

Ten Things that Must Happen Before the Rapture

I have heard Christian leaders teach the rapture could happen at any moment including right now. That sounds great, but it overlooks the scriptures telling of other events that must happen first. Until those things happen the rapture cannot happen. Regardless of what our pastor or anyone else says about it, we must rely on the scriptures as the final authority.

God's Promise to Deliver Us

Just mentioning anything that must happen before the rapture sets off alarms for some people because they have been taught the rapture will deliver them out of here before anything bad happens. So before listing the ten things that must happen before the rapture, I want to acknowledge God's promises to deliver believers from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Revelation 3:10) and from the hour of testing that is coming.

Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 3:10)

So we can take comfort in knowing God will keep His promises. His wrath will be poured out in the earth, but not on His people. That is really good news! All the unrepentant sinners in the world will mourn when they see the sign of the Son of Man in the sky (Matthew 24:30) because they will know it means they are doomed, but believers will not be here to mourn with them. God's people will be rescued in the rapture.

As awesome as these promises are they do not mean God's people will not endure any trouble in the world because there is a difference between the wrath of God and the wrath of man. God has promised to deliver us from His wrath, but has not promised to deliver us from man's wrath. In fact, He promised the world would hate us, persecute us, and even kill us. Jesus said we would "be hated by all because of His name" (Mark 13:13) and "they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another (Matthew 24:9-10).

We don't have to look into the future to find examples of the wrath of man because it has been operating in the earth ever since the days of Cain and Able. Millions of Christians around the world have endured great persecution and have even been killed for their faith. American Christians have so far not had to endure much persecution, but Christians in other parts of the world have suffered horrible things and continue to endure these things today. Just consider what believers today are enduring in places like Iraq, Syria, and China.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "all who desire to live godly in Messiah Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Therefore, we cannot just toss out scriptures warning us about bad things coming in the last days. We cannot just look for the rapture to deliver us from all trouble. Not only would that be contrary to scripture, but it could also destroy our faith when bad things happen and we find ourselves still here. When that day comes, we will need strong faith to

carry us through any trouble that comes our way. We will need faith that endures to the end. That kind of faith only comes from an accurate understanding of the scriptures.

So now we can move on. Here are ten things that must happen before the rapture.

1. The First Six Seals Must Be Broken

A great way to locate the timing of the rapture is by studying the breaking of the first six seals in Revelation 6. The Apostle John saw great trouble released by the breaking of each of the first five seals. Jesus saw the same events occurring in the same sequence (Matthew 24). Both John and Jesus saw a time of trouble coming in the last days that would include wars, famines, earthquakes, and the rise of false messiahs (Matthew 24:4-19).

Both John and Jesus saw the rise of the antichrist during this time of trouble. Since there is only one antichrist, we can conclude they both saw the same events during the same time period. John saw a rider on a white horse receives a crown after the first seal is broken. The white horse is a symbol of conquest, but also represents a counterfeit of the Messiah who promised to return riding on a white horse. This false Messiah is the antichrist. After receiving his first crown he begins using his crown to gain more crowns (Revelation 6:1-2). This marks the beginning of his rise to power and the beginning of the season of birth pangs.

Jesus saw the antichrist entering the temple and standing in the holy place, which is what the prophet Daniel called the abomination that brings desolation (Matthew 24:15). This arrogant action marks the beginning of the end for the antichrist. The cup of the wrath of God is full and about to be poured out.

Both John and Jesus saw another event that only happens one time in all of history. They describe it with so many details they must have seen the same thing. Here is what John saw released after the sixth seal is broken (Revelation 6:12-17):

- There was a great earthquake.
- The sun became black.
- The moon became like blood.
- The stars of the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree shaken by the wind.
- The sky is split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up.
- Every mountain and island were moved out of their places.
- The people of the earth hid themselves and sought to die because they were dreading the coming wrath of God.

