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# The Rapture Won't Happen Until .....



By Steven J. Hogan

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I am concerned that millions of Christians are mistaken about the timing of the rapture. I fear they will be completely caught off guard when various prophesied events begin to happen, for they thought they'd already be gone from the earth. They are ones who believe the rapture is imminent, that no signs or prophesied events need to occur before Christ returns to take us home to heaven. In fact, they think the rapture could even happen today, this week, or this year, that Christ could suddenly speed down from heaven and snatch us from the earth. But this is error, and must be corrected, for Christians need to know the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Last week, I explained why the rapture isn't imminent, and can't happen at any moment. We know this for two reasons: First, the Bible says the rapture takes place at His coming and not at some other

distinct time (Matt. 24:27-31, 1 Cor. 15:23, 1 Thess. 4:15-17, 2 Thess. 2:1). Second, the Bible specifically points out many prophesied events that will occur before Christ's coming and, therefore, before the rapture. An extensive list of these events is found in Matthew 24:4-31 and 2 Thess. 2:1-12 – earthquakes, wars, plagues, the coming of the Antichrist, the desolation of the temple, great tribulation, deception, apostasy, and the skies going dark. Knowing that the rapture occurs at Christ's coming, and that prophesied events take place before His coming, is conclusive proof that the rapture is not imminent.

But I need to continue with this theme, and in particular, explain why many people believe the rapture is imminent. Here's how they think:
1. They correctly say that Christians are rescued from God's wrath. John 3:36, 5:24; 1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9
2. They incorrectly believe that the tribulation spoken of in Matthew 24 is God's wrath.
3. They incorrectly say the entire 70th week of Daniel is tribulation and great tribulation, leading them to believe that this 70th week, this entire 7-year period, is God's wrath.
4. Their correct understanding (point 1), along with their two incorrect assumptions (points 2 and 3), lead them to incorrectly conclude that the rapture takes place before this tribulation, this so-called wrath, which they believe occurs during the entire 70th week. This is called the pre-tribulation rapture view.
5. Since many major prophesied events occur during Daniel's 70th week, they also incorrectly conclude that the rapture happens before all these events and, therefore, is imminent, can happen at any time, and without notice.

Let me elaborate on why points 2 and 3 are incorrect, and lead to a wrong conclusion. With regards to point 2, we know tribulation is not God's wrath because no place in the Bible says tribulation is God's wrath. What we do know is that this wrath is God punishing unbelievers, but tribulation is what believers experience during the church age. Jesus said, *"In the world you have tribulation"* (John 16:33). Paul said, *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts

14:22). Paul said, *"Momentary, light tribulation is producing for us an eternal weight of glory"* (2 Cor. 4:17). These verses and others clearly communicate that Christians go through tribulation during their time on earth. Rom. 8:35, 1 Thess. 3:1-4, Rev. 7:14

Prophecy passages also talk about this tribulation. 2 Thess. 1:4-10 says Christians will suffer tribulation right up to the end of the age, when Christ is revealed and gives us relief from it by rapturing us to heaven. Then in Matt. 24:9, Jesus says, *"They will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."* Notice that the *"you"* in these verses refers to Christians. Then in Matt. 24:21-22, Jesus talks about *"great tribulation"* affecting the Jews, and then greatly affecting the Christians, which we just read about in Matt. 24:9, and which is also described in Rev. 12:13-17. What you need to know is that tribulation and great tribulation refer to the persecution and suffering that Christians will go through until the end of the age, when Christ raptures the church.

