

The End Times: The Great Tribulation

Every year or so the question of the return of Christ and how and when the Great Tribulation will begin arises. It seems that the same questions or the same doubts afflict the believers from time to time. For some time I have felt a necessity of writing down my understanding of the end time. I confess that there are many, many scriptures that I have not been able to fit into an exact place in the end time doctrines. Even though many Bible teachers seem to have proved every point with scripture, I have not been able to remove all questions about end time events with the scriptures. One of the paramount problems that I have not seen adequately explained by Bible scholars is this; Will there be a difference between the babes in Christ who have not grown up into Christ and the sanctified, consecrated, perfected saints that have done the will of God and permitted God to change them from glory to glory? If all are caught up in the rapture and all will rule and reign with Christ throughout eternity, what is the advantage of the consecrated believer suffering the loss of all things so that he might win Christ? Is there really any reason why we should lay aside every weight and run the race with all endurance unto the very end? Is there any advantage for the consecrated servant of God over the lukewarm and apathetic believer that refuses to put forth any effort to grow up into Christ?

For years certain elements of the church have taught that forgiveness of sins is all that is required to be ready for the coming of the Lord. They proclaim that all will be snatched away solely on the basis of what they believe and not on the basis of what they are in their character and spiritual growth. For that reason spiritual growth is preferred but not necessary to be ready for the coming of the Lord. They quote the verse about God being no respecter of persons which they say means that all believers will be treated exactly the same regardless of spiritual growth or character.

The other question that has not been adequately answered by popular Bible scholars is this; Will the second coming of Christ be one event or two or three events. Will there be an “invisible coming” as a thief in the night and then a “visible coming” where every eye will see Him? Is there “tribulation” that every saint will experience in every generation and then, later, the “birth pains” that will precede the “great tribulation”? Will the “birth pains” precede the snatching away of the sanctified church and then the great tribulation begin? Will “the harvest of the earth” be all at one time or will the “harvest” follow the Old Testament types of (1) First fruits (2) Main harvest (3) Gleanings? Does God’s eternal purpose, that He purposed before the foundation of the world, determine which saints will be “raptured” and which saints will be “resurrected” and when? What is “the perfection” that the scripture speaks about concerning the saints preparation for the coming of Christ for His bride?

The questions like this are endless and of course some will have a clear answer in scripture but there are many questions that are unanswered in scripture. These have been the source of all the debate by Bible Scholars. The three basic doctrines presented by much of the Bible believing church are as follows: (1) (pre-trib)The church will be caught up before the great tribulation. (2) (mid-trib) The church will be caught up after 3 ½ years in the middle of the great tribulation. (3) (post-trib.) The church will go through all 7 years of the great tribulation and those who endure to the end will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Of course there are some who believe that Jesus was only speaking about the fall of Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel in 70 A.D. which

has already been fulfilled. There are a few who have developed “A Kingdom Now Theology” that teach that the church must do spiritual warfare and drive every demon and spiritual force off the earth and prepare the earth so Jesus can return to establish His Kingdom. There are also some who believe that the saints will not be “taken up” until after the millennium (post Millennial) Most believers are not affected by those doctrines.

The fact is that each of these groups have many scriptures to prove their position. Each group are sincere Bible scholars and use the scriptures well, sincerely and honestly. Then why should there be these three positions and so much controversy concerning the end time? If we examine these teachings with an open mind we can easily see that they are all correct in what they see. Then we can only conclude that each group is interpreting the scriptures that they understand as they conform to their understanding of the series of end time events. If this is true it can only mean that the end time should be interpreted as including each position. How could that possibly be accurate? To show how that is possible we will look at several of these proof texts.

It seems that every new book reinterprets the main parts of the Book of Revelation. While that is not bad in itself some of the interpretations just add to the confusion. For example: Some interpretations of the “sun-clad woman” in ch.12 begin when Jesus was born and include Mary and Joseph going into the wilderness of Egypt . Some say she is Israel and the 12 stars are the sons of Israel.

Just to arrive at a reasonable interpretation of some of the difficult scripture concerning this vision it is necessary to set some times of fulfillment. The Book of Revelation is in no way a history book that tells of things that had already been past but speaks of those things that take place “after these things”. REV 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, **“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”**

In addition to this fact there is also REV 22:10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, **for the time is near.** (Not past) also this is repeated again in REV 22:6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants **the things which must shortly take place.** For this reason we feel we must reject any interpretation that has to do with things that had happened before this time that John was receiving this revelation. This includes any reference to Jacob or to Joseph and his brothers or to Mary and Joseph, the Lord’s parents. That would eliminate Jesus as being the “man-child”.