Now compare that to what Jesus saw happening immediately after the tribulation, after the birth pangs (Matthew 24:29-30):

- The sun will be darkened.
- The moon will not give its light.
- The stars will fall from the sky.
- The powers of the heavens will be shaken.

- The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.
- All the people of the earth will mourn after seeing the sign of the Son of Man in the sky.

Both passages describe the same events in which the sun is darkened and turned black, the moon becomes like blood so that it does not give its light, the stars of the sky fall to the earth, the powers of the heavens are shaken as the sky is split apart and the sign of the Son of Man appears in the sky, and the people of the earth mourn and hide themselves because they dread the coming wrath of God. While the earth has endured earthquakes, solar eclipses, blood moons, and small meteorites in the past, there has never been anything like what is described in these two passages with all of these things happening at the same time, plus the sky being rolled up like a scroll, plus the heavens shaken, plus the sign of the Son of Man appearing in the sky, plus the people of the earth mourning. Actually, the sky being split apart like a scroll sounds like the prelude to the sign of the Son of Man appearing in the sky. Surely it would be a sign of something very big happening in heaven. Since nothing like this has ever happened before, and since the same things happen in both passages, we can conclude both John and Jesus are referring to the same events.

The only significant difference between the two passages is John saw a great earthquake and Jesus did not mention that. Perhaps Jesus did not need to mention that because he already told us the stars of the sky will fall to the earth and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Scientists have proven that movements of the sun and moon not only cause huge oceans to rise at high tide and fall at low tide, but also cause changes in pressure on the earth, which causes earthquakes. It is like squeezing a tennis ball and forcing it to change shape. So when stars fall to the earth and the heavens are shaken, the changes in the gravitational pull caused by these forces would surely be enough to cause major earthquakes. In addition, the impact of stars falling and hitting the earth would also be likely to cause earthquakes, even causing mountains and islands to be moved out of their places.

Isaiah (Isaiah 13:6-13) and Joel (2:1-10) provide further support to the testimonies of Jesus and John because they also saw a time coming when the sun and moon will be darkened, the stars will fail to give their light, the earth will quake, the inhabitants of the earth will mourn, and the heavens will be shaken. Isaiah and Joel also identified these events would happen just prior to the wrath of God being poured out on the day of the Lord.

So now we can draw some conclusions regarding the timing of the rapture. Since the events released by the breaking of the first five seals match the events listed by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-14 and the events released by the breaking of the sixth seal matches the events listed by Jesus in Matthew 24:29-31, we can now locate the timing of the rapture because in both passages it is the very next thing that happens (Matthew 24:29-31 and Revelation 7:9-17). Here is what Jesus said:

“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 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 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. (Matthew 24:29-31)

John's testimony reveals the same timing of the rapture. Right after the sixth seal is broken John saw a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne of God (Revelation 7:9). Then the elder explained to him these people came out of the great tribulation where they had endured hunger, thirst, exposure to the elements, and tears. He assures John they will not have to endure those things any more.

And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:14-17)

The things suffered by these people, including hunger, thirst, exposure to heat, and tears, are in line with what would be expected for believers during the great tribulation period because the antichrist system will prevent anyone from buying or selling unless they have taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17) and because there will be wars, which are known to cause famines. We also know the antichrist will be "wearing out the saints" (Daniel 7:25).

The only way these people could have come out of the great tribulation is if they were already in it because it is impossible to come out of something unless you are in it. So these people will still be on earth for a brief time after the great tribulation begins. As we already established above with a direct quote from Jesus, the great tribulation begins with the breaking of the sixth seal and the rapture comes immediately after that. Since believers are still on earth when the great tribulation begins we can conclude they will still be on the earth during the tribulation period because the tribulation precedes the great tribulation. This conclusion is consistent with the accounts from both Jesus and John.

