

THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS NOT ARMAGEDDON OR THE DAY OF JEHOVAH

The teaching presented by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) of Jehovah's Witnesses that Armageddon is part of the Great Tribulation is out of harmony with the scriptural statements concerning the sequence of events at the time of the end. This sequence shows that the *Great Tribulation* occurs first and is followed by the *Day of Jehovah (His wrath)*. The Armageddon event then comes as the last part of the Day of God's wrath. The Great Tribulation is significantly Satan's wrath against Christians and comes in the form of intense persecution by those who hate the true God and the Bible's message.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS MAINLY SATAN'S WRATH

FINAL PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

Although Christians met with a significant amount of persecution prior to the time of Constantine, and still are persecuted at various times and places in the modern world, these painful and difficult times do not compare to the coming time of Satan's final expression of his wrath. This is expressed in Revelation by the use of verb tenses applied proleptically i.e. the past tense being used for the future. In other words the events in the following description are certain and have yet to happen:

- ❖ "So down the great dragon was hurled...Satan...he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him...On this account be glad you heavens...Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger ('wrath' in most translations), knowing that he has a short period of time. Now when the dragon saw that it was hurled down to the earth, it **persecuted the woman** that gave birth to the male child" (*Rev. 12:9, 12, 13*).
- ❖ "...that very horn [*Satan's prime representative*] **made war upon the holy ones**, and it was prevailing against them, until the Ancient of days came and judgment itself was given in favor of the holy ones" (*Dan. 7:21, 22*).
- ❖ "And there was granted it [*The wild beast - Satan's prime representative*] to **wage war with the holy ones** and conquer them" (*Rev. 13:7*).

Please see Volume 5 STUDY 7 to note the various descriptions of Satan's end-time representative. Also please see Volume 5 STUDY 6 sub-heading: THE GREAT TRIBULATION LASTS ABOUT 3½ YEARS. Furthermore, during this period it is also granted for the 'two witnesses' to bring plagues upon those who oppose their prophesying work (*Rev 11: 3-6*).

ALL ANOINTED CHRISTIANS WILL EXPERIENCE THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Contrary to the teaching of the WBTS there is only one class of Christians (please see STUDY 10) and so all living Christians will experience the Great tribulation:

- ❖ "...the things you are about to *suffer*...that you may be fully put to the test and have *tribulation ten days*" (*Rev. 2:10*) i.e. meaning the complete time of the Great Tribulation.
- ❖ "[*John*] a sharer with you in *the tribulation* and Kingdom and endurance in company..." (*Rev. 1:9*).
- ❖ "We must enter into the Kingdom of God through many *tribulations*" (*Acts 14:22*)
- ❖ "...the great crowd come out of the *great tribulation*" (*Rev. 7:9, 14*).
- ❖ "For then there will be *great tribulation* such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short **no flesh would be saved**; but on account of **the chosen ones** those days will be cut short" (*Matt. 24:21, 22*).

This is not to say that all Christians are tortured or killed. Many flee Judea to the mountains and are protected in the wilderness (Matt. 24:16; Rev. 12:6, 14).

“THE DAY OF JEHOVAH” IS THE DAY OF HIS WRATH

In contrast to Satan’s wrath as expressed against Christians during the Great Tribulation, Jehovah God will express his wrath against the entire wicked world. There are many descriptions throughout the Scripture of this event. For example:

- ❖ “The great day of Jehovah is near...that day is a **day of fury** (‘wrath’ in most translations), a day of distress and of anguish, a day of storm and of desolation, a day of darkness and of gloominess... and I will cause distress to mankind” (Zeph. 1:14, 15, 17).

The phrase “the day of Jehovah” and similar phrases appear over two dozen times in the Hebrew Scriptures. All descriptions of this day are concerning wrath from God. Please see Isaiah 13:9; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2; 3:13-16; Amos 5:18-20. Furthermore the book of Revelation also picks up on these descriptions when it describes wicked people’s reaction to that time:

- ❖ “...hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because **the great day of their wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16b, 17).

JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD OCCURS IN THE DAY OF GOD’S WRATH

- ❖ “...because of your...unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the **day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous *judgment* of God...” (Rom. 2:5).
- ❖ “...the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great winepress of the **wrath of God**” (Rev.14:19).

The description of the pouring out of the seven bowls of God’s wrath in Revelation 15 and 16 does not necessarily encompass “the great and fear-inspiring *day of Jehovah*” which is connected only with the 6th and 7th Bowls of wrath.

However, studious Christians will be encouraged when they are enduring the Great tribulation, because they can know the sequence of these events by having compared the words of the prophets with those of Jesus.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION OCCURS BEFORE THE DAY OF GOD’S WRATH (including ARMAGEDDON)

The Great Tribulation is a relatively short burst of Satan-inspired intense persecution of Christians; whereas the “day of God’s wrath,” including Armageddon, follows after the Great Tribulation. So the Great Tribulation is not Armageddon.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS

- ❖ “Therefore, when you catch sight of *the disgusting thing that causes desolation*...standing in a holy place ... those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains ... for then there will be **Great Tribulation** ... Immediately *after the tribulation* of those days the sun will be **darkened**, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven....and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds”

(Matt. 24:15, 21, 29).

NOTE: Please see STUDY 21. Subhead: THE U.N. IS NOT THE DISGUSTING THING THAT CAUSES DESOLATION.

So the “Great Tribulation” occurs *before* the sun, moon and stars are darkened. However, the next part

of the sequence is seen when we read Joel's prophecy which tells us that:

- ❖ "The sun itself will be turned into **darkness**, and the moon into blood, *before* the great and fear-inspiring *day of Jehovah* comes" (Joel 2:31).

This passage is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:20. Therefore the "day of Jehovah" occurs after the sun, moon and stars are darkened. So combining Matthew 24:29 and Joel 2:31 the order of events becomes clear:

1. *The Great Tribulation.*
2. *Sun, moon and stars are darkened.*
3. *"The day of Jehovah" when Jesus makes his one-time return. This is also "the day of Christ" at Armageddon.*

THE DAY OF JEHOVAH INCLUDES ARMAGEDDON

- ❖ "...the war of **the great day of God** the almighty...and they [*the spirits of demons*] gathered them [*the kings of the entire inhabited earth*] together to the place that is called in Hebrew **Harmageddon**" (Rev. 16:14, 16).

This preparation for and occurrence of the *Armageddon* event are shown to be part of the pouring out of the 6th and 7th bowls of wrath and therefore **at the end of the 'day of God's wrath.'**

NOTE: Because Christ acts as God's agent "*the day of Jehovah*" came to be called in the Christian Scriptures "*the day of the Lord*" and is recognized as also being the "*day of Christ*" (2 Cor. 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10) because it is "*the day when God through Christ judges the secret things of mankind*" (Rom 2:16).

CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, WILL NOT SUFFER GOD'S WRATH

Paul gives the following encouragement to his fellow Christians by noting that:

- ❖ "...having been justified by his blood, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through him" (Rom. 5:9).
- ❖ "...Jesus who rescues us from the **wrath to come**" (1 Thess. 1:10).
- ❖ "...because God assigned us not to **wrath**, but...to salvation" (1 Thess. 5:9).

Jesus later also gave similar encouragement in his words to the Congregation in Philadelphia:

- ❖ "I will **keep you from the hour of test**, [*God's wrath*] which will come upon the whole inhabited earth" (Rev. 3:10).