In this same way, by taking the facts presented we can accept or reject various interpretations. For example; The 144,000 in Rev 7 that were sealed with a mark to preserve them from death during the tribulation. These will obviously be the recipients of the promise made to Israel concerning the Kingdom of the Messiah. They will most likely be the ones who will populate the earth during the millennial reign of Christ. There is no indication that they will be “caught up to heaven”. Therefore, to relate these 144,000 on earth to the 144,000 in heaven in Rev. 14 who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, is not valid interpretation.

Our thesis will be that (1) the “first fruits” who are the mature saints (which is the church which is His body) will be caught up before the tribulation (pre-trib) (2) Those who are left and refuse to take the mark of the beast and love not their life unto death will be resurrected in the middle of the great tribulation as the “main harvest”(mid-trib) and (3) those who are martyred in the last half of the great tribulation will be resurrected as “the gleanings” at the end of the great tribulation. (post-trib)

MATH 13:30] `Allow both to grow together **until the harvest**; and **in the time of the harvest** I will say to the reapers, "**First** gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."

MT 13:36 Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." [37] And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, [38] and **the field is the world**; and as for the good seed, these are ***the sons of the kingdom***; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; [39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and **the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels**. [40] "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be **at the end of the age**. [41] "**The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness**, [42] and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] "Then **THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN** in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

MATH 8:12[10] Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. [11] "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; [12] but the ***sons of the kingdom*** shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Here the "***sons of the Kingdom***" is referring to Israel and their unbelief. These are the only two references to the sons of the Kingdom.

DAN 12:1 "Now at that time Michael, **the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise**. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. [2] "**And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt**. [3] "And ***those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars*** forever and ever. [4] "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book **until the end of time**; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

When we first examine these scriptures concerning the end time harvest it appears that Jesus was saying that at the end time the evil ones will be cast into the fire **FIRST, AND THEN** the church will be caught up proving that the church will go through the whole tribulation and be caught up at the very end. However, if we look at the scriptures that Jesus was quoting it is clear that He

was speaking about Israel and not the church. In the Book of Revelation we will see that many, many Christian believers will suffer through the first half of the great tribulation. The ones that **are not prepared to be caught up as first fruits** will be **martyred by the middle of the great tribulation**. We will see these multitudes in **Rev 7:13-14** as the great harvest who were not ready to be caught up to sit with Him on His throne but who will find their place **before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple**. While the Jews that Daniel is speaking about are protected and fare better in the first 3 ½ years because of their covenant with the beast, in the last half of the tribulation will break the covenant and will be martyred also. Then we see the tares and the wheat in the final harvest. The wheat will be those who at last will recognize that Jesus is the true Messiah and will believe on Him and will be gathered into His barns. This will take place at the end of the tribulation.

DAN 12:6] And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" [7] And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever **that it would be for a *time, times, and half a time*; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed**. As we see in **Rev. 12:14** this happens in the last half of the tribulation.

REV:12-14] And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, **where she was nourished *for a time and times and half a time*, from the presence of the serpent**. [15] And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. [16] And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. [17] And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and **went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus**. Since the true Christian believers are "snatched away" or are all martyred by this time because they refuse the mark of the beast, the rest of her offspring must be Jewish believers who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (The amplified Bible adds "and bears witness to Him".)

DAN 12:[10] "Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, **and none of the wicked will understand**, but ***those who have insight will understand***. [11] "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be **1,290 days**. (3 ½ years are 1260 days) [12] "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! [13] "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age." This prophesy concerns the Jews who are "sealed" during the tribulation and are "saved" because of the mark on their foreheads. REV 7:4] And I heard the number of those who were sealed, **one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel**: These are the ones who attain to the 1335 days when the millennial Kingdom begins and Christ and His mature saints begin to reign on the earth. He will reign over the Jewish nation as was promised to the "seed of David" who would sit upon the throne of David. This will be in the earthly Jerusalem.

REV 12:6] And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so

that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. This is speaking of the first 3 ½ years. (1290 days- 1260 days= 30 days) The abomination of desolation will be set up 30 days before the second half of the tribulation begins. The “wicked” who do not understand are obviously the tares. 1335 days must speak of the time up to the final battle which begins at the end of the last 3 ½ years or at the end of the 7 years. 1335 days- 1260 days = 75 days until the final battle is finished.

