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The End of the Age, Christ's Coming, and the Rapture

By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #372 ~

God has given us a great deal of information about Christ's 2nd coming, which means it's extremely important. Therefore, we must study it, believe it, and teach it. In the past three posts we have looked at the timing of Christ's return to rapture the church, and determined that the rapture is pre-wrath and not pre-trib. We learned that Christ is coming to rapture the church at the end of this age, after she goes through great tribulation but before God's wrath is poured out on the unbelievers. We also learned that the rapture takes place sometime during the 2nd half of Dan. 70th week. Dan. 9:24-27, Matt. 24:3-31

Today we are carefully examining the end of this age, for it is at this time that Christ returns to rapture the church. Understanding this age and what happens when it ends helps us to discern the timing of the rapture, that it occurs at an unknown time during the last half of Dan. 70th week.

What is the age we live in? We live in an evil age, one ruled by Satan, one that began with the sin of Adam and ends with the coming of Christ. *"*(Christ) *gave Himself for our sins so that that He might rescue us from this present evil age"* (Gal. 1:4). *"We speak God's wisdom… wisdom which God predestined before the ages… which none of the rulers of this age has understood"* (1 Cor. 2:7-8). *"We know that we are of God and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."* 1 John 5:19

What are the other ages? The 1st age is when Adam and Eve were perfect, and were perfectly ruling in the garden of Eden. The 2nd age is this present evil age. The 3rd age, the age to come, is the millennial kingdom age, when Christ is reigning on earth. This is followed by the 4th age, the eternal kingdom age. *"… He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."* Eph. 1:20-21, 2:6-7

How do we know this age is coming to an end? The fact that we are to make disciples until the end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20), that the church is raptured at the end of the age (Matt. 24:29-31), that God keeps us strong to the end of the age (1 Cor. 1:8), and that this age is followed by the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20), makes it quite clear that this age is coming to an end. 1 Cor. 15:20-28

What do people think about this present age? Most people do not understand that this present age must come to an end. They believe this world, apart from rulers, technology, and a few other things, continues on and on and on. During the recent July 4th weekend, many politicians and news people spoke about the possibility of this country going on for another 250 years. Then there are those who speculate that this world can keep going for 1,000's of years. People who say such things do not know what they are talking about. They do not understand God's end-times' purposes and plans, they do not know this world is

coming to a sudden and shocking end, and that Christ is returning soon. 1 Thess. 5:1-9

What is the significance of the end of this age? The end of this age marks the end of this world as we know it. Everything and everyone will change, be dramatically different – believers, unbelievers, Jews, rulers, governments, the economy, music, etc. It will be obvious that man is not in charge, but that Jesus Christ is in complete control, that He is reigning over this earth in a glorious and powerful way. God's plans, as carried out by Christ, will be evident. *"Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is heaven."* Matt. 6:9-10; Psalms 47, 67, 72

What do Jewish people think about this age? They believe this age comes to an end. Daniel was told to *"seal up the book until the end of time"* (Dan. 12:4, 9). Psalmists and Prophets wrote that this age would end with the day of the Lord, with eschatological wrath, with God judging the world, followed by the earthly, eternal reign of the Messiah (Ps. 2; Joel 2:1-11; Is. 2:10-22, 13:6-13; Ob. 1:15; Zeph. 1:1-3, 14-18). They did not know that Christ would first build His church and then, at the end of this age and before the day of the Lord, return to take her to heaven. Matt. 16:18; Rev. 2-3, 6-9

What is the relevance of the disciples' questions concerning the end of the age and Christ's coming (Matt. 24:3)? The disciples knew that the end of this age and Christ's coming were back-to-back events, that this age would end and be followed by Christ coming to judge the world. But they did not expect Jesus to give them a long list of events preceding the end of this age (vss. 4-28), and then answer their questions with these two signs (vss. 29-30). And they had no idea that Christ would ascend into heaven, build His church, and then return to earth to rapture the church, judge the world, and set up His kingdom. Acts 1:1-11

How are you to live in the years leading up to the end of this age? You are to love the Lord, to rejoice, be humble, pray, sing, trust Him, and obey Him. You are to love people, to forgive, be kind, compassionate, patient, and hospitable. You are to be strong in the Lord, to serve, to use your gifts. Specifically, you are to *"make disciples… to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:19-20), to endure *"to the end"* (Matt. 24:13), to preach the gospel *"and then the end will come"* (Matt. 24:14), and to be *"encouraging one another… as you see the day* (the end of the age) *drawing near"* (Heb. 10:25). The fact that Christians are to do these things until the end of the age is unmistakable, undeniable evidence that they will be living on earth at the end of the age. 1 Cor. 1:8-9

What is the sign of the end of the age? *"The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light… and the powers of the earth will be shaken"* (Matt. 24:29) before the end of this age, before *"the great and glorious day of the Lord"* (Acts 2:20). Heavenly lights go out and the earth goes dark, and it's witnessed by the whole world, by believers and unbelievers. Joel, Amos, and Isaiah spoke of this darkness, as did Matthew (Matt. 24:29), Mark (Mark 13:24), Luke (Acts 2:20, Luke 21:25), and John (Rev. 6:12). Why the repetition, why the emphasis? Because God is declaring, is crying out, is loudly proclaiming the truth that this age has come to an end, and that the world needs to wake up, to wise up, to know that Christ, the Savior, Judge, and King, is right at the door.