We are not told how this multitude got to heaven. Since there are so many of them and all of them came out during the same time, it appears something happened suddenly to bring them to heaven. There are two possible explanations for how they got to heaven so suddenly with all of them leaving the earth during the same brief window of time. Either they were all martyred by the antichrist or they were delivered in the rapture. We are told many believers will be martyred during the tribulation (Matthew 24:9 and Revelation 6:9-11). However, these people had all survived the tribulation because that is the only way they could have entered into the great tribulation, which they suddenly came out from. Besides that the elder told John the

things they endured, but there is no mention that any of them endured martyrdom. To acknowledge those who endured hunger, thirst, heat, and tears, but fail to acknowledge those who endured the greatest of all sacrifices, which is laying down their lives, would be disrespectful to anyone who was martyred. Therefore, my conclusion is these people were not martyrs. They are the ones who are rescued in the rapture.

As we already established above, God has promised to deliver His people from the wrath to come, but the wrath does not come until after the seventh seal is broken. God's people are caught up to meet the Lord in the air after the sixth seal is broken. It is not a mistake that Revelation 7 was inserted between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals because that is when the rapture happens. Jesus said it plainly and John's testimony agrees. Immediately after seeing this great multitude, John continues with the breaking of the seventh seal in Revelation 8. Then the wrath of God begins to be poured out.

For more information about this topic, see my previous post: [The Timing of the Rapture is Revealed by the Great Multitude](#).

Jesus made a distinction between the tribulation and the great tribulation, which is important to understand because there are many differences between these two periods. Jesus said the great tribulation begins after the abomination of desolation.

For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. (Matthew 24:21-22)

To learn more about these periods, read my post "[Twelve Differences Between The Tribulation and The Great Tribulation](#)."

In conclusion, the first six seals must be broken before the rapture happens. Since Jesus called this the tribulation, we can conclude the tribulation period is completed before the rapture.

2. The Third Temple Must Be Rebuilt

Currently, there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The scriptures tell us the temple will be rebuilt during the time when the Lord will pour out His wrath on His enemies.

A voice of uproar from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord who is rendering recompense to His enemies. (Isaiah 66:6)

Since we have already established that the man of lawlessness takes his seat in the temple before the rapture comes, we can conclude the temple must be re-built before the midpoint of the seven-year period because that is when the antichrist takes his seat in the temple. The temple must be completed even before then because by the middle of the seven years it is already being used for regular daily offerings and sacrifices. We know that because the antichrist puts a stop to those things in the middle of the seven-year period (Daniel 9:27). So during the first three and a half years the Jewish people honor God in the temple, but

everything changes after the antichrist takes his seat in the temple. When that happens the temple is thrown down (Daniel 8:11). The daily sacrifices and offerings will be given to the antichrist instead of the Lord (Daniel 8:12). The host of people who serve in the temple and the holy place will be trampled for 2,300 evenings and mornings. (Daniel 8:13-14) That is counting the number of daily sacrifices that would be missed. Since there are two each day that would be 1150 days, which is 3 years, 2 months, and 10 days. Since the sacrifices are stopped in the middle of the tribulation it will take almost the entire second half of the seven-year period before they are restored.

In the long history of Israel, there have been only two temples in Jerusalem and both were eventually torn down. The Romans destroyed the second temple in 70 AD. After that the people of Israel were scattered throughout the earth and to this day the temple has never been rebuilt. The Muslims built the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the very same spot where the temple must be built. Muslims consider this site to be the second most holy place in the world, after Mecca, which is in Saudi Arabia. Any attempt by Israel to destroy these buildings would provoke a war with all of the nations surrounding Israel. Israel does not want war so the temple construction plans are on hold. However, a Temple Institute was founded in 1987 in Jerusalem to promote interest in rebuilding it and to develop design plans.

The temple situation provides insight into how close we are to the tribulation period. For those of you who have already bought your rapture beanie caps with the little spinner on top, you can put them away until the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are destroyed and construction of the Jewish temple begins. We still have some time to go.