In the great tribulation it is obvious that all believers must die as martyrs and no “rapture” (Literally “the snatching away”) will take place during the tribulation. Rev. 13: 4-8] and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" [5] And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and **authority to act for forty-two months** (3 ½ years) was given to him. [6] And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. [7] And it was given to him **to make war with the saints and to overcome them**; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Then we who are **alive and remain** until **the coming of the Lord**, who will be “snatched away” to meet the Lord in the air, must be “snatched away” before the tribulation. If this is a true fact it should be clear that some believers (saints) will be left behind to die as martyrs in the first half of the tribulation. These are the great multitude who are before the throne in Rev. 7 who have come out of the great tribulation. It is assumed by end time Bible scholars that these are only Jews, who become believers, that are saved during the tribulation and are not Christian, or church affiliated believers. A careful reading will show that in the first 3 ½ years the Jews will make covenant with the anti-christ and be safe from persecution. However, the Christians that are left behind will not escape persecution and death unless they take the mark of the beast and worship him.

1 THES 4:17] Then we ***who are alive and remain*** shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. This is the word “harpazo” and means “**to be snatched away**”. In Math 11:12 it is translated “take (it) by force”. This word is also used of the “male child” in Rev. 12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was **caught up (snatched away)** to God and to His throne. This group are not dead martyrs but alive saints who are “snatched away” and meet the Lord in the air. He doesn’t come to the earth at this time which is before the great tribulation. This is the secret coming! It is following the tribulation that Jesus returns to the earth on His big white horse and every eye shall see Him.

The Book of Revelation unfolds the series of events that take place during the seven years that the Jews make covenant with the anti-christ. This is foretold in the Book of Daniel. DAN 9:27] "And he (the anti-christ) **will make a firm covenant with the many** (Jews) for one week (of years), but in the middle of the week (3 ½ years) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." This is following the great tribulation that the one who makes desolate is destroyed..

This was referred to by Jesus in Math 24:15, "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [16] then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; [17] let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; [18] and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. [19] "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! [20] "But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; [21] **for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.** [22] "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

Those who apply this prophesy to 70 A.D., when Emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem declare this to be already fulfilled. They refer to what happened in the temple during the destruction of Jerusalem that seems to confirm what Jesus said. It was reported that Titus offered a pig on the altar. While this may be a partial fulfillment this event does not satisfy all the requirements of "the Great Tribulation" or even the things spoken by Jesus in v 21. It doesn't satisfy the 7 years of great tribulation.

Most Bible scholars agree that the great tribulation will last for seven years and be divided into two periods of 3 ½ years each. During the first half the anti-christ will persecute the "remnant church" that is seen in Rev. 12 as the "sun clad woman" who gives birth to three different groups of offspring. The first being the "man child" or "male child" who is immediately caught up to the throne of God and who is going to rule "all the nations with a rod of iron". (these are the firstfruits) We could say these are "the first born" of the eternal Kingdom. They may be mature in the ways of the church but not yet mature or children in the ways of the eternal Kingdom. This however, refers to the Overcomers in REV. 2:26 `And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO him **I will give authority over the NATIONS;** [27] **HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON,** AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; [28] **and I will give him the morning star.** These will be broken of all self will, arrogance, pride etc, etc. and will receive authority under Jesus Christ. They will also return with Jesus for the final battle. Their reward will be "THE MORNING STAR". Most people wouldn't know what to do with a "morning star".

REV 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I

am the root and the offspring of David, **the bright morning star."** **It is the overcomers who "win Christ", the bright and morning star.** These will rule with Christ as we see in REV 19:14] And the armies which are in heaven, **clothed in fine linen, white and clean,*** were following Him on white horses. [15] And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; **and He will rule them with a rod of iron;** and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. These are referred to earlier in REV 19:7] "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and **His bride has made herself ready."** [8] **And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean;** for the **fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** *

REV 12:6] And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. (42

months or 3 ½ years.) 1260 divided by 30 days = 42 months. This is not approximately 3 ½ years. Then the next group of her offspring are seen in V11 and they overcome Satan but they are killed. This is the great multitude in Rev 7:14. These are those who are identified in various scriptures as the church being “caught up” (resurrected) in the middle of the tribulation. Those who see the church caught up in the middle of the tribulation (mid-trib) identify with this group. However, these are the Christian martyrs who refused to take the mark of the beast and are “saved” according to Rev 7:9-10. Not “saved” from the tribulation but saved during the tribulation. Even a casual reading of V9 should reveal that these are not Jews. REV 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, **from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; [10] and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, REV 7:10 **"Salvation to our God** who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." These ones in Rev.7 are “saved” and are seen “in heaven” at the middle of the great tribulation and have “come out of” the tribulation which shows that all believers will not go through the whole tribulation but will escape as martyrs. These are not Jews as is commonly taught. The 144,000 Jews are sealed and remain on the earth and will populate the earth during the millennium reign of Christ with His saints.