What is the significance of Matt. 24:6 and Matt. 24:13-14? Matt. 24:6 states, *"Those things* (birth pains) *must take place, but that is not yet the end."* Just because birth pains are happening on earth does not mean the end of the age and the rapture are imminent, that these events occur right away. Matt. 24:13-14 states, *"The one who endures to the end, he will be saved*. *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." Vss.* 13-14 are in the context of great tribulation (vss. 9), which begins just after the midpoint of Dan. 70th week. These

verses tell us two things: 1) preaching the gospel and enduring keep going until the end of the age and Christ coming to rapture the church; 2) the rapture of the church must occur after the 3½ year mark.

When is the end of the age, Christ's coming, and the rapture? Simply stated, it takes place during the 2nd half of Dan. 70th week. Let's now go over the order of events as given in Rev. 6-9, for this will help you understand this critical point about the timing of the rapture.

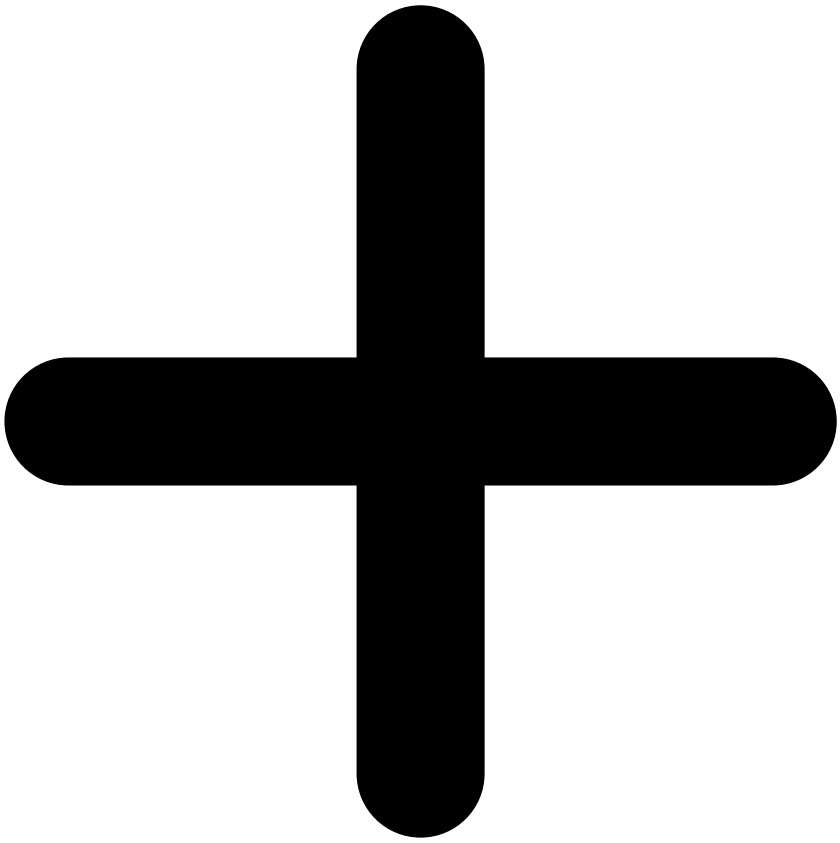
* Rev. 6:9-11 is the breaking of the 5th seal which is great tribulation. Immediately after this tribulation is cut short, there is the 6th seal signaling the end of this age (Matt. 24:22, 29; Rev. 6:12-17). Both believers and unbelievers know that God's wrath is coming very soon.
* Rev. 7 speaks of two major events taking place between the 6th and 7th seals. The first is the sealing of 144,000 Jews, and the second is Christians being raptured, being delivered out of great tribulation, and then standing in heaven before Jesus Christ. Rev. 7:1-8, 7:9-14
* Rev. 8:1 is the breaking of the 7th seal, resulting in the opening of the scroll, one describing the trumpet judgments, the pouring out of God's wrath from that point until the end of Dan. 70th week. Rev. 8:1-13 – 9:1-21; Rev. 10:7, 11:15, 12:6

So here is the pre-wrath rapture position: Great tribulation begins just after the midpoint of Dan. 70th week, goes on for a little while, and then is cut short, immediately followed by the end of the age, the coming of Christ, and the rapture of the church. This occurs before God's trumpet-judgment wrath on earth, wrath that goes to the end of Dan. 70th week. All these facts force us to conclude that the rapture is not before great tribulation, but before God's wrath, and that it occurs at the end of this age, sometime during the last half of Dan. 70th week (Matt. 24:15-34, Rev. 6:9-17, Rev. 7:9-14, Rev 8-9).

Yes, there are a lot of details, but I am glad God told us so much. He wants all Christians, especially pastors (2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17, 4:1-2), to clearly understand the end of the age, Christ's coming, the rapture, and the timing of the rapture. He does not want any believer to be naïve, ignorant, or misled with regard to any of these end-times' truths.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying. 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" Revelation 7:9-10

P.S. Just think, you, your children, grandchildren, or friends may be alive when this age comes to an end. Here are two more posts about the future – *"The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching is False"* and *"This Age is Coming to an End and Then a New Age Will Begin."*



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