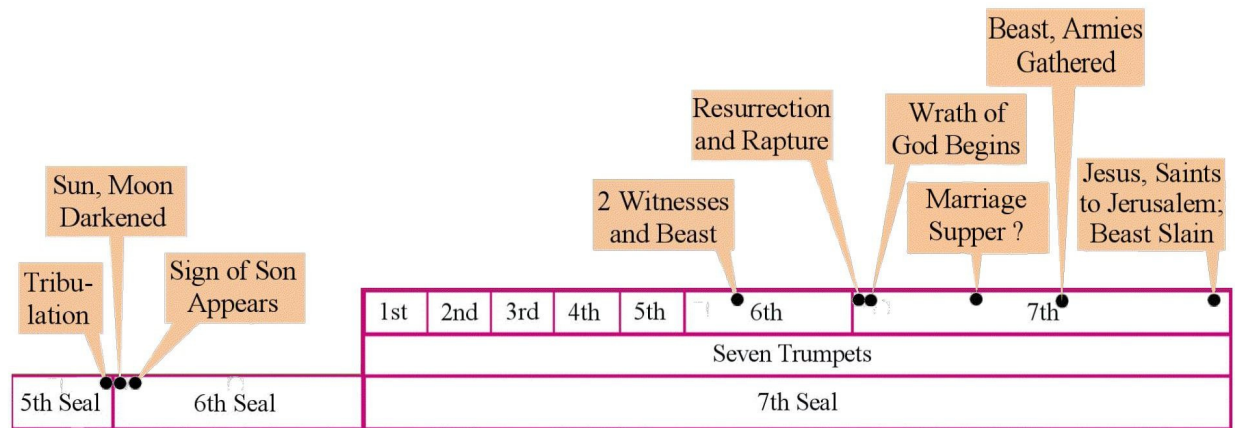
- "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64)

"Sitting on the right hand of power" - on the throne. Let's go back to Revelation 6:15,16 and see what men say after the sun and moon are darkened:

- "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;

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" (Revelation 6:15,16)



They're literally seeing "the sign of the Son of man," "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Seeing is believing, and an "innumerable multitude" come to repentance, as described in Revelation 7. They are shown figuratively "before the throne," having entered into "his temple" - the true church.

Here's a synopsis, the order of events, with some opinions thrown in:

— The "great tribulation" is man-made disaster, probably including war, so bad that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:21,22).

— The great tribulation is cut short by the darkening of sun and moon at the opening of the *sixth seal*, (Rev 6:12-14), "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matthew 24:29).

— the darkening of the sun and moon are followed by the appearance of the "sign of the Son of man" (Matthew 24:30) in the sky, causing everyone from kings to slaves to seek to hide "from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev 6:15-17).

— A "great multitude" come to repentance . . . they saw the sign; seeing is believing . . . (Rev 7:9-17).

— Seal 7 is opened (Rev 8:1); consecutive trumpets announce various traumas, some of which suggest a nuclear/volcanic winter.

— But Jesus hasn't arrived. People wonder and rumor, "where is He?" Jesus warned not to be swayed by reports "He's in the desert" or "in the secret chamber":

● "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." (Matthew 24:26).

— The appearance of "the sign of the Son of man" has set the stage for the appearance of



impostors: "false Christs and false prophets, showing "great signs and wonders" (Matthew 24:24). For example: the antichrist beast and the false prophet (Revelation 13).

— This will be "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev 3:10). People will need to sort out the truth: either believe the testimony of the two witnesses (sixth trumpet of the 7th seal, Rev 11:3-7), or else believe the beast and false prophet (Revelation 13). Many will attempt to "hurt" or discredit the testimony of the two witnesses. But "fire" - irrefutable evidence of the truth - will come from their mouths, destroying the credibility of any who challenge their testimony:

● "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. (Revelation 11:5)

— Will there be Christians on earth then? Of course: the beast and false prophet "make war" on them (Revelation 13:7; Daniel 7:21,25).

— the 7th trumpet of the seventh seal sounds (Rev 11:15): The dead in Christ are resurrected immortal; those physically alive and "in Christ" also receive immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

— Together, they rise to meet Him "in the air." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17);

— The "marriage supper of the Lamb" takes place (Rev 19:7-9) as the seven vials of God's wrath are poured out on those who remain on earth, who accepted the mark of the beast (Revelation 16).

— The beast and its armies gather for battle against Jesus (sixth vial of God's wrath, Revelation 16:12-16), but are destroyed by Jesus (Revelation 19:11-21) as He comes to Jerusalem with His saints (Zechariah 14:5).

— Jesus rules here on earth for 1000 years, with His immortal saints:

● "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6, Isaiah 2:1-4, Daniel 7; Daniel 2:44; Luke 22:28-30, etc)

Pre-tribulation rapture? No. No evidence for such a thing. Jesus comes once for His bride, at the last, seventh trumpet of the seventh seal.

Is the church raptured before the wrath of God is poured out? Absolutely.

Is the tribulation the wrath of God? No. The tribulation, correctly understood, ends early in the sequence of events, long before the wrath of God is poured out.

Well, I hope this helps clear things up. There is one last thing I should mention about the timeline. The 7 trumpets are shown in order; they do begin in sequence. But some of them must end before the next one begins. That is the case for the 5th trumpet or first "woe," which must end before the 6th trumpet begins:

- "One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (Revelation 9:12,13)

And it's true for the 6th trumpet or 2nd woe, which must end before the 7th trumpet (third "woe") begins (Revelation 11:14,15).

But there is no indication or statement that the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th must end before the next begins. They will BEGIN in order, yes, but one or more may CONTINUE ON after later ones (2, 3, 4, eg.,) have started.