Then in the last half of the great tribulation the woman goes into the wilderness where some earthly help was given to her but the dragon was enraged with the woman and set out to kill **the rest of her offspring**. These keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. It appears that “the woman” was made up of these three groups and when the last group are killed she no longer exists because we don’t hear about her again. These will be resurrected at the end of the great tribulation and will correspond to the gleanings. It is this group that are identified in various scriptures as those who are “caught up” (resurrected) at the end of the tribulation. (Post-trib)

The reason Rev. 12 is so important to understanding the whole unfolding of the tribulation is because we can see the whole tribulation from beginning to end in the proper sequence in one chapter. While we don’t see a lot of detail we can see a clear overview of the events as they happen in the beginning of the tribulation, in the middle and then at the end. It is these three views that help us sort out the other chapters and put them in order.

For example: We see the tribulation beginning in Rev. 6 (the chapter divisions are not exact) and ending in Rev 11:17-18, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign. [18] "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and **the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give “their reward” to (1) Thy bond-servants, (2) the prophets, and (3) to the saints, and (4) to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and (then) to destroy those who destroy the earth.**" ()are mine.

Then in Rev. 13 we see the tribulation beginning and in Rev 19: 20 we see the end of the tribulation. REV 19:20] And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which **he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image**; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. [21] And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. Then (1) the beast receives his reward (2) the false prophet (3) the deceived (4) those who Jesus kills with the sword of His mouth.

From Rev. 6 to Rev. 19 we see the whole tribulation in two visions that are taking place at the same time and one vision lays on the top of the other vision. Those who try to make each chapter follow the next in perfect sequence end in total confusion. From chapter 6 to chapter 11 we see the whole tribulation from the Jewish viewpoint and from Rev. 13 to Rev. 19 we see the whole tribulation from beginning to end from the gentile viewpoint, including the remnant church.

This is necessary because the gentiles will be persecuted during the first half of the tribulation while the Jews fare much better, having made a covenant with the anti-christ the first 3 ½ years. At the beginning of the last 3 ½ years the Jews who have understanding will recognize their mistake and break covenant with the anti-christ and great persecution will come upon the Jews. At least some Jews will acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Messiah and will be saved as Christians in the last half of the tribulation. These are identified by the scriptures that refer to the (“catching up”) which will be **a resurrection** at the end of the tribulation. Once the “snatching away” (what is referred to as “the rapture”) takes place before the tribulation, it appears that all who are saved after that will be martyred and for that reason it will be a resurrection. REV. 13: 14 telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. [15] And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and **cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed**. [16] And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given **a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead**, [17] and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Dan 3:4] Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, [5] that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. [6] "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." This experience of Daniel is an example for the New Testament believer who is left behind and the faith and steadfastness it will require to “overcome” the beast and not bow down to his image.

Both visions (of the 7 years) show the seven fold judgements that will come upon the disobedient of the earth. In the Gentile vision we see the “seven last plagues” or the “seven vials” judgements and in the Jewish vision we see the “seven trumpets” judgement. While these correspond in many ways there is a difference and it is clear that the chapter divisions, which were arbitrarily chosen, are not accurate to compare the judgements.

The true church has always been persecuted by Godless men in every generation as was promised by Jesus. The great tribulation is not speaking about the general persecution but a terrible time that has not been known before or will be known again. While the true church will not escape the general persecution, is it possible to escape the great tribulation? Paul spoke about the general tribulations in Acts 14:22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "**Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**" These tribulations are preparations for participating in the Kingdom of God and are necessary for everyone who is pressing into God and His purpose. (This is all part of the "breaking to pieces" of the overcomers in Rev. 2:26.

