

THESE ARE THE LAST DAYS (Part 2)

Matthew 24:3

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the END of the world?

The disciples wanted to know when the “end” would be. What about you? Would you like to know when the end will be? Some might say, “It’s impossible. No one knows when the end will be.”

Matthew 24:36

³⁶ But of that day and hour KNOWETH no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

When Jesus says, “No man ‘knoweth’” it’s important to understand that the *tense* of the verb “know” is in the present. In other words, Jesus was really saying, “No man *presently* knows.” Therefore, the question is, “Will we know *later*?” The Bible seems to suggest that some *will* know.

Matthew 24:37–39

³⁷ But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And KNEW NOT until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO the coming of the Son of man be.

In the time of Noah many did not know that a flood was coming until they were taken away. However, my question is, “Did *Noah* know?”

Genesis 7:1, 4, 10

¹ And the Lord said unto Noah, COME THOU AND ALL THY HOUSE into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. ⁴ For yet SEVEN DAYS, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. ¹⁰ And IT CAME TO PASS AFTER SEVEN DAYS, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

It seems Noah knew that the flood was coming 7 days in advance! Well, if the coming of the Son of man will be like the days of Noah, we should expect that the Church will also know in advance. I believe we have been given a warning in that event we call the Tribulation. The Tribulation is God's 7-year warning that the end is near!

If this is true, then the Tribulation is the single most important event of the end times. No wonder every major theory surrounding the end times is based on this event. For example, there are 3 leading theories concerning the Rapture, all of which are related to the timing of the Tribulation.

There is a Pre-Tribulation theory, a Post-Tribulation theory, and a Mid-Tribulation theory. What are these theories? Well, the Pre-Tribulation theory states that the Rapture will take place *before* the Tribulation begins. Those who hold this view believe the Church will "escape" the Tribulation by virtue of the Rapture. This is a very popular view among Christians. It's probably also the reason why we're so indifferent when it comes to the end times, because we believe we won't be present when these things take place!

Personally, I don't know how anyone can be a serious student of the Bible and conclude that the Church won't go through the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:21, 22

21 For then shall be great TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days SHOULD BE SHORTENED, there should no flesh be saved: but for the ELECT'S SAKE those days shall be shortened.

Why would God have to "shorten those days" if the Church won't be present during the Tribulation?

John 16:33

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. IN THE WORLD YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION: but be of good cheer; I have OVERCOME THE WORLD.

Jesus *guarantees* that we will have tribulation in this world. Yet, in spite of this, He says, "Be of good cheer; I overcome the world." Why should His overcoming the world in spite of tribulation bring us peace? Because tribulation is how we overcome the world!

Romans 8:35–37

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall TRIBULATION, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, IN ALL THESE THINGS we are more than CONQUERORS through him that loved us.

Everything Paul lists in this verse (persecution, distress, famine, sword) are all things associated with the Tribulation. Yet, in spite of this, we are told that we are *conquerors* (overcomers) “IN” these things!

2 Peter 3:10–12

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all THESE THINGS SHALL BE DISSOLVED, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 LOOKING FOR and hasting unto THE COMING of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Notice, Peter tells us to “look for His coming” when we see *these things* dissolve. Therefore, it seems obvious that we’ll be present when “these things” take place!

Acts 14:21, 22

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Notice, there is NO scenario where we enter into the kingdom of God (heaven) without going *through* tribulation!

Matthew 24:29–31

29 Immediately AFTER THE 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: 30 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.

31 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.

Notice how we enter the kingdom (heaven) AFTER the Tribulation. Therefore, our “gathering together” (i.e. the Resurrection and Rapture of the saints) must also be AFTER the Tribulation. Otherwise, some people would be left out!

Revelation 20:4, 5

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were BEHEADED for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they LIVED and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

Notice, those who are killed during the Tribulation will be a part of the FIRST resurrection. The “first resurrection” is the ONLY resurrection of the righteous. This means that this resurrection must take place *after* the Tribulation in order to include those who will die in the Tribulation. Moreover, if the resurrection takes place after the Tribulation, the Rapture must also take place after the Tribulation because both events occur TOGETHER!

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.