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Rescued from the Punishing Day of the Lord



By Steven J. Hogan

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The Bible talks extensively about the *"day of the Lord,"* a phrase referring to a frightening, devastating period of time when God intervenes in the affairs of this world and judges the ungodly. In the Old Testament, the prophets described in detail many of these *"days"*, times when God righteously punished deserving sinners, cities, and nations. Here are some examples: *"I will punish the world for its evil, and wicked people for their sin"* (Isaiah 13:11); *"The day of the Lord is awesome and very terrifying – who can survive it?"* (Joel 2:11); *"You will get exactly what your deeds deserve"* (Obadiah 1:15); and *"I will destroy people and animals."* Zephaniah 1:3

The most dreadful and destructive *"day of the Lord"* is still coming, and it will occur at the end of this age, when the holy, powerful, and sovereign God judges the entire world. Matt. 24:29 speaks of these celestial signs suddenly darkening the skies, alerting and warning everyone on earth that this day of doom is soon to begin. *"The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light... and the powers of heaven will be shaken."* Rev. 6:12-14 also tells us that there will be a *"great earthquake... and every mountain and island were moved out of their place."* Every single person on this earth will know that something dramatic and cataclysmic is going to happen, and they seem to know what it is, for they say, *"Hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."* Rev. 6:16-17

This severe judgment will be unleashed upon this sinful world during the second half of Daniel's 70th week, a seven-year time frame. The Antichrist will be ruling the world, unbelievers will be living in *"peace"*, and Jews and Christians will be undergoing persecution. Then these cosmic disturbances will darken the skies, alarming the unbelievers. Not long after that, seven *"trumpets"* will be blown resulting in fiery and deadly judgments killing billions of people and animals. *"There came hail and fire... a third of the living creatures in the sea died... torment for five months... they would kill a third of mankind."* Rev. 8:7, 9; Rev. 9:5, 15

Soon after that, there will be seven more judgments, for the *"bowls"* will be quickly poured out resulting in more death and destruction. *"It became a loathsome and malignant sore... every living thing in the sea died... men were scorched with fierce heat... they gnawed their tongues because of pain... and huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men"* (Rev. 16:2, 3, 9, 10, 21). And the evil unbelievers living on earth still *"blasphemed the God of heaven... and did not repent of their deeds"* (Rev. 16:11). Without question, these wicked sinners will deserve to be greatly

punished. *“Righteous are You, who are and who were, the Holy One, because You judged these things.”* Rev. 16:5

Then Jesus Christ will suddenly appear on the scene. The *“King of kings and Lord of lords,”* along with the armies of God, will come racing down to earth and strike down the nations. *“He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.”* (Rev. 19:15-16). He will royally crush that devilish Antichrist and his evil partner, the false prophet. *“These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire”* (Rev. 19:20). *“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.”* Rev. 19:6

What about the Christians? What happens to them during this time? They will not be on earth during this wrath!!! That’s because of *“Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come”* (1 Thess. 1:10). But there’s still some confusion among Christians as to what will happen to them in the end-times, and when. **Matthew 24**, the most important prophecy chapter in the Bible, gives us the **order of end-time events**: First, there are birth pains – wars, famines, earthquakes, and plagues (**Matt. 24:4-8**). These events, affecting both Christians and non-Christians in various parts of the world, are not part of the day of the Lord, God’s wrath, for they take place before it even begins. Second, there’s great tribulation, the persecution of Christians and Jews brought on by the Antichrist. **Matt. 24:9-14** talks about this tribulation as it affects the Christians, and **Matt. 24:15-26** tells us the origin of this great tribulation, that it’s instigated by the Antichrist and starts in Jerusalem, and that it affects the Jews. Rev. 13:13-17

Matt. 24:27 describes a brilliant light flashing from east to west, the glorious, celestial signal that Christ is coming, and obviously, this happens after the birth pains and great tribulation. Then **Matt. 24:28** gives a most sobering message, that vultures gather which means people are dying during this time. But there’s something

else we need to know – that this great tribulation is cut short by these sky-darkening signs (**Matt. 24:29**) which, as Acts 2:20 tells us, are *"before the great and glorious day of the Lord."* This can only mean that this great tribulation, this period of persecution, is before the day of the Lord, the period of punishment. **Matt. 24:30** then informs us that immediately after these celestial-darkening signs, the skies will be lit up by Christ's glory (Matt. 24:27). It is at that point that Christ will gather together all the believers from all time, those still on earth and those already in heaven. *"He will send forth His angel 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 24:31**, 1 Thess. 4:16-17, 2 Thess. 2:1

This should make it clear to Christians that the rapture takes place after the great tribulation has ended but before the day of the Lord, before God's wrath begins. People who say the birth pains and great tribulation are part of the day of the Lord are wrong, are in error. Great tribulation is when Christians and Jews are persecuted by the Antichrist, and the day of the Lord is when unbelievers are punished by God. Yes, we may be persecuted but we won't be punished. As 1 Thess. 5:9 says, *"God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."* This *"salvation"* refers to physical salvation, to being raptured and rescued from God's wrath, the disastrous and deadly day of the Lord. 2 Thess. 1:6-10 tells us the same thing, that there will be relief from tribulation for Christians, but retribution and eternal destruction for disobedient and ungodly unbelievers.