The context of Revelation 3:10 shows that this refers to the protection that Christians will have when Jehovah pours out his wrath on wicked mankind. This does not require the removal of any Christian from the earth in 1918 and onward as in WBTS teaching. The first resurrection is, in any case, not over any extended period (see STUDY 13 sub-head: IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION NOW UNDER WAY?). If a Christian is living he will be on earth but he will be preserved from the destruction that will be brought by Jehovah "*which will come upon the whole inhabited earth,*" that is at the pouring out of God's wrath. Such protection is highlighted in the following *examples*:

1. "I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to **keep** ('protect' NIV) them **from** the evil one" (John 17:15).
2. "So that He might rescue us **from** (out of) this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4).
3. Jesus was saved **from** (out of) death (Heb. 5:7) but he still went through it.

4. The sun-clad woman of Revelation chapter 12 is protected for 1260 days, but not resurrected out of danger.
5. The Israelites in ancient Egypt were supernaturally protected during the seven last plagues.
6. Noah and family were sheltered from God's wrath but were still on the earth.

So too anointed Christians will be protected during the pouring of these plagues and will possibly be resurrected before the 7th bowl of plague is poured out (Rev. 16:15).

SALVATION FOR ANOINTED CHRISTIANS OCCURS ON THE SAME DAY THAT DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED BEGINS

Contrary to the WBTS teaching that there are two classes of Christians the following scenario painted by Jesus shows that there will be no salvation for any Christians until the Great tribulation is over and the wicked are about to be destroyed:

- ❖ “Just as it occurred in the days of **Noah**, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying....until **the day Noah entered** into the ark, and the flood came and **destroyed them** all ... But **on the day Lot** came out of Sodom it rained fire....and **destroyed them all**. The same way it will be on that day when the Son of Man is to be revealed”
(Luke 17:26-30).

*This emphasizes that the righteous will be delivered on **the same day** as the wicked are being destroyed. Noah's entry into the ark and Lot's going out of Sodom are types of the salvation of all Christians i.e. to a place of safety.*

ILLUSTRATION OF THE DRAGNET

- ❖ “That is how it will be in the conclusion of the system of things (“age” KIT): the angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous and will cast them into the fiery furnace”
(Matt. 13:49, 50).

These details make the timing of the salvation, **including the resurrection**, close to the time of the pouring out of God's wrath, thereby making any form of a pre-tribulation first resurrection impossible.

THE DAY OF JEHOVAH DOES NOT EXTEND THROUGH THE MILLENNIUM

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society teaches that “*the day of Jehovah*” encompasses the entire 1,000 year reign of Christ Jesus. However, the descriptions of “*the day of Jehovah*” throughout the Hebrew Scriptures point to a time of foreboding because God's wrath is poured out on the wicked of the world at that time. They are told that they will:

- ❖ “Howl, YOU people, for *the day of Jehovah* is near! As a **despoiling** from the Almighty it will come...Look! The day of Jehovah itself is coming, **cruel** both with fury and with burning **anger**, in order to make the land an object of astonishment, and that it may **annihilate [the land's] sinners** out of it” (Isa. 13:6, 9).
- ❖ “*Jehovah has a day of vengeance*, a year of retributions for the legal case over Zion” (Isa. 34:8).
- ❖ “Alas for the day; because *the day of Jehovah* is near, and like a despoiling from the Almighty One it will come! Has not **food itself been cut off** before our very eyes; from the house of our God, rejoicing and joyfulness? Dried figs have shrivelled under their shovels. Storehouses have been laid desolate. Barns have been torn down, for the grain has dried up ... for **fire has devoured the pasture grounds** of the wilderness, and a very flame has consumed all the trees of the field”
(Joel 1:15-17, 19).

