

THE GREAT TRIBULATION IS NOT ARMAGEDDON OR THE DAY OF THE LORD

The teaching that the Day of the Lord, and therefore Armageddon, is part of the Great Tribulation is out of harmony with the scriptural statements concerning the sequence of events in the end-times. This sequence shows that the Great Tribulation occurs first and is followed by the Day of the Lord (the day of His wrath). The Armageddon event then comes as the last part of the Day of the Lord. 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

- ❖ “And the great dragon was thrown down...to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him”
(*Rev. 12:9*).

FINAL PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

- ❖ “Woe for the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time” (*Rev. 12:12, 13*).
- ❖ “...and that horn [*Satan's end-time representative*] was waging war with the saints and overpowering them” (*Dan. 7:21*).

The shattering of their power is for the last 3½ years (Dan. 12:7c):

- ❖ “It was also given to him [*the Beast*] to make war with the saints” (*Rev. 13:7*).

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

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS THE DAY OF HIS WRATH

- ❖ “Near is the great day of the Lord ... A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry ... I will bring distress on men...their blood will be poured out like dust...” (*Zeph. 1:14, 15, 17*).

The phrase ‘the day of the Lord’ and similar phrases appear over two dozen times in the OT. 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).

- ❖ “...hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the **great day of their wrath** has come, and who is able to stand” (*Rev. 6:6b*).

THE GREAT TRIBULATION OCCURS BEFORE THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH

The Great Tribulation is a relatively short burst of Satan-inspired intense persecution of Christians; whereas the “day of God's wrath” brings destruction on wicked mankind.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS:

- ❖ “Therefore when you see **the Abomination of Desolation**...standing in the holy place ... those in Judea are to flee to the mountains” (*Matt. 24:15, 16*).

- ❖ “For then there will be **Great Tribulation...**” (Matt. 24:21).
- ❖ “But 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 the sky... And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky ... and they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:29, 30).
- ❖ “The sun will be turned into **darkness** and the moon into blood **before** the great and awesome **day of the Lord** comes” (Joel 2:31).

So when one refers back to Matthew 24:29 the order of events becomes clear:

1. The Great Tribulation.
2. Sun, moon and stars are darkened.
3. The day of the LORD when Jesus returns at Armageddon. This is also “*the day of Christ.*”

Because Christ acts as God’s agent most scholars recognize “the day of the Lord” to mean the same as “the day of Christ.” So the day Christ returns = the start of “the day of Christ” = “the day of the Lord.” Yet the “the day of the Lord” is not part of the Great Tribulation, which is caused by Satan, but is the day of God’s wrath being poured out by Christ. All Bible descriptions of “the day of the Lord” are of God’s wrath being poured out. So it does not extend through the Millennium of beautiful conditions, but rather it is:

- ❖ “...the war of the great day of God the Almighty ... and they 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 war at the place of Armageddon and the subsequent Day of the Lord are shown to be part of the pouring out of the 6th and 7th bowls of wrath and therefore the completion of ‘**God’s wrath.**’

ALL CHRISTIANS AT THE TIME WILL EXPERIENCE THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- ❖ “...the things you are about to *suffer*...that you may be fully put to the test and have *tribulation 10 days*” (Rev. 2:10).
- ❖ “...[John] a sharer with you in *the tribulation* and Kingdom and endurance in company with Jesus” (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 beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved: but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short” (Matt. 24:21, 22).

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

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).

After the blasting on the 6th trumpet and the pouring out of the 4th and 5th bowls of wrath is completed there is an allowance for people to repent. However, the point of no return is reached if people have not repented before the 6th bowl of wrath begins to be poured. Final and total destruction comes with the pouring of the 7th bowl.

CHRISTIANS, HOWEVER, WILL NOT SUFFER GOD'S WRATH

- ❖ "...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).
- ❖ "God assigned us not to wrath, but...to salvation" (1 Thess. 1:1, 10; 5:9).

GOD'S PEOPLE PROTECTED

- ❖ "I will keep you from (*out of*) the hour of test, which will come upon the whole inhabited earth"
(Rev. 3:10).

