

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT LEAD UP TO THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

Without a doubt one of the key concerns for believers when the topic of the Rapture comes up is, "Will the Church go through the tribulation?" I believe the scriptures are clear on what happens to the Church during the End-Times scenario and exactly when will the Rapture take place.

I. DOES THE CHURCH EXPERIENCE THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD?

Reading the Book of Revelation can make one feel that God would never allow His people to experience the hardship and tribulation of the End-Time generation. How can a loving God allow His children to suffer as horrifically as Revelation describes the scenario of the End-Times? Most in the Church confuse the "wrath of God" with "wrath of satan."

A. The wrath of God- Upon followers of anti-christ.

Judgment: God deals with the nations in such a way that His heart is to bring them into obedience before He releases more severe means, in order to bring them into agreement with His will. The Day of the Lord is the fullness of God's wrath upon the nations of the earth and the enemies of Christ who have chosen their allegiance with satan and all forms of wickedness.

Psalm 110:5-6 "The Lord is at Your right hand. He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nation, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries."

Isaiah 26:21 "For behold, the LORD comes out of His place, To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain."

Zechariah 12:9 "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

Revelation 15:1 "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete."

B. The wraith of satan-Upon the followers of Jesus Christ.

Persecution: The Bible is clear that from the beginning of creation, satan would seek to destroy the seed of the woman and His offspring. Satan's perfect hatred is seen through the earth in his hatred of the Church and the preaching of the word of God.

1. God prophesied the friction and persecution that would take place against the followers of Christ.

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

2. Daniel prophesied a time where an End-Time ruler would come against the saints of God.

Daniel 7:21-23 “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. “Thus he said: The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.”

3. Jesus prophesied persecution upon those who received His word and believed in Him and lived a life of righteousness.

Matthew 5:10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 13:21 “Yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”

Matthew 24:9-10 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.”

4. The Apostle Paul declared that anyone desiring to live a godly life would suffer persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12 “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

C. God has always divinely protected His people from His judgments of wrath that He unleashed upon the un-godly.

Isaiah 26:20-21 “Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.”

Zephaniah 2:3 “Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD’s anger.”

1. Noah delivered from the flood - Gen 6:17-18
2. Lot delivered from judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen 19:12-25
3. Israel delivered from plagues upon the people of Egypt - Ex 8:22-23
4. Rahab delivered from the destruction of Jericho - Josh 6:17

5. The 144,000 witnesses of revelation will be delivered from the judgments to come upon the earth - Rev 7:3-4
6. The Church is warned to not participate in the wickedness that will dominate the earth in the last days. This implies that if we come out and be separated from the filthiness of this world, we would be spared from the judgments to come.

Revelation 18:4 "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

II. THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE RAPTURE/ 2nd COMING

Bible prophecy in many cases is like a "prophetic puzzle" that at a glance can be confusing and frustrating. This is especially true concerning the first and second comings of the Lord. God has promised by His Spirit that as the day of His appearing approaches, He will reveal more detail prophetic information to His prophets in the generation of which the Lord returns.

Jeremiah 23:20 "The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly."

Daniel 12:9 "And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

THE SEQUENCE OF END-TIME EVENTS

1. **Israel signs a 7 year covenant with a world leader securing them temporary peace** - Dan 9:27, 12:11, Mat 24:15
2. **Anti-Christ is revealed** - 2 Thes. 2:1-3
3. **A great falling away from the faith takes place** - 2 Thes. 2:1-3, 1 Tim 4:1
4. **Anti-Jewish and anti-Christian sentiment sweeps the nations. Persecution takes place** - Mat 24:9-14, Dan 7:21-22, 25, Rev. 12:7-17, Rev 13:7-18
5. **Judgments of God are released** - Rev. 7-17 (7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Bowls)
6. **Great Darkness covers the earth. The moon looks like its covered in blood and the sun's light greatly diminished** - Matt. 24:29:31, Rev 16:10-21

7. **Jesus descends from the heavens in the clouds** – Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27, Acts 1:9-11, Rev. 1:7

- With the voice, shout of an archangel
- The dead in Christ will arise first
- The living believers are raptured - Angels involved

Isaiah 26:19 “Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

- We receive glorified bodies - 1 Cor. 15:51-53

8. **Jesus marches through the land confronting the forces of the anti-christ** – Isa. 63:1-6, Ps. 2, Ps. 10, Ps. 149

9. **Jesus overcomes the anti-christ and delivers the city of Jerusalem**

Zechariah 12:9 “It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 14:2-3 “For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.”

10. **Jerusalem is established as the capital of the earth.**

Zechariah 14:16 “ And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”