I have heard people try to make the case that the future temple is only figurative, not literal. They say it is only symbolic language that does not require a third temple to be built. However, the scriptures describe five future events, which could not be fulfilled unless the temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem. All of these events occur during the reign of the antichrist. The scriptures describing these events are so specific and detailed there is no way they could be fulfilled without the temple being rebuilt.

1. In the middle of the seven-year tribulation period the antichrist will violate his own covenant with Israel when he orders all sacrifices and grain offerings must be stopped (Daniel 8:11 and 9:27). This lets us know sacrifices and grain offerings, which have not been practiced for the past 2,000 years, will begin again. The Jews have not practiced these things because they have not had a temple. Yet, Daniel saw they would restore these practices at the time of the end, which means a new temple must be built. It sounds absurd to suggest that after having waited for 2,000 years to resume these practices they will suddenly change their mind and resume these practices without a temple.
2. During the reign of the antichrist the holy place will be thrown down (Daniel 8:11). The people of the prince who is to come (the people of the antichrist) will ruin the city of Jerusalem and the holy place (Daniel 9:26). The holy place is located in the temple. How can the holy place be ruined and thrown down unless there is a temple? The host of

people who serve in the temple and the holy place will be trampled for 2,300 evenings and mornings (Daniel 8:13-14). 2,300 is the number of daily sacrifices that would be missed. Since there are two each day that would be 1150 days, which is 3 years, 2 months, and 10 days. Since the sacrifices are stopped in the middle of the tribulation it will take almost the entire second half of the seven-year period before they are restored. How could there be a host of people serving in the temple if there is no temple? How could the temple be thrown down, ruined, and trampled on by the people of the antichrist for 2,300 evenings and mornings if there was no temple?

3. The antichrist will take his seat in the temple in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) where he will display himself as God. How can he take his seat in the temple if there is no temple?
4. Instead of offering sacrifices to the Lord, on account of transgression the regular sacrifice will be given over to the antichrist. (Daniel 8:12) Sacrifices will stop being made to the Lord and will start being made to the antichrist. Again these sacrifices are offered in the temple, so these events cannot be fulfilled without a temple.
5. The Apostle John also saw the temple in Jerusalem in his vision of the tribulation. He was instructed to measure the temple and the altar and those who worship in it (Revelation 11:1). John is told not to measure the outer court of the temple because it will be given to the nations and they will tread under foot the city of Jerusalem for 42 months (Revelation 11:2). How could John see the temple and measure it if it did not exist? How could people worship in the temple if there is no temple? Why would he be told not to measure the outer court of the temple if there was no temple?

These scriptures clearly refer to a real, literal temple, not a figurative or symbolic one. Since we know these specific events could only happen in a temple, we can conclude a new temple must be built.

3. The Beast Kingdom Must Be Established

No previous kingdom has ever ruled over the whole earth, but according to the scriptures it must happen before the rapture. This end-time kingdom was shown to the prophet Daniel in the form of a beast with ten horns. He saw a terrifying beast devouring the whole earth, treading it down, and crushing it. The angel Gabriel then explained to Daniel the ten horns are ten kings who will arise within this kingdom. The beast kingdom will divide the whole earth into ten regions with a king ruling over each region. After those ten kings are established, another king will arise and will subdue three of the ten kings. That one is the son of perdition, also called the antichrist (Daniel 7:23-27).

Today, we do not yet see this beast kingdom ruling on the earth, but we will be able to recognize it when it comes because it will be ruled by the spirit of antichrist and will divide the whole earth into ten regions.

The Apostle Paul tells us the sequence of events with the rapture happening after the son of perdition (also translated as son of destruction) enters the temple in Jerusalem to take his seat, which means to establish his throne there (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4). The son of perdition does

not commit this abomination until after he has risen to power in the beast kingdom and reigned for 42 months, which is three and a half years, which is the middle of the final seven-year period (Daniel 7:25 and 9:27, Revelation 11:2).

