

The People of the Apocalypse
“The Most Prophesied Event in Scripture”

When the Lord Jesus’ four disciples, James, John, Peter and Andrew, asked Him these two questions:

“When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?”
(Matthew 24:3b)

He answered their question with simplicity and great clarity. However, He addressed the second part of their question first [“The end” of the age] because the events leading up to the end of the age are also the signs for His coming, for both events, the end of this age and the second coming of Christ, occur on the very same day:

*“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until **the day** that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But **the same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”* (Luke 17:26-30.

The Lord is emphasizing “*the same day*” rescue of His people then immediate retribution and judgment which has been His unchanging method through the ages. In other words, this present age, which is the age of grace, will end when the Lord returns to rescue His saints from Satan’s great tribulation by rapture which is immediately followed by His Day of the Lord judgment. His coming will bring an end to this present age, which is also called the church age.

Man’s time on earth started “In the beginning” (Genesis 1:1) when God created man (Genesis 1:27) and gave him “Dominion...over every living thing” (Genesis 1:28) and therefore, the time since creation could rightly be called the day of man.

Man’s day will be immediately followed by God’s day which is the Day of the Lord: “The Most Prophesied Event in Scripture”. In that day God will systematically re-take control of His planet through His righteous Day of the Lord judgments.

In the process these judgments will also accomplish His purpose of purging and purifying the earth from the ages-long effects of sin’s corruption (II Peter 3:10-12). This Day of the Lord judgment period will be preceded by these heavenly wonders:

*“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** the great and the terrible day of the Lord come”* (Joel 2:30,31).

Joel, whose entire book focuses on the Day of the Lord, is the first to write of this event indicating that these heavenly wonders will be the sign of the Day of the Lord for they will precede the Lord’s wrathful judgment in that day.

Isaiah also attests to these same signs in the heavens in connection with the Day of the Lord:

“Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine” (Isaiah 13:9,10).

The prophet Amos speaks of the darkness during this future event:

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord: to what end is it for you: the day of the Lord is darkness and not light... Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18,20).

Zephaniah, whose book also centers upon the Day of the Lord, records this same darkness along with other defining characteristics:

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastes greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zephaniah 1:14,15).

The Lord Jesus Christ links these same heavenly wonders to the end of this age and His return to rescue the saints from Satan's "great wrath" (Revelation 12:12) the great tribulation:

*"**Immediately after** the [great] tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31).*

Notice the Lord's continuing step-by-step chronological explanation:

1. Immediately **after** the great tribulation is shortened the heavenly wonders occur (Matthew 24:21,29)
(The entire planet is miraculously darkened)
2. **Then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.
(The entire planet is miraculously illuminated by His "great [Shekinah] glory")
3. **And then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.
4. They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.
5. And He shall send His angels
6. With a great sound of a trumpet.
7. They shall gather together His elect (rapture).

Mark also records this most significant sequence of prophetic events:

*"But in those days **after** that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And **then** shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. **And then** shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." (Mark 13:24-27)*

Luke, too, tells of these future signs in each of the books he wrote:

*"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** that great and notable day of the Lord come." (Luke 21:25; Acts 2:19,20)*

John's record of these supernatural events progressively provides additional significant information:

"And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." (Revelation 6:12,13)

While these passages focus upon the sign that occurs before the Day of the Lord ultimately indicating this sign's

prominence in the Lord's time of the end plan, this is only the sign which precedes His wrath-filled Day of the Lord judgment. This major prophetic sign and its global effects are referred to in at least fourteen different Bible passages:

(Isaiah 5:30, 13:10, 24:23; Ezekiel 32:7,8; Joel 2:2, 10, 30-31; Amos 1:18; 8:9; Zephaniah 1:15; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:20; Revelation 6:12, 13).

Therefore, the Biblical importance of this event [the sign preceding the Day of the Lord] is clear, for it is the key to understanding the unfolding chronology of the time of the end as it is the signal that occurs "after" the great tribulation (Matthew 24:29), and just "before" (Joel 2:30,31) "the same day" (Luke 17:29) beginning of the Day of the Lord and the second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:30,31) to rescue His elect by rapture.

The Day of the Lord is thoroughly described in the seven trumpet plagues (Revelation 8-11), the seven vial plagues (Revelation 15,16.), the destruction of Babylon (Revelation 17,18) and the culminating battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21).

There are three minor prophets whose books are dedicated wholly to the Day of the Lord: Obadiah, Joel and Zephaniah, while Isaiah 2-5, and major portions of "The Little Apocalypse" (Isaiah 24-27) also focus upon this unparalleled time of God's wrath/judgment.

While the rapture of the saints continues to be the event that receives the most attention because it is the major occurrence on God's prophetic timetable clearly effecting the saints, it is not the event that the Lord has underlined in His word, for the rapture itself is scarcely mentioned when compared to amount of Bible text that is devoted to the eschatological Day of the Lord.

The Bible gives a clear and compelling witness to this future time of God's time of the end judgment when He will fulfill His three-fold purpose for the Day of the Lord by:

1. Punishing the peoples (Isaiah 2:10-17, 34:2; Zephaniah 1:17)
2. Purging the planet (Micah 1:3,4; II Peter 3:10,11)
3. Purifying His people (Isaiah 6:10,13; Daniel 12:10; Zechariah 13:8,9; Malachi 3: 1-3)

It is during this time called the Day of the Lord that God will utilize a mighty company of 144 Thousand servants (Revelation 7:3) who will be called out, prepared, sealed (Revelation 7:4-8) and protected (Revelation 9:4) in order that they might be His witnesses during this future time of judgment. They are in reality "The Time of the End Israel of God".