Jesus warned His disciples about the necessity of watchfulness if they were going to be worthy to escape the great tribulation. LUKE 21:34 "**Be on guard**, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; [35] for *it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.* [36] "**But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.**"

In the first 303 years of the church age, the church was persecuted and multitudes were killed for their faith. In every century since there has been major and minor (if there is such a thing) persecutions and thousands have been killed in select places in Europe, the middle east and the far east and also in Africa. Much persecution came from the Catholic church. However, there has never been a world wide persecution and tribulation as it is described in the Book of Revelation. This will surpass the horror and intensity of every former tribulation. While Israel has faced severe persecution, famine and death, rape of the women and slavery to other nations over the centuries, when God withdrew His hand from protecting them, this tribulation will surpass them all. God has withdrawn His hand at various times in order to get Israel's attention and to draw them back to Him. This great tribulation will be the final drawing for Israel to return and worship the One True God. Of course not all Israel will understand and repent. JER 30:7] `Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it. Another name for the great tribulation seen from the Jewish viewpoint is "Jacobs Troubles" or "Distress". Some will be "saved" from "IT" but any who worship the image will not be saved. Either Jew or Gentile!

The great tribulation will judge every nation on the face of the earth at one time. That has never happened before in all of history except in the time of Noah. While many individual nations have been judged to show the world God's certainty of judgement, the whole world has not been judged. Sodom and Gomorrah is an example but there are multitudes of others throughout history. Germany is one in our time. As past history has shown and as the scriptures indicate the purpose of judgement is to bring God's people back to Him and not to punish the faithful believer who has been serving God with all their heart and soul. Persecution is something different that judgement. The great tribulation is not designed to judge the Spirit filled church that is serving God with all their heart. However, we all know that every believer is not living that way or even interested in laying down their life to serve God and do His will. Many are only interested in having their own needs met and to be saved from Hell.

That is why I believe that the consecrated, sanctified, Spirit filled church that is doing the whole will of God will escape the great tribulations after the beginning birth pains are completed. I will try to set down some scriptures that will give us hope of being included in the "snatching away". To be included in the "snatching away" is not guaranteed to every "believer" who has accepted Jesus as their "personal servant" LUKE 21:34 "Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; [35] for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. [36] "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to **escape all these things** that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." Since this comes upon all the earth it surely is speaking about the great tribulation. However, there are those who may be counted worthy to ESCAPE. Of course we can't be spiritually asleep and caught up in the things of this world.

1 THES. 5:3] While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. [4] **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;** [5] for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; [6] so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. [7] For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. [8] But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. [9] For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

LUKE 17:34] "I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; **one will be taken,** and the other will be left. [35] "There will be two women grinding at the same place; **one will be taken,** and the other will be left. [36] ["Two men will be in the field; **one will be taken** and the other will be left." As we study the Kingdom of God we will see that it is not sentimental and will not accept those who are sloppy about doing the will of God or careless about their spiritual life. Here we see different persons in exactly the same situation but one will be taken and the other left behind. All were working but not all were ready to be taken. No pity is shown to the lukewarm who will be vomited out of His body.

LUKE 17:26] "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: [27] they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, **until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.** [28] "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; [29] **but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.** [30] "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

In the days of Noah and also in the days of Lot when the judgement of God was to come upon the earth, **just as soon as God's people were taken out** the judgement immediately came and destroyed all them that remained. God delivered His people before the great destruction. It would be reasonable to assume that the great tribulation will begin **just as soon as the "snatching away" of the perfected church is completed.** The remnant church will be perfected through

suffering and the final decision to be martyred, rather than take the mark of the beast.

1 COR. 15:51] Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet**; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. Paul says that some will not die before the “snatching away”. In this scripture we are told that not all will die but at **the last trumpet** they will receive a new spiritual body whether dead or alive at that time. The controversy is over the phrase “**the last trumpet**” which seems to indicate this will only take place **after the last trumpet of the trumpet judgements**. In the “7 trumpet judgements” the “trumpets” are blown by angels and not by men and they are meant to produce judgement and destruction upon the earth to punish, kill, and torment the inhabitants of the earth that are disobedient to God.

1 THES.4:16] For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout**, with the voice of the archangel, **and with the trumpet of God**; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

This trumpet that the Lord, Himself blows is obviously not the same as the trumpets of judgement that the seven angels blow during the tribulation. It is at The LORD’S trumpet that “the dead IN CHRIST” will rise in resurrection.

NUMBERS 10:1 The LORD spoke further to Moses, saying, [2] "Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and **you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out**. [3] "And when both are blown, all the congregation **shall gather themselves to you** at the doorway of the tent of meeting. [4] "Yet if only one is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, **shall assemble before you**. [5] "But **when you blow an alarm**, the camps that are pitched on the east side shall set out. [6] "And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are pitched on the south side shall set out; an alarm is to be blown for them to set out. [7] "**When convening the assembly**, however, you shall blow without sounding an alarm. [8] "The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations. [9] "And **when you go to war** in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then **you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets**, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies. In the scriptures the “trumpets” are used for many purposes and not just for judgements. These trumpets are blown by the priests and not by angels.