So the beast kingdom must be established first so the son of perdition can replace three of the ten kings, rule for 42 months, and attempt to establish his throne in the temple in Jerusalem, which is the event that reveals the identity of the antichrist (see point 7 below). Then the rapture can happen (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

4. The Antichrist Must Make a Seven-Year Covenant

A seven-year covenant must be signed between the antichrist and the many. This treaty is sometimes referred to as a peace treaty, which might be part of it, but I have yet to find any scriptures calling it a peace treaty. We know “the many” will include Israel because the antichrist later violates the covenant by ordering the Jews to stop performing sacrifices and making offerings in the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27). Daniel identifies this covenant marks the beginning of the final seven-year period, although those days will be cut short for the sake of the elect (Matthew 24:22).

The antichrist violates the covenant in the middle of the week, which is three and a half years into his reign as ruler of the world. This is also when the antichrist takes his seat in the temple and commits the act that Jesus calls the abomination of desolation. Since we have already established that believers are still on earth at that time, and since the covenant is established three and a half years prior to that, then we can conclude believers are still on earth when the covenant is established. The seven-year covenant is made before the rapture.

5. The Power of the Saints Must Be Shattered

The rapture cannot come until the power of the saints is shattered first.

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?” 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; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. (Daniel 12:6-7)

The angel told Daniel the events of the end will be completed when the antichrist has finished shattering the power of the holy people. There is no way the church can be removed from the earth in the rapture before the antichrist shatters their power because it is his shattering of their power that brings the tribulation to a conclusion. For three and a half years he will wage war with the people of God. The people of God will be given into his hand. He will overpower them and wear them down (Daniel 7:21-25). In addition, it will be given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation will be given to him (Revelation 13:5-7 and Daniel 9:27).

Other scriptures reveal exactly how the power of the saints will be shattered. God's people will be delivered to tribulation and will be killed and hated by all nations because of the name of Jesus (Matthew 24:9). The saints will be severely persecuted. John saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God (Revelation 20:4-6). Daniel saw that the antichrist will destroy the mighty and the holy people (Daniel 8:24).

We have already established in the first point listed above that the rapture comes after the sixth seal is broken. Persecution and mass murder of God's people is released after the fifth seal is broken (Revelation 6:9-11). If believers are still on earth when the sixth seal is broken then we must also still be here when the fifth seal is broken. In addition, Jesus said, "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name" (Matthew 24:9).

These scriptures cannot be fulfilled if the church is already gone to heaven before these things happen:

- The great tribulation period cannot be completed unless the saints are here on earth so the antichrist can shatter their power (Daniel 12:6-7). The antichrist cannot finish shattering the power of the saints if they are already in heaven.
- The antichrist cannot make war with the holy ones and overcome them if they are already in heaven (Revelation 13:7, Daniel 7:21-25).
- The saints cannot be given into his hands for three and a half years if they are already in heaven (Daniel 7:25).
- The saints cannot be delivered to tribulation and killed if they are already in heaven (Matthew 24:9).
- The saints cannot be beheaded if they are already in heaven (Revelation 20:4-6).
- The antichrist cannot destroy the saints if they are already in heaven. (Daniel 8:24).

The saints are an important part of the events that occur during tribulation period. The church must be on earth for these things to be fulfilled. Therefore these things must come before the rapture.

6. The Apostasy Must Come First

Webster's dictionary defines the apostasy as the renunciation of religious faith, or the abandonment of a previous loyalty. The Bible warns us a time is coming when great numbers of believers will abandon their faith. It also tells us the apostasy will happen before the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3), which makes perfect sense because how could there be a great falling away from the faith if all of the believers have already been taken to heaven. Believers will not be renouncing their faith or abandoning their loyalty to the Lord after they are in heaven. Some have been taught it is impossible for believers to fall away from their faith, but the scriptures tell us it is going to happen in large numbers before the end of this age.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and

our gathering together to Him, that you 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. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first... (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)

The Greek word 'episunagoge' in verse 1 is translated as "gathering together." This is the same Greek word that is used in all of the New Testament scriptures referring to the rapture. So we can be sure this passage is referring to the rapture.

Those who are left behind, still on the earth after the rapture, will not be falling away from the faith because the reason they were left behind is because they were already faithless. Surely many of them will repent after they see they were left behind. But those who repent will be getting saved in a very hostile environment. They will be aware that their decision will likely cost them their life. They are not the ones who will be falling away. Just the opposite, they are the ones who will be repenting and getting right with God. Besides that, the above scripture already established the fact that the apostasy comes before the rapture.

Jesus also warned us about the apostasy when He said:

Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time MANY WILL FALL AWAY and will betray one another and hate one another. (Matthew 24:9-10)

Notice that Jesus says the apostasy comes after believers are delivered to tribulation. The severe trials of seeing other believers killed and hated by all nations will put great pressure on believers. Many will crack under that pressure and will abandon their faith. Daniel described this process as a time when the Antichrist will "wear out the saints of the Most High" because they will be given into his hand for three and a half years (Daniel 7:25).

Imagine how devastating it will be for people who have been taught they will not have to endure these things because of a pre-tribulation rapture. That false doctrine will likely be responsible for many people abandoning their faith. Now is the time to study the scriptures so that we are not deceived when these things begin to happen.

7. The Man of Lawlessness Must Be Revealed

The revealing of the man of lawlessness, the antichrist, must come before the rapture because the Bible says, "our gathering together to Him... will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). The next verse tells us how man of lawlessness will be revealed. It will be when "he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

The sequence of events given by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 is confirmed by Jesus in Matthew 24. He tells us about the man of lawlessness taking his stand in the holy place in verse 15 then comes the cataclysmic events released by the sixth seal in verse 29, then the sign of the Son of

Man appears in the sky, then he sends forth his angels with a great trumpet and they gather together his people from one end of the sky to the other in verse 31. The abomination of desolation is the event that reveals the man of lawlessness as the antichrist. So in both accounts, Jesus and Paul tell us the man of lawlessness must be revealed before the rapture.

Jesus stated it very plainly when he said, "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place..." (Matthew 24:15). He was speaking about end-time events, not applicable to the people standing there listening to him at that moment. So when he said "when you see" he revealed the generation of believers who is living at the time of the end will see the man of lawlessness enter the holy place, which is the abomination that brings desolation. The only way we would be able to see this event is if we are still on earth when it happens. Therefore the rapture must happen after this event.

Further evidence that the man of lawlessness must be revealed before the rapture is found in understanding the significance of the Abomination of Desolation in end-time events. The following summary of the days of the antichrist shows why this event is a pivotal turning point.

The antichrist will succeed in rising to power. Initially he is given a crown after the first seal is broken (Revelation 6:1-2). Being equipped with a bow and a white horse, which are both symbols of conquest, he goes forth conquering and to conquer. This crown is not the position of ruling the whole world. We understand that because there would be no one left to conquer if he already ruled the world from the start. After receiving his crown, he must go forth conquering to grab more power for himself. He must achieve a series of conquests along the way to becoming ruler of the world.

We are not told exactly how long it will take for him to accomplish his rise to ruler of the world, but surely it will take some time because it is an enormous task, which no man has ever been able to achieve. However, after he completes his rise to power, he will only be allowed to keep his grip on the world for a time, and times, and half a time, which is three and a half years.

During all of that time including his rise to power and his three and a half year reign his true identity will be concealed. Many people will listen to him, support him, vote for him, and follow him completely unaware that he is the antichrist. He will hide that fact from them because he understands that no one would follow him if they knew who he was. His power and position will be founded on a lie and he will add many more lies on top of that. Daniel saw that he would cast truth to the ground (Daniel 8:12).

Daniel saw that the antichrist will think very highly of himself. He will become great in his own mind (Daniel 8:25). He will be full of himself, narcissistic, adoring himself, and seeking adoration from others. Giving him honor and praise will be the key to being promoted in his kingdom. He will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over many (Daniel 11:39).

So we see the sick character of this man. He will never be satisfied with the level of praises he receives, but will always be hungry for more. He will even magnify himself to be equal to the Lord (Daniel 8:11). He will utter great boasts from his mouth (Daniel 7:8). The whole world worships him (Revelation 13:8), but still that will not satisfy him. He will want more. He will come against every other god, even turning against the god of his fathers (Daniel 11:37-38), in order to exalt himself above them all. He will seek to be the sole recipient of all of the world's worship. Anyone who refuses to worship his image will be killed (Revelation 13:15).

Eventually, after ruling for 42 months, his appetite for worship will drive him to the point where he can no longer resist the temptation to take off his mask, to abandon all sense of protocol, to allow the beast within him to totally take over. That is when he violates his own seven-year covenant with the people of Israel when he orders them to stop all sacrifices and offerings in the new temple in Jerusalem. He then enters the temple and takes his seat in the holy place, displaying himself as being God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

This guy just doesn't know when to stop. He was already guilty of a long list of crimes, including the murder of large numbers of Christians (Revelation 6:9-11). But when he takes his seat in the temple he commits an abomination that is so offensive to God that it releases worldwide desolation, including his own destruction. From that point on, the party is over for him and for all who followed him.

The prophet Daniel saw these things:

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:27 NASB)

In the middle of the week refers to a week of seven years rather than seven days. He he will break his covenant after only three and a half years. When he enters the temple and takes his seat, this is the abomination that brings desolation. At the same time someone else also takes His seat. The Lord, the righteous judge, takes His seat in the courts of heaven and makes a ruling to take action against him. Thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days took His seat. The court sat and the books were opened (Daniel 7:9-10). When the seventh seal of the book is broken and the book is opened then the wrath of God will begin to be poured out (Revelation 8). Then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will (Matthew 24:15).

When he takes his seat in the temple the abomination that causes desolation will be revealed. God will expose his identity for all to see he is nothing but a fraud. The man who presented himself as the solution to the world's problems will be exposed as the source of the problems. Then all the world will know they have followed the antichrist, but for most of them it will be too late because they will already have received his mark on their hand and anyone who has his mark is doomed to spend eternity with him in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11).

This event marks a significant turning point. Jesus warned His followers that the events coming after that would be far more severe than anything that happens prior to that. Jesus gave the following warning:

“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), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. (Matthew 24:15-21)

Why would Jesus warn his followers about events that would happen after the three-and-a-half-year reign of the antichrist? If His people were no longer on earth during those times there would be no need for a warning. Yet Jesus gave specific instructions about where to flee, in the mountains. He instructed His followers to act with a great sense of urgency. Whoever is in the field is warned not to even take time to go back to get his cloak. Whoever is pregnant or nursing babies during that time will have extreme trouble. At that time the world’s birth pangs will end and a new season of even greater trouble will begin. The tribulation period will end, but the great tribulation will begin.

We have already established that the events that come after the abomination of desolation as listed by Jesus (see Matthew 24:29-31) are the same events released by the breaking of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17). The abomination of desolation is the trigger event that leads to the breaking of the sixth seal. Since we have already established that God’s people are still on the earth when the sixth seal is broken and it is not broken until after the man of lawlessness is revealed, then it follows that the man of lawlessness must be revealed before the rapture. So now we have established the following points:

- The apostasy must come before the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).
- The man of lawlessness must be revealed before the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). This happens when he takes his seat in the temple in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
- Both Daniel and Jesus referred to this event as the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15).
- Jesus told us we would see the Abomination of Desolation so we must still be here when it happens (Matthew 24:15).
- The Abomination of Desolation occurs at the midpoint of the tribulation (Daniel 9:27).
- The “great tribulation,” begins after the man of sin is revealed (Matthew 24:21).
- Jesus instructed believers what to do after the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15-21).
- A great multitude of believers comes out of the “great tribulation” by the rapture

(Revelation 7:14-17).

Therefore, the Man of Lawlessness, the antichrist, must be revealed before the rapture.

8. The Gospel Must Be Preached in the Whole World

Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). This prophetic word must be fulfilled before the end of this age because Jesus said so. For that to happen, the church must still be on the earth because they are the ones who will proclaim the good news to the world.

Therefore, we can conclude the church cannot be raptured and taken to heaven until the gospel is preached to the whole world. The rapture cannot come at any moment, as some claim, because this prophecy must be fulfilled first. This is another insight into the timing of the rapture.

9. The Church Must Be Without Spot or Wrinkle

Whereas the temple building was the housing for the presence of God in the earth during the days of the Old Testament, our physical bodies became the temple of the Holy Spirit after the Messiah washed us clean with His own blood and sent the Holy Spirit to fill our temple. Rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem parallels rebuilding the spiritual temple of the body of believers in the Messiah.

The Apostle Paul instructed the Ephesians that love holds the body of believers together. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Paul continued his teaching to the believers in Ephesus by explaining what Jesus Christ accomplished for the church when He gave Himself up for her.

Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Although believers have already been sanctified and cleansed because of what Jesus Christ did for them, Paul uses this fact to exhort husbands to love their wives, wives to respect their

husbands, and children to obey their parents. Paul tells them to live holy and blameless because Jesus Christ desires to “present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle.”

This provides an insight into what the Lord desires to do at the end of this age when He presents the church to Himself. He is not coming back for a church that is busted, disgusted, defeated, and depleted. He is coming back for a victorious church of over-comers who show forth the glory of God to the world. So the church has a responsibility to become what He wants them to be before the end of this age. There is much evidence to suggest the church has not yet measured up to this high standard. However, this must happen before the end of the age. For this to happen, the church must still be on the earth because they will not be able to reveal the glory of God after they have gone to heaven. Therefore, this must come before the rapture of the church.

The saints of God today are in two locations with some already in heaven and others still on the earth. The Lord desires the saints on earth to be holy and blameless like the saints in heaven. The two groups must become more alike. Along these lines, the Lord said to Kat Kerr, “When we are so in love with the way the body of Christ is loving and living and talking and acting like we do and we cannot bear to be without them then we will come and get them.”

10. Believers Must Do Greater Works than Jesus Did

Jesus prophesied that believers will do greater works than He did (John 14:12). There have been many amazing testimonies from believers ministering with signs and wonders such as healings, miracles, and raising the dead. However, Jesus did all of those things too. For believers to do greater works will surely be astounding even for unbelievers. However, it must happen because Jesus said so. This prophecy cannot be fulfilled unless believers are still on the earth. They cannot do them from heaven. Therefore, this must be fulfilled before the rapture of the church.

Recap of 10 Things that Come Before the Rapture:

Recapping the above points, here are the ten events that must come before the rapture. There are surely many other events that could be added to this list, but this is a blog post, not a book!

1. The first six seals must be broken. (Revelation 6)
2. The third temple must be rebuilt. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
3. The beast kingdom must be formed. (Daniel 7:23-27, Revelation 13:1-10)
4. The antichrist must make a seven-year covenant with the many. (Daniel 9:27).
5. The power of the saints must be shattered. (Daniel 12:6-7)
6. The apostasy must come. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)
7. The man of lawlessness must be revealed. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)
8. The gospel must be preached to the whole world. (Matthew 24:14)
9. The church must be without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)
10. Believers must do greater works than Jesus did. (John 14:12)

Therefore, anyone who teaches the rapture could happen at any moment is teaching contrary to the scriptures. The rapture cannot happen until these ten things happen first.