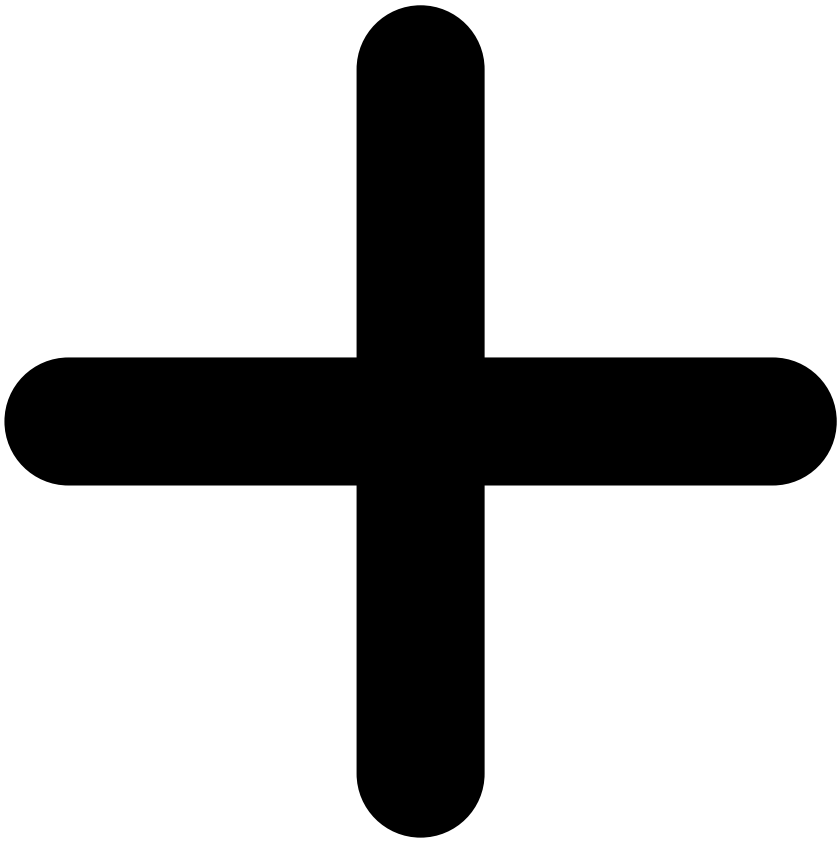
Let's now talk about point 3, that oft believed assumption that the entire 70th week of Daniel is tribulation and great tribulation. This point is easy to answer, for the Bible never says the entire 70th week of Daniel, this 7-year period, is tribulation and great tribulation, which is wrongly assumed to be wrath. What the Bible tells us is that there will be tribulation and great tribulation affecting the Christians, and wrath affecting the non-Christians.

Let me explain this further: Daniel 9:27 says the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week and then desolates the temple, a point Jesus refers to in Matt. 24:15. Shortly after that, in the 2nd half of Daniel's 70th week, great tribulation begins, starting with the Jews and then spreading to the Christians. Both Jews and Christians had been experiencing tribulation before this time, but now it intensifies becoming great tribulation. This great tribulation continues for a short while, but is suddenly cut short. The skies are darkened, then

immediately lit up by Christ's coming, and the church is raptured, Christ suddenly taking her from the earth. After the rapture, God's wrath is poured out on an unbelieving world. This divine chain of events is also described in Rev. 6-9 – there's persecution (Rev. 6:9-11), signs in the heavens (Rev. 6:12-14), rapture (Rev. 7:9-14), and wrath (Rev. 8-9).

The main point of this post is to help you understand that the rapture is not imminent, that many prophesied events must happen before the rapture. In summary, Christians alive on earth during Daniel's 70th week, having undergone tribulation and great tribulation, will be raptured, not at the beginning of that week, but sometime during the 2nd half of it, a time known only to God. Because God loves us, He gives us advance notice about the upcoming tough times, and when we see these prophesied events happen, we know we will see Him soon. Of course, we don't know the exact day and hour, but we will know that Christ's return and the rapture is getting closer (Hebrews 10:25). By God's grace and with hope in our heart, we will persevere, and those alive during that time will all see Jesus, some by being martyred, and some by being raptured. Either way, it will be glorious for us, and a great glory to God.

P.S. God wants Christians to know the general timing of Christ's return and the rapture, and that's why I continue to write posts related to this subject. Here are three previous posts that will help you understand this: "The Timing of the Rapture", "Christians Will Go Through Great Tribulation", and "The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching is False."





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