They will carry the merciful message of the gospel of grace to those (Daniel 11:32-35, 12:3; Zechariah 13:9) who are written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. The chronological sequence of events recorded in Matthew 24:4-31 and Revelation 6-8 indicate:

1. The Beginning of Sorrows (Matthew 24:4-8; Revelation 6:1-8)
2. The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:9-28; Revelation 6:9-11)
3. The Sign of The Day of the Lord & The Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 6:12-17)
4. The Sealing of The 144 Thousand (Revelation 7:1-8)
5. The Coming of the Lord to Rescue/Rapture/Receive the Saints (Matthew 24:31; John 14:3; Revelation 7:9-17)
6. The Beginning of The Day of the Lord (Revelation 8:1-5)
7. The Day of the Lord plagues/judgments (Revelation 8:6-11:15, 15, 16)
 - a. The Seven Trumpets [The first plagues (Revelation 9:20)]
 - b. The Seven Vials [The last plagues (Revelation 15:1)]
 - c. The Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-15)

These horrendous cataclysmic Day of the Lord judgments mentioned above which are sent from God and executed by His angels are the main elements of God's wrath upon the earth and its inhabitants taking up the majority of the prophetic section of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The following events will occur ***before*** the Day of the Lord begins:

1. The Sending of Elijah (Malachi 4:5,6)
2. The Revival of Hearts (Malachi 4:5,6)
3. The Restoration of All [Holy [Old] Covenant] Things
(Daniel 11:28-32; Matthew 17:11; Mark 9:12)
 - a. The Jews will be in the land (Deuteronomy 30:5; Daniel 9:24; Matthew 24:16)
 - b. The holy city of Jerusalem will be occupied (Daniel 9:24)
 - c. The temple will be rebuilt (Daniel 11:31; II Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 11:1,2)
 - d. The holy place included (Matthew 24:15)
 - e. The regular/morning and evening sacrifices will be instituted (Daniel 8:11,12, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11)
 - f. The Sabbath will be honored (Matthew 24:20)
 - g. The two witnesses/prophets will be sent (Revelation 11:3-17)
 - h. The twelve tribes of Israel will be recognized/sealed (Revelation 7:3-8)
4. The Awareness of the Believer (Matthew 24:32,33; I Thessalonians 5:1-10)
5. The Falling Away (Daniel 11:30; II Thessalonians 2:1-3)
6. The Man of Sin Revealed (Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:1-10)
7. The Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:3,4)
8. The Great Tribulation (Daniel 11:31-12:1,2,10; Matthew 24:15-28; Revelation 13:1-18)
9. The Heavenly Wonders (Joel 2:31; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24,25; Luke 21:25,26; Revelation 6:12)
10. The Sealing of The 144 Thousand (Revelation 7:1-8)
11. The Last Trump (Joel 2:1; Matthew 24:31; I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16)
12. The Second Coming of Christ/Beg/Day of the Lord (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 24:29-31)

The Day of the Lord is clearly described as God's wrath:

*“Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with **wrath** and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it...Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the **wrath** of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.” (Isaiah 13:9,13)*

*“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastes greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of **wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” (Zephaniah 1:14,15)*

The Day of the Lord which is God's wrath will not be experienced by His people for they have been promised to be delivered from this unparalleled period of judgment:

“And to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation [deliverance] by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9).

However, God's people have never been promised deliverance from tribulation. On the contrary, the Scripture teaches *“through much tribulation”* we *“enter into the kingdom of God.”* (Acts 14:22)

The Lord Jesus told the eleven disciples the night before He was crucified: *“In the world ye shall have tribulation”* (John 16:33) which the apostle Paul also confirmed:

“For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.” (I Thessalonians 3:4)

Tribulation is used by God to produce patience in His people for “*Tribulation works patience*” (Romans 5:3) as any true child of God will testify, knowing that it is the Lord’s working in their life. James, the Lord’s half-brother was the first to record this vital truth in the New Testament:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Paul himself gloried “*in tribulation*” (Romans 5:3) and was “*exceeding joyful*” (I Corinthians 7:4) in and through all of the tribulation God allowed him to suffer knowing that the Lord was at work in his life. This patience building through tribulation ultimately allows the child of God to “*possess ye your soul*” (Luke 21:19) during the coming and most vicious persecution believers will face during the great tribulation at the time of the end. (Luke 21:12-18)

Although “*[the] great tribulation*” (Revelation 7:14) which is carried out by the Antichrist and false prophet (Revelation 13:1-18) also called Satan’s “*great wrath*” (Revelation 12:12) and is his ultimate “*war against the saints*” (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:7,) must not be confused with God’s wrath which immediately follows this “*great tribulation*” (Matthew 24:29) and is called the Day of the Lord.

God will definitely rescue the saints before His wrath by cutting off thereby shortening this time of “*great tribulation*” (Matthew 24:22) when He sends His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue the saints by rapture from this the most intense tribulation ever experienced by the saints (Matthew 24:21)!

This glorious supernatural rescue of the people of God is also referred to as “the blessed hope”:
“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:13,14)

The saints will be taken home to heaven (Revelation 7:9-17) being delivered (I Thessalonians 5:9) from the coming wrath of God, which definitely is “The Most Prophesied Event in Scripture”:
“The great and dreadful day of the Lord.” (Malachi 4:5)