

Israel, America And The Last Days

Chapter Thirteen: The Coming Storm

The rumbles of judgment's thunder are on the horizon. We can see the distant forked streaks of lightning of an approaching storm. While we cannot say for sure when the Lord's return for His church will occur we can see from the signs of the time we live in that we are closer now to the rapture than any generation has been since the start of the church age of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the church is raptured the powers of hell will be unleashed upon this world unlike anything this world has ever seen nor will it ever see in its future. This is the church's greatest hour and her greatest challenge. We don't have much time to get the word out of this coming storm. Jesus called it Great Tribulation.

TEXT: Matthew 24:21 - For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

There's a storm coming. We hear the terms every day - "the end times," "the last days," the "time of the end;" "the end of the age." All these are terms leading up to what the Bible calls a seven-year period of tribulation when this age as we know it comes to an end. It will be preceded by the Rapture of the church and followed by the Glorious Appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. During this period however planet Earth will suffer the most horrible time in her history. The Earth has seen some dark days in her past, but Jesus said not only had there never been a time like it in the past, there will never be a time like it again - EVER.

Ever since Jesus ascended to the Father, the church has been asking the \$64,000 question, "When will you return, and what will be the sign of your coming?" This is the question the disciples put to Jesus at the beginning of what many Bible scholars call the "Olivet Discourse," from where our text is taken for this journal.

Matthew 24:1-3 - And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. [2] And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. [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 were not criticized for their question. Instead, Jesus laid out a sobering vision for them of the future. He did not predict peace and prosperity and blessing, like we hear the 21st Century Church promising the world today. But Jesus said that before He returned there would be a horrible time on planet Earth. Things would get worse and worse. He called it GREAT TRIBULATION unlike the world has not ever seen nor will it ever see again. While on earth Jesus Himself did not know the hour when all this would take place. But as He

spoke to the 12, He gave them signs to look for that would be a telltale warning that a dark time was quickly approaching. As we enter the new millennium I'm here to tell you there is a storm coming. It's on the horizon. You can hear the muffled rumbles of thunder and see the distant forks of lightning in the future. You can feel the ominous still in the air that signals that something is stirring in the heavenlies. There's something that is about to happen and it's BIG. There's a shaking going on not only in the heavenlies but also in the earth itself. The Earth is convulsing. She's shaking because with each passing day she knows her redemption, just like all the rest of fallen, cursed humanity, is drawing nigh. Paul said it this way in Romans 8:

Romans 8:18-24 - For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [19] For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. [20] For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, [21] Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. [22] For we know that the whole creation groans and travaileth in pain together until now. [23] And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the FirstFruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. [24] For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

I know this type of message is always met with criticism because it's not a "positive," "feel-good," goosey-bumps type exhortation. It is a warning. The world is NOT getting better no matter what any church leader or television network predicts. **THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO BE TAKING OVER THE WORLD BUT EVANGELIZING THE WORLD TO GET AS MANY PEOPLE ELIGIBLE FOR THE RAPTURE TO ESCAPE THIS COMING STORM!** I declare to you that what I am talking about will not be stopped.

Luke 21:36 - Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Prophets and Christ Himself have foretold the storm predicted in scripture. The events were given to Jesