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Christians Go Through Tribulation



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #57 ~

I know you may not want to hear this, but it's the truth, all Christians go through tribulation. Some health-and-wealth false teachers may try to deny it, but you can't deny what God has repeatedly told us in His word. And you can't deny that a countless number of Christians have experienced tribulation throughout church history. How about your own life? Haven't you gone through tribulation? Of course you have.

How is tribulation defined? It's from the Greek word *"thlipsis."* Vines Dictionary defines the verb form as *"to suffer affliction, to be troubled, has reference to sufferings due to the pressure of circumstances, or the antagonism of persons."* Austin Precept says, "*thlipsis pictures one being crushed by intense pressure, difficult circumstances, suffering or trouble pressing upon them from without. Thus persecution, affliction, distress, opposition or tribulations all press hard on one's soul. Thlipsis does not refer to mild discomfort, but to great difficulty… most often*

used of outward difficulties…"

What does God's word say? The underlined words in the following verses are translated from the Greek word *"thlipsis."* John 16:33 – *"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation,…"* Acts 11:19 – *"… those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen…"* Romans 5:3 – *"… we exult in our tribulations."* Romans 8:35 – *"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?"* 2 Corinthians 1:4 – *"Blessed be God… who comforts us in all our affliction."* Ephesians 3:13 – *"I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations…"* Revelation 1:9 – *"… your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and persecutions which are in Jesus…"* Here are even more verses speaking about *"thlipsis":* Matthew 24:9, 21; Mark 13:19; Acts 7:9-10; Romans 12:12; 1 Corinthians 7:28; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4, 6; Revelation 2:10, 7:14.

These verses make it very clear that believers experience *"thilipsis"*, this tribulation, persecution, affliction, this trouble, distress and pressure. Every Christian goes through tribulation, though some go through it more than others. The point I am making is that you shouldn't be surprised by *"thlipsis"*, for it is a normal Christian experience. Paul said, *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."* (Acts 14:22). But why does God want you to go through it? Because it's a means by which He works in your life, uses you for His purposes, and then blesses you forever. *"For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."* 2 Corinthians 4:17

What about great tribulation? Will some Christians go through this in the future? Yes. But many Christians say they won't, that they will be raptured before great tribulation, particularly what is spoken of in Matthew 24:21-22. Let me explain why that's not true.

1. There are many, many verses about Christians going through tribulation, and that includes great tribulation. You just can't say great tribulation isn't a part of tribulation. Your own experience tells you that sometimes life is hard, and sometimes life is extremely hard.

2. The English language tells us that great tribulation is tribulation, only greater. By definition, the only difference between great tribulation and tribulation is that great tribulation is greater, more intense, more severe than tribulation. You can't say a Christian goes through tribulation, but does not or will not, go through great tribulation.

3. The Bible never says Christians are excused from great tribulation. We are exempt from God's wrath, but not from tribulation or great tribulation. 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9

4. Many Christians say the great tribulation, spoken of in Matthew 24:21, is part of God's wrath. But how can you have all these verses on tribulation referring to believers, and then get to Matthew 24:21 and redefine it as God's wrath? You can't do that. Great tribulation affecting believers, is separate and different from God's wrath affecting unbelievers. For example, Revelation 6:9-11 is speaking about great tribulation and Revelation 8, 9, 16 is speaking about God's wrath.

5. Matthew 24:9 says, *"They will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."* In this verse, who's being killed and hated? It's the Christians. This verse says future believers will be going through tribulation, and you could even say this is great tribulation because of its deadly severity and global scope.

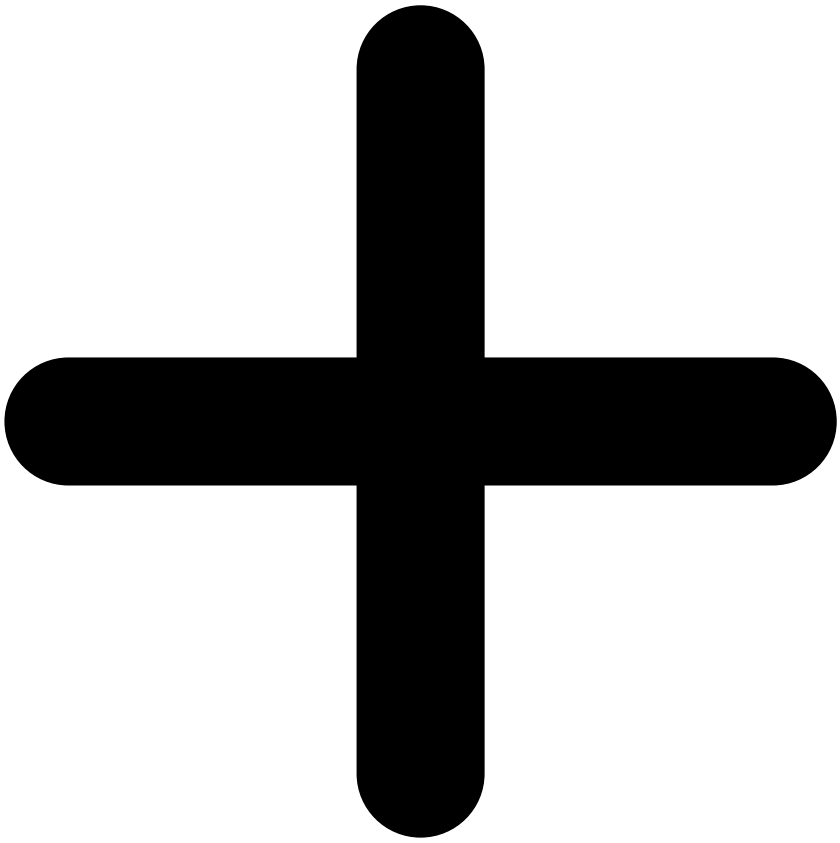
6. The Bible tells us that great tribulation, initiated by the Antichrist, starts at the midpoint of the 70th week, and sometime after that, is when Christians are raptured. (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-31). Therefore, Christians will go through great tribulation.

This subject is heavy on my heart, for I fear many Christians are ill-

informed, mistaken, or in error, regarding the truth that believers will go through great tribulation before the return of Christ. I am warning you, great tribulation is coming, and so be ready, be serving, and be willing to suffer (Revelation 2:10). But remember 2 Thessalonians 1:7, that God will *"give relief to you who are afflicted … when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven"* – this relief from tribulation happening when Jesus Christ is revealed, and you are raptured and taken to be with Him.

P.S. I encourage you to read the article, A Biblical Perspective on the Trials of Life, for it will most definitely help you as you go through tribulation, understanding what God is doing in your life, being strengthened by His Spirit, and being encouraged by His grace.

P.P.S. The Charts tab was changed to be a drop down so that you can find the charts by number or by subject. This will make it much easier for you to find and look at all the charts on one particular prophecy subject.



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