



## God's Grand Story: The Rapture and the Day of the Lord

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The Apostle Paul describes the rapture in I Thessalonians 4:

*I Thessalonians 4:15-17 — “For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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 will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”*

Daniel writes about a seven-year period that will begin when the Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and end with the return of Christ. In the middle of these seven years, the Antichrist will break the covenant with Israel and set himself up on Temple Mount in Jerusalem to be worshipped as God. This is the **Abomination of Desolation** and marks the beginning of the **Tribulation**. The Tribulation will end when Jesus comes to earth, defeats the Antichrist, and sets up His Kingdom on the earth for a thousand years.

*Matthew 24:3-8 — “As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.’”*

**Birth pangs** are the events that will take place before the end and before His return.

*Matthew 24:9 — “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.”*

*Matthew 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],”*

*Matthew 24:21 — “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again.”*

The Tribulation will be a time of great persecution for Christians and Jews.

*Matthew 24:10 — “And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another.”*

*Matthew 24:13 — “But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved.”*

The length of the Tribulation will be shortened:

*Matthew 24:22 — “And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”*

*Matthew 24:29-31 — “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. 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. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”*

This is the **Rapture**. The Apostle Paul describes it in I Thessalonians 4:

*Read I Thessalonians 4:15-17*

Jesus will appear and will illuminate the sky. The trumpet will sound, and the angels will gather the elect from the earth.

*Matthew 24:40-41 — “Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.”*

The prophet Joel describes The Great and Awesome Day of the Lord:

*Joel 2:30-31 — “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.”*

Before the Great and Awesome Day of the Lord comes, the Church will be raptured. Paul says to the Thessalonians,

*I Thessalonians 5:1-4 — “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;”*

*I Thessalonians 5:9 — “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

The Church will be raptured **before** the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord's judgment, the wrath of God, and the outpouring of the Trumpet Judgments in the book of Revelation.

*II Thessalonians 2:1-4 — “For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.”*

This is the same order of events that Jesus describes in Matthew 24:

- 1. The beginning of birth pains**
- 2. The Great Tribulation (cut short) and the apostasy**
- 3. The Rapture of the Church**
- 4. The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord's Wrath**

The Church will not be here for the wrath of God to be poured out or for the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. The Church *will* be here for the Tribulation, a time of great persecution and even martyrdom.

*Luke 21:36 — “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

We must pray that we may not enter into the temptation to defect and that we may have the strength to stay loyal to Jesus even if it means dying for our faith. Paul gives guidance on how to live in light of that day coming:

*I Thessalonians 5:8-9 — “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. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

In light of who we are as children of God, we must be awake, alert, self-controlled, and well-armed. The end-time events will come like a thief in the night, suddenly and unexpectedly, and they will come like labor pains at the end of a pregnancy, sudden and unavoidable. We must arm ourselves with faith and love like a breastplate and with hope like a helmet. We must protect our thinking by the realization of what is coming in the future.

*Revelation 11:15 — “Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”*

And on the earth, to which He has now returned, the Lord will rapidly pour out His seven bowl judgments during a specified 75-day period of time that runs beyond Daniel's 70th week, as He marches to Jerusalem and wins the battle of Armageddon.

*Philippians 2:10-11 — “so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

There is a day coming when those who have refused to willingly and voluntarily bow their knee to Christ, will be put on their knees. When that time comes, it will be too late to get mercy. His very presence will cause everyone to have to kneel before Him.

It's not too late to submit to Jesus today!