This refers to the protection that Christians will have during the pouring out of the Bowls of Plagues. This does not require the removal of any Christian from the earth during this time, but their being preserved during the hour of test "*which is about to come upon the whole world.*" That 'being kept from...' means protection is shown in the following examples:

- "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).
- "...so that He might rescue us from (*out of*) this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4).
- Jesus was saved **from** (out of) death (Heb. 5:7) but he still went through it.
- The sun-clad woman of Revelation chapter 12 is protected for 1260 days, but not raptured.
- The Israelites in ancient Egypt were supernaturally protected during the 7 last plagues. So, too, Christians will be protected during the pouring of these plagues and will likely be raptured before the 7th bowl of plague is poured out (Rev. 16:15).
 - ❖ "Come my people, enter into your rooms and close the doors behind you; hide for a little while until **indignation** has run its course...to punish the inhabitants of the earth"
(Isa. 26:20).
 - ❖ "...the 2 wings of the great eagle were given to **the woman**, so that she could fly away **into the wilderness** to her place, where she was nourished for *a time and times and half a time*, [*the tribulation*] from the presence of the serpent" (Rev. 12:14).
 - ❖ "I saw 4 angels standing at the 4 corners of the earth, holding back the 4 winds of the earth ... I saw another angel...having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the 4 angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth and the sea or the trees [*during God's wrath*] until we have **sealed** the bond-servants of our God on the foreheads. And I heard the number of those who were sealed, **144,000...**'" (Rev. 7:1-4).

SALVATION FOR ALL CHRISTIANS OCCURS AT THE SAME TIME THAT DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED BEGINS

- ❖ “Just as it happened in the days of **Noah**, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man they were eating...until **the day Noah entered** into the ark, and the flood came and **destroyed them** all ... but **on the day Lot went out** from Sodom it rained fire...and **destroyed them** all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed” (*Luke 17:26-30*).

This emphasizes that the righteous will be delivered in **the same very short period of time** 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. There is no room here for an earlier salvation or any split in the times of salvation.

THE DRAGNET PARABLE

- ❖ “That is how it will be in the conclusion of the age: 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. Evidently these events occur after the great tribulation and, in fact, not until *the Day of the Lord—the Day of Christ* begins.

WHAT WILL THE DAY OF THE LORD BE LIKE?

- ❖ “For the LORD has a **day of vengeance**, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion” (*Isa. 34:8*).
- ❖ “Wail for the day of the LORD is near! It will come **as destruction** from the Almighty ... Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and **burning anger** to make the land a desolation; and he will **exterminate its sinners** from it” (*Isa. 13:6, 9*).
- ❖ “Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty. Has not **food been cut off** before our eyes...The storehouses are desolate ... For **fire has devoured the pastures** of the wilderness...” (*Joel 1:15-17, 19*).
- ❖ “Let all the inhabitants of the land **tremble**, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, a day of **darkness** and gloom...” (*Joel 2:1b, 2*).

A similar picture is found at Amos 5:18-20.

- ❖ “Put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the winepress is full; the vats overflow for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The sun and moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and **the heavens and earth tremble**. But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel” (*Joel 3:13-16*).
- ❖ “For the day of the LORD draws near **on all the nations**. As you have done it will be done to you” (*Obad. 15*).
- ❖ “Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you (“*right in front of you*” NLT). For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and **the city will be captured**, the houses plundered, the women ravaged and half the city exiled ... Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations...” (*Zech. 14:1-3*).

The positive side to the Day of the Lord is the protection and salvation afforded God’s people. However, the Day of the Lord cannot include the Millennium because paradise conditions are not described as existing during that day.

Although the NT contains many elements of joy regarding the Day of the Lord this also is not because of paradise conditions existing at that point in time but, rather because of the hope it gives Christians for the return of Jesus to remove wickedness. In other words “the day of the Lord” is always ‘a day of wrath’ (Rom. 2:5) and so does not extend through the Millennium.

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