What 21st century Christians need to understand is that the church will still be on earth during the birth pains and great tribulation, but not during that dreadful day of the Lord, which is only for unbelievers. The order and nature of end-times' events, shown also in Rev. 6 – Rev. 8, make this very clear. In Rev. 6:1-8 we read about the first four seals, which speak of the birth pains. Rev. 6:9-11 talks about

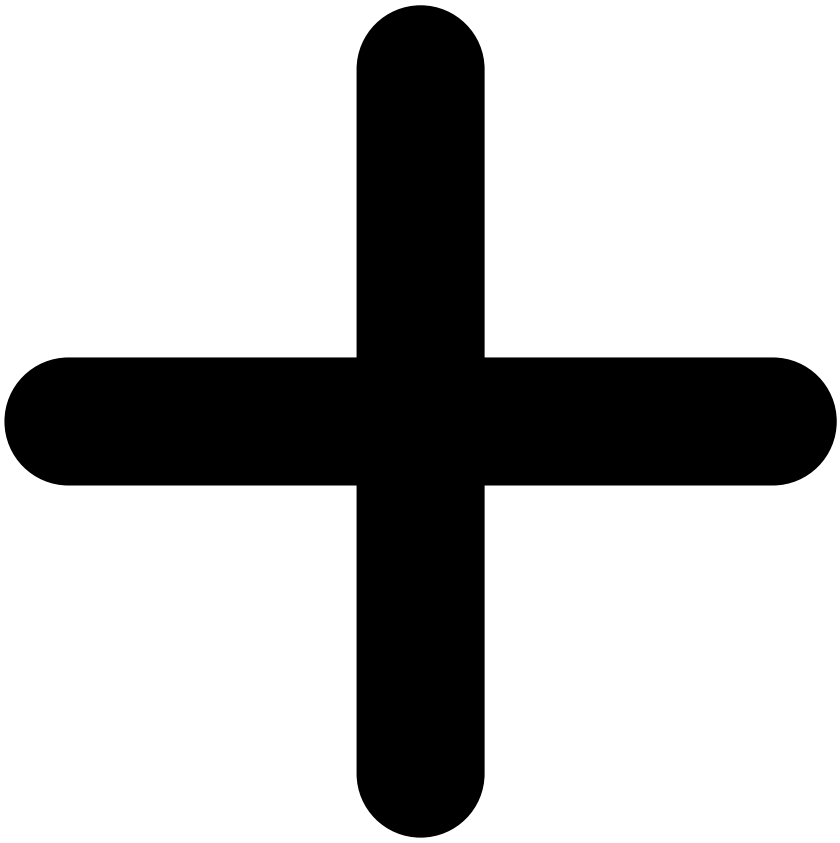
the 5th seal, which is Christians suffering great tribulation and being martyred. Then Rev. 6:12-17 tells us about the 6th seal, which describes the sign of the end of the age, the world-waking celestial disturbances warning us of God's coming wrath. But this wrath, pronounced by the 6th seal in Rev. 6:16-17, is not poured out on the earth until after the breaking of the 7th seal (Rev. 8:1), which then results in the opening of the scroll and the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:2-9:21). In between Rev. 6 and Rev. 8 is Rev. 7, which tells us two things, the sealing of 144,000 Jews, and the church, just having been delivered out of great tribulation, worshiping God in heaven.

Since we are so close to the end of this age, it is extremely important that all Christians know this order of end-time events: 1. birth pains; 2. great tribulation. 3. celestial signs (darkness and then light). 4. the rapture of the church. 5. the wrath of God on earth. It is now 2021, and at this time, we're in phase 1, the birth pain stage. But great tribulation is coming soon, and right after that, catastrophic, life-altering, earth-shaking, God-judging events will impact the entire world. Everything on earth will change, and if you are a Christian, you will be changed too, for you will be glorified. *"We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."* 1 Cor. 15:51-52

What a time to be alive! As Christians, it's absolutely imperative that you know these things, and then tell others who don't know, and especially those who aren't Christians. Tell the unsaved that today is the day of salvation, that now is the time they need to turn from their sin to Jesus Christ. Tell them not to wait, for the time is coming when it will be too late, and they will be left behind, and suffer, and be punished, and not just on earth during the day of the Lord, but in an extremely painful and everlasting hell. Matt. 25:30, 41, 46; Rev. 14:10-11

Tell the unsaved that God is holy, and that He must judge sinners who rebel against Him, who reject the truth of the gospel – but also tell them that God is merciful, that He offers forgiveness to all who come to Him and believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior, the only One who can save them from their sins, and from that terrible day of the Lord on earth, and from that punishing wrath in hell. *"This is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."* John 6:40

P.S. You need to know about the Day of the Lord, the coming wrath of God on this sinful earth. Understanding this subject will sober you up, make you more holy, and motivate you to tell the lost about what they will experience if they don't turn from their sin to Christ for salvation. Here is another post that will help you understand this most important subject – *"The Day of the Lord, the Wrath of God on Earth."*



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