Those who are asleep, apathetic and busy about other things will not hear this trumpet.

1 THES. 5:4] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; [5] for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; [6] so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. [7] For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. [8] But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. [9] **For God has not destined us for wrath**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

MAT 24:29 "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 the powers of the heavens will be shaken, [30] and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, **and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.** [31] "And **He 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 the other.**

This **great trumpet sound** is to gather His elect **following the great tribulation**, not from the earth in resurrection but from the sky, to follow Him on His big white horse to rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Rev. 19:14) This trumpet is blown by the angels.

We also see that **this appearing of the Lord will be visible to all** who are still alive on the earth to see. REV.1:7] BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, **and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him;** and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. Even those who pierced Him, who are dead, will see Him and mourn.

The first time the Lord comes to snatch away His bride, His elect, His overcomers, his perfected church which is His body, will be **a secret coming** to just above the earth **and in the clouds** and these will be snatched away to meet Him in the clouds. He does not come "to the earth". 1 THES. 4:17 **The world will not see this coming.** Here He comes as a thief in the night. 1 THES. 5:2] For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord **will come just like a thief in the night.** 2 PET 3:10] But **the day of the Lord will come like a thief**, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. [11] **Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,** [12] looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! [13] But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

At the end of the tribulation every eye will see Him, even those in the graves.

Another scripture that has caused much concern to those who teach that the whole church, all born again believers regardless of their character and spiritual growth, will be caught up before the great tribulation is found in REV.13:5] And there was given to him (the beast) a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months (3 ½ years) was given to him. [6] **And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.** [7] And it was given to him to **make war with the saints and to overcome them;** and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. [8] And **all** who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world **in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.** This takes place in **the first half of the tribulation** as seen from the Gentile viewpoint and out of Israel.

Many prophesy teachers teach that these are only Jews who are saved during the tribulation ! A

casual reading of V 7 should reveal this error. These are from every tribe, tongue, nation and people of the earth. "Overcome the saints" means to kill them!

The "**Book of Life of the Lamb**" has been mis-interpreted to be the same as the "**Book**

of Life". The fact is there are several "books". REV 20:12] And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**; and **another book was opened, which is the book of life**; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. [13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. [14] And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15] **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.** Here we see different "books" that contain the deeds of the human race. There was also "**the Book of Life**" which was opened. The minimum requirement to escape the "lake of fire" was to have your name in the "Book of Life". These are those who had "fire insurance" through faith in Jesus.

In addition to these "other Books" there is also the "**Book of Life of the Lamb**". In Rev. 21:27 John is revealing facts about the New Jerusalem which has been identified as the "bride of Christ" or as the "wife of the Lamb". V 9. He tells us who can be in this eternal city where the throne of God and of Christ is found. REV. 21:24] And the nations shall walk by its light, (The New Jerusalem) and the kings of the earth (those who rule on the earth) shall bring their glory into it. (Their { the kings of the earth } citizenship is in the New Jerusalem) [25] And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; [26] and they shall bring **the glory and the honor of the nations** into it; [27] and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life**. This clearly shows that when the New Jerusalem is the throne of God following the millennial reign of Christ there will be NATIONS ON THE NEW EARTH. Some faithful saints who multiplied what they were given in the church age will rule over 10 cities. Of course they will have to rule in the same character as Christ.

There is a tremendous difference between the "Books", "The Book of Life" and "the Book of Life of the Lamb". This is the difference between escaping the lake of fire and ruling the nations with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. It is the difference between "being saved" and being the "bride of Christ". It is the difference between being an inhabitant of the New Earth or the New Heaven or being joined to Christ in the New Jerusalem. The "Book of Life of the Lamb" records those who are fully given to Him as a consecration offering. 2 Tim 2:19] Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His,"

PHI 3:8] More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish **in order that I may gain Christ**, PHI 3:11] in order that **I may attain to the resurrection from the dead**. The word translated "resurrection" is EX- ANATASIA. This is the only time this word is used. EX means OUT and ANATASIA means resurrection. We all know Paul was "saved" but he was pressing on "to win Christ" and to be found "in Him". He was also pressing to attain to

the “out resurrection”. The snatching away or the rapture to meet the Lord in the air. ***In the final judgement everybody will be resurrected.*** Some to blessing and some to eternal damnation. That could not be “the resurrection” that Paul was striving for because that is automatic.

