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The Timing of the Rapture



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #55 ~

When is the rapture going to take place? I don't know. In fact, no man knows. No one but God knows the exact time of the rapture, when His Son will return to earth to gather all the believers to Himself, and then take them home to heaven. But we can know the timing of the rapture, and particularly where it occurs in relationship to the 70 Weeks of Daniel, a 7-year prophecy packed timetable. Knowing what God says about the 70th week is the key to discerning the timing of the rapture. *"Give me understanding..."* Psalm 119:169

Let me remind you that we live in the end times, that time period leading up to the return of Christ and the rapture of the church. Right

now, we are in the *"beginning of birth pains"* stage, but sometime in the near future Daniel's 70th week is going to start. It is Daniel 9:24-27 that states some of the main events, some definitive markers in this divine time frame. The first event taking place is the signing or confirming of a peace treaty between Israel and other countries. Then 3½ years later, at the midpoint of this 70th week, the Antichrist is revealed. Finally, at the very end of these 7 momentous years, a great remnant of Jews will be saved. Now don't forget the key years, 0, 3½ and 7, and the main event associated with each year. *"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people… to make an end of sin… to bring in everlasting righteousness."* Daniel 9:24

Again, we can't know the exact time of the rapture, but we can know the general time, where the rapture is at in relationship to the three events I just mentioned. And so when is the rapture? It's after the midpoint, the 3½ year mark of Daniel's 70th week, and before the end of this week, the 7 year mark. That's it – the rapture of the church occurs at an unknown time to us, sometime during the 2nd half of Daniel's 70th week.

Let me explain. First, we know that the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, at which time he desecrates the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15). Then he unleashes this great tribulation which is directed at both Jews and Christians (Matthew 24:9, 21). But after a little while, this tribulation is cut short by God (verse 22), marked by these great signs in the skies (verse 29). Immediately after that, Christ comes in the clouds to rapture the Christians (verse 31).

Let me say it again. After the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint of the 70th week, he begins great tribulation, but it is cut short (meaning it doesn't last the entire 3½ years), and then the church is raptured. Since the salvation of the Jews takes place at the very end of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24), then we know the rapture happens sometime

during the last 3½ years. Matthew 24:9-31 lays out the order of events in the 2nd half of Daniel's 70th week, and therefore, the timing of the rapture. First, there's the revealing of the Antichrist (verse 15), then great tribulation (verse 21), then signs in the heavens (verse 29), and then the rapture (verse 31). *"He* (Jesus) *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 another."*

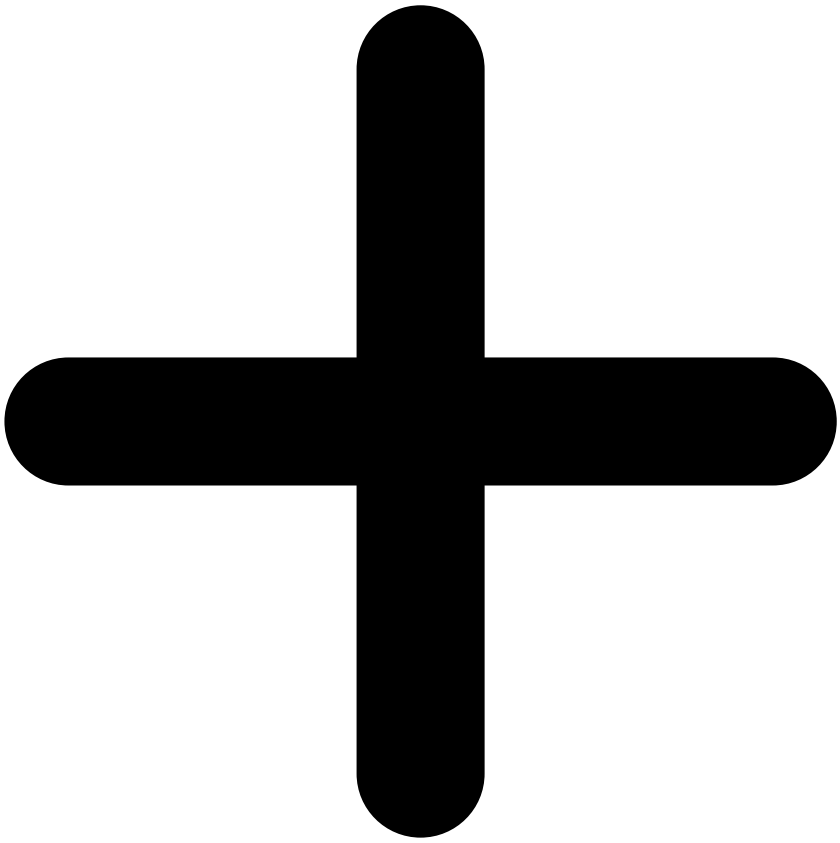
What about God's wrath? It's after the rapture. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 says, *"Jesus… rescues us from the wrath to come."* The rapture, believers being taken off this earth, is the means by which we are rescued from God's wrath. The rapture of the church then is after the tribulation of the Antichrist but before the wrath of God. It is after the persecution of the church but before the punishment of the unbelievers. Therefore, the rapture of the church is post-tribulation and pre-wrath. Thanks be to God that, for a little while, we can suffer great tribulation for Him – but Hallelujah, for then we will be delivered from His great wrath on earth and from His eternal wrath in hell. *"Momentary, light tribulation is producing for us an eternal weight of glory."* 2 Corinthians 4:17

God clearly tells us the timing of the rapture in Matthew 24, but also in Mark 13, Luke 21, 2 Thessalonians 1-2, and Revelation 6-7. He repeatedly tells us that the rapture takes place sometime in the last 3½ years of Daniel's 70th week, and that's because He wants us to know where it fits, because it's important to know this, and because He will be wanting us to see that it's getting closer and closer. *"… but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day* (rapture) *drawing nearer."* Hebrews 10:25

God greatly loves us, and wants us to greatly love Him. He wants us to be excitedly serving Him in these days, to be willing to suffer for Him, and to be enduring to the end of the age. In Matthew 24:9, 13, Jesus tells us, *"Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you… but the one who endures to the end will be saved* (raptured)." Jesus

encourages us, *“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.”* John 16:33

P.S. One of the most important things for your life is knowing the love of God. I strongly encourage you to read the article that I just finished, “Keep Yourself in the Love of God.” I would also suggest reading my article on the “The Rapture of the Church.” It gives you much greater detail about the rapture.



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