

too. According to one survey, 90% of pastors in the United States see signs of 'End Times' at present.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 6-7:1

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5.) WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF IT?

What is the purpose of the tribulation? The world is under God's control. But that doesn't mean that everything that happens in the world is what God wants. God never wanted Cain to kill Abel. Some people think that God has a purpose in the tribulation to purify the church, to remove false believers. But I can't see anything that says that God has any particular purpose in the great tribulation. What we do know is that when God's people experience this persecution, God will act decisively.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Today's talk may seem a bit dismal. Is there any good news in these two chapters of Revelation? I believe there is.

1. Forewarned is forearmed. It's not always the news we want to hear, but we need to hear it. Church leaders need to warn the church. If they don't, the church will be unprepared. The world will be unprepared!
2. We can come through this trial! A great multitude does! They washed their robes in the blood of the lamb. I believe that means they remained faithful during the trial.
3. We know that the great tribulation won't last forever. The people John sees in Revelation 7 have come out of it.
4. So, we should be aware of what will happen. But we shouldn't be alarmed. We should recognize that God has been expecting these events since at least the time of Daniel. And God is in control.
5. The best part of this series to me, is that God is in ultimate control. I will be the first to say, I may not have it ALL correct. As a matter of fact, I am pretty sure that I don't, but then I could say that about every preacher and every sermon ever preached on the subject(s) we are covering. God, however, has known, knows, and will execute HIS plan to precision. As for me, I know that there is a rapture, there is a day of reckoning for the believer at the Bema Seat, I know there is a Great Marriage, a Marriage feast, and I know that Jesus will bring His bride with Him to reign on this earth. There is a great tribulation coming for this earth. I believe there will be some who come to Salvation during that time.

What is this great tribulation? That's what we're going to try to understand today. I'm going to try to answer five questions.

- * **What kind of tribulation will it be?**
- * **Will it be bad?**
- * **Will Christians be spared?**
- * **When will it happen?**
- * **What is the purpose of it?**

Note the phrase 'THE GREAT day of their wrath.' This isn't just an average day of God's wrath. People on earth will **know** that this is the GREAT DAY of God's wrath. So, In Revelation 7, John has a vision of 144,000 people being 'sealed' by having a mark on their foreheads. The seal is to protect them. This is the point we have reached. John then sees 'a great multitude that no one could number ... clothed in white robes.' They have come out of the great tribulation.

Let's now come to our questions.

1.) WHAT KIND OF TRIBULATION WILL IT BE?

We can see this in **Revelation 6:9**. It says, 'When he' (that is, Jesus) 'opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"'

They want God to avenge them on those who dwell on the earth. It's the people who dwell on the earth who had killed them. So, we know that at this point in Revelation, there has been direct attack on Christians.

The elder explains the multitude to John. He says, 'These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. **THEY HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.**' (**Rev. 7:14**)

I take it that these people have come to salvation and remained faithful to God in trial and that is how they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. So, I

think that the trials that the believers will go through at this time, whether through persecution or through conquest, war, famine, and death will severely test faith.

Jesus spoke about this time and said, ‘Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. And then many will fall away...’ [Matthew 24:9,10a]. This time of tribulation will most certainly test faith.

It looks very much as though this attack on believers is what causes God to pass judgment. ‘As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High...’ [Daniel 7:21-22].

It suggests that God’s judgment was given in response to this horn making war with the saints – and prevailing over them.

2.) WILL IT BE BAD?

Yes, it will be bad. We get a clue that the great tribulation will be bad from the name itself: ‘THE great tribulation.’ But there are other reasons to think that this tribulation will be in a league of its own.

Daniel prophesies about the time before Jesus comes again. He tells us that ‘there shall be a time of trouble, SUCH AS NEVER HAS BEEN SINCE THERE WAS A NATION TILL THAT TIME’ [Daniel 12:1].

Jesus says the same thing. He is sitting on the Mount of Olives, near to Jerusalem, with his disciples. Jesus tells them, ‘then there will be great tribulation, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD UNTIL NOW, NO, AND NEVER WILL BE’ [Matthew 24:21].

It’s hard to imagine how Jesus could have been more emphatic. This tribulation will be the worst tribulation there ever has been or ever will be.

3.) WILL CHRISTIANS BE SPARED?

I don’t know that even the question should be asked in this way, for the question is truly a trick question! Will Christians be spared? Yes, those who have been raptured and taken before the Bema Seat, and are returning with Christ will be.

Those who have accepted the salvation of Christ POST- Rapture... no, they will not be.

This is somewhat exciting to me. I have mentioned it briefly, and will again here. Once the rapture takes place, the unsaved of mankind that are left behind will still have the opportunity to turn to Christ for salvation. What is the difference?

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.” Revelation 6:9-11

According to many interpretations of the Bible, people can be saved during the tribulation, with the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and a great multitude from all nations being examples of those who will come to faith during this time.

When the Lord returns to the earth with His bride to reign, the bride is seen to be already rewarded. This is observed in **Revelation 19:8**, “*it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure*”—*for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*”

In 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:8; and Revelation 22:12 the reward is associated with *that day*, that is, the day in which He comes for His own. Thus, it is believed that the rewarding of the church must take place between the rapture and the return of Christ to the earth.

4.) WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?

This is an interesting question! It simply seems logical that the most severe tribulation the world has ever known will happen in the period after the Rapture of the Church.

Is there evidence that tribulation has already started? I believe there is. There is plentiful evidence of a huge increase in persecution of Christians. Is this the GREAT TRIBULATION, I don’t think so, but I believe they are the ‘birthing pains’ of that which is to come! That is my sense. It’s the sense of a lot of others