Paul’s first emphasis was to get people born again or saved or serving the Lord. That did not finish his work. COL 1:28] And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, **that we may present every man complete (perfect or mature or fully grown) in Christ.** [29] And **for this purpose also I labor**, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

There always seem to be a strain to give a clear scripture that indicates that the church shall be ‘raptured’ before the great tribulation begins. We know there will be great ‘birth pains’ take place before this “rapture” or “snatching away”. Some who are really straining to find “the rapture” point to REV 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, **"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."** They naively say that the “come up here” is the “rapture”. Even a casual reading will show this is silly.

MAT 24:40] "Then there shall be two men in the field; **one will be taken**, and one will be left. [41] "Two women will be grinding at the mill; **one will be taken**, and one will be left. [42] "Therefore be on the alert, **for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.** [43] "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. [44] **"For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.**

If the Lord’s return was after 7 years of such great suffering and tribulation that this time could not be mistaken, all we would have to do to determine the time of the Lord’s return would be able to count 7 years. Jesus’ warning is to be ready at all times because there is no way of knowing when He will return. His first return will be secret and in a moment and a blinking of the eye it will be all over. In the middle of the tribulation it will be a resurrection of those who are dead. At the end of the tribulation there will be a resurrection and His return will be so visible that every eye shall see Him.

The clearest teaching concerning the Lord’s return in the middle of the tribulation is seen in the parable of the ten virgins. Even though the 5 wise virgins were not wise enough to be ready for His first coming they were wise enough to be ready at the midnight hour. They were sleeping but woke up just in time. See the study about the Ten Virgins!

LUKE 12:35 "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. [36] "And be like men **who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast**, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. [37] "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them. [38] **"Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.**

[39] "And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. [40] "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

At the first coming, in the **first watch**, the firstfruits, who are the overcomers, who are the perfected bride church, will be "snatched away" in a moment and in a blinking of the eye. In the **second watch** and in the darkest time of the night He will come back for (or resurrect) the five wise virgins. They will go in with Him to the wedding feast as "invited guests" and not as the bride. Even though they are late comers they will be blessed. Then in the **third watch** He will resurrect the gleanings who are the unwise virgins. While unwise virgins cannot enter into His presence or the wedding feast as invited guests, it appears that they will be saved. At least it seems they have the credentials of saved people. See study of the ten virgins.

There are careless Christians (like the 10 virgins) who will be trapped in the great tribulation. The warning is to not be one of those! MATH 24:48] "But if **that evil slave** says in his heart, 'My **master** is not coming for a long time,' [49] and shall begin **to beat his fellow slaves** and eat and drink with drunkards; [50] **the master of that slave** will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, [51] and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.

This is obviously not speaking about those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ because they are His slaves (or servants) and Jesus is their "Master". However, they treat other Christians in a similar way that we are all familiar with. LUKE 12:47] "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, [48] but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from **everyone who has been given much shall much be required**; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

The only hope these will have to escape the fires of Hell will be to accept martyrdom in

the great tribulation. There seems to be some provision made for those who are ignorant but it is way too late for us. Our only alternative is to make sure we are ready and are keeping our focus upon the blessed hope of the first coming of the Lord for His bride. These are also identified as the "overcomers" who will sit with Him on His throne.

2TI 3:1 But realize this, **that in the last days difficult times will come**. [2] For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, [4] treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; [5] holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. [6] For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, [7] always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

While these will hold to some outward form of godliness their deeds will identify them as

counterfeit Christians. They obviously are always in the process of “learning” spiritual things but the ultimate truth escapes them. LUKE 17:26] "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: [27] they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. [28] "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; [29] but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] **"It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.** The Kingdom of God is not sentimental and offer pity to those who are careless about setting their lives right and in harmony with God’s laws. Those who are basing their hope upon what they “believe about” Jesus and not upon their character and spiritual growth will be very surprised.

MATH 7:21] **"Not everyone** who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but **he who does the will of My Father** who is in heaven. [22] "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' [23] "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**' (Who took no thought to obey My laws).

All Bible believing Christians believe there will be a great tribulation come upon the whole earth. Not all agree about the reason for this great tribulation. A careful study of scripture will reveal that God has no plan or desire to punish His faithful servants by taking them through such a terrible time of suffering. MATH 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! **How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.** This reveals the heart of God concerning Israel and also the church. God desire is for all His children to be in this close relationship with Him. The same as a hen with her chicks.