- ❖ “Blow a horn in Zion, O men, and shout a war cry in my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land get agitated; for *the day of Jehovah* is coming, for it is near! It is a day of **darkness** and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick gloom, like light of dawn spread upon the mountains”
(*Joel 2:1, 2 and a similar picture is found at Amos 5:18-20*).
- ❖ “Thrust in the sickle, for the harvest has grown ripe. Come descend for the **winepress** has become full ... Crowds, crowds are in the low plain of decision, for *the day of Jehovah* is near in the low plain of the decision. **Sun and moon** themselves will certainly become **dark**, and the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness. And out of Zion Jehovah himself will roar, and out of Jerusalem he will give forth his voice. And heaven and **earth will certainly rock**; but Jehovah will give *refuge to his people*, and a fortress for the sons of Israel” (*Joel 3:13-16*).
- ❖ “For *the day of Jehovah* **against all the nations** is near. In the way that you have done it will be done to you” (*Obadiah 15*).
- ❖ “Look! There is *a day* coming *belonging to Jehovah*, and the spoil of you will certainly be apportioned out of the midst of you. And I shall certainly gather all the nations against Jerusalem for the **war**; and the **city will actually be captured** and the houses be pillaged, and the women themselves will be raped. And half the city will go forth into **exile**...And Jehovah will certainly go forth against those nations as in the day of his warring” (*Zech. 14:1-3*).

The positive side to **the day of Jehovah** is the protection and salvation given to God’s people. However, this does not include paradise conditions at that time of the destruction of the wicked at the beginning of the Millennium. Furthermore, although the Christian Scriptures contain many elements of joy regarding “*the day of Jehovah*” this, also, is not because of any paradise conditions yet to exist during the Millennium, but rather because Christians hope for the return of Christ to remove wickedness. In other words “the day of Jehovah” still remains “the day of wrath” (Rom. 2:5).

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURAL POINTS

1. THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS MAINLY SATAN’S WRATH

It is Satan’s final persecution of Christians as described in **Daniel 7:21, 22; Revelation 12:9, 12, 13 and 13:7. It is the Great tribulation** and lasts approximately 3½ years.

2. ALL ANOINTED CHRISTIANS WILL EXPERIENCE THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- ❖ “For then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short **no flesh would be saved**; but on account of **the chosen ones** those days will be cut short” (*Matt. 24:21, 22*).

3. “THE DAY OF JEHOVAH” IS THE DAY OF HIS WRATH

It is never described as a joyous time for mankind in general. See Isaiah 13:9; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2; 3:13-16; Amos 5:18-20; **Zephaniah 1:14, 15, 17**; and **Revelation 6:16b, 17**. This will be the time when God judges the world according to **Romans 2:5**.

4. CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, WILL NOT SUFFER GOD’S WRATH

- ❖ “we shall be **saved from the wrath of God**” (*Rom. 5:9*).
- ❖ “...Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come” (*1 Thess. 1:10*).
- ❖ “because God assigned us not to wrath, but...to salvation” (*1 Thess. 5:9*).

5. THE GREAT TRIBULATION OCCURS BEFORE THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH
This also means that it occurs before Armageddon which is part of God's wrath (Rev. 16:14, 16).
The order of events can be seen by comparing the descriptions given by:

Jesus, who stated in **Matthew 24:15, 21, 29** that there will be: **Great Tribulation.**

Then sun and the moon will be **darkened,**

And Joel who stated in **Joel 2:31** that: "The sun itself will be turned into **darkness**, and the moon into blood"

Then "the great and fear-inspiring *day of Jehovah* comes"

6. SALVATION FOR **ANOINTED** CHRISTIANS OCCURS ON THE SAME DAY THAT DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED BEGINS

❖ "But **on the day Lot came out** of Sodom it rained fire....and **destroyed them all**. The same way it will be on that day when the Son of Man is to be revealed" (*Luke 17:28-30*).

7. THE DAY OF JEHOVAH DOES NOT EXTEND THROUGH THE MILLENNIUM

❖ "Look! The day of Jehovah itself is coming, **cruel** both with fury and with burning **anger**, in order to make the land an object of astonishment, and that it may **annihilate [the land's] sinners** out of it" (*Isa. 13: 9*).

A similar picture of devastation is given in the following Scriptures: **Isaiah 34:8; Joel 1:15-17, 19; 2:1, 2; 3:13-16; Obadiah 15; Zechariah 14:1-3.**

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