The great tribulation is primarily for the destruction of the world and the world system and not the earth itself. The earth doesn’t “pass away” until after the 1000 year reign of Christ on this earth. [REV 21:1-2] The tribulation is against the rebellious of God’s created beings who are disobedient to the truth that is revealed in all of creation. ROM 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; [32] **and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

God’s plan and His desire is not for any to perish but for ALL to come to repentance and be “saved”. It is true that God will judge those who have corrupted, spoiled and destroyed the earth through various perversions. Both the human and the angelic beings along with the demons and forces of darkness will be removed from the earth. God’s plan is never to destroy His faithful

believers. For this reason He has put warning after warning in His word instructing us to flee from all ungodliness etc and to separate from the disobedient so we don't get trapped in their destruction.

However, when the sanctified and matured saints are snatched away, unfortunately, there will be those believers who have not been careful and sincere about their spiritual life that will be trapped in the tribulation. This is not God's plan for them but they were sleeping when they should be preparing themselves according to the warnings. MATH 25:5

The great persecution and suffering they endure is **not from God but from the evil forces of anti-christ, the beast and the false prophet and also from the plagues** that come upon the whole earth. The destruction is not directed toward the believers but they are trapped on the earth and can only release themselves by being martyrs of the anti-christ and his forces. Some who have no understanding will think God is the source of their suffering and will end up cursing God. Of course some will try to save themselves by taking the mark of the beast but will be sealing their own doom.

As unhappy as all this sounds, the blessing for those who have ears to hear is that God has foretold to us the details and events and requirements in advance. Therefore, we can judge our lives according to the word of God and escape all these things and stand before the Son of God. We are clearly told that Jesus is coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless who has grown up in all things into Christ. She will have come to the measure of the stature that belongs to the fullness of Christ and has conformed her life to the image of Christ. We have the clear choice to seriously consider these things and be careful to sanctify our lives according to the discipline of the Holy Spirit or we can be lukewarm about it and come in the hard way.

The devil is a hard taskmaster and a master deceiver but God loves us and wants the very best for us. If the cost seems too high we can be sure that the cost of not being ready will be much higher.

TITUS 2:11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, [12] **instructing us** to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, [13] **looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;** [14] who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Another problem that is included in some of the interpretations is the confusion of the difference between "the day of Christ" and "the day of the Lord". Many use these terms interchangeably. Even though they seem to be similar the context shows they are quite different.

"The day of the Lord" is used in the Old Testament to indicate a terrible time period when God will judge the anti-christ and those who worship and follow him and the beast and false prophet.

"The day of Christ" on the other hand is a day to look forward to and is a day of joy and expectation. It is the time when God finishes His great work of grace within the sanctified church.

These following verses indicate the “day of Christ” is the day of the “snatching away of the saints” to be with the Lord forever.

.PHIL. 1:[6] For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you **will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

PHIL. 1:9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may approve the things that are excellent, **in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;**

PHIL. 1:15] that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, [16] holding fast the word of life, **so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.**

1 COR. 1:6] even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, [7] so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, [8] who shall also confirm you to the end, **blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The day of the Lord is a day of vengeance.

ISA 13:5] They are coming from a far country From the farthest horizons, The LORD and His instruments of indignation, **To destroy the whole land. [6] Wail, for the day of the LORD is near!**

ISA 13:9] 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. [10] For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises, And the moon will not shed its light. [11] Thus I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

EZE. 30:3] "For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations. [4] "And a sword will come upon Egypt, And anguish will be in Ethiopia, When the slain fall in Egypt, They take away her wealth, And her foundations are torn down.

JOEL 1:15] Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

JOEL 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near, [2] A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness.

AMOS 5:18 Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; [19] As when a man flees from a lion, And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, And a snake bites him. [20] Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light,

1 COR 5:5] I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Even gloom with no brightness in it?

1 THES. 5:2] For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. [3] While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

There are 17 scriptures like these that indicate that "the day of the Lord" is a time of destruction and darkness will come upon the enemies of God suddenly. The "The great and terrible day of the Lord" is never presented as a time for rejoicing and celebration but a time of distress and weeping. See these references to the same time but with different names. (1) Day of vengeance. (2) Day of His wrath (3) Day of visitation (4) Day of desolation (5) Day of darkness (6) Day of alarm.

It should be clear if we mix these two "DAYS" we will come to a wrong conclusion. This is a popular mistake. There is no question that we should prepare for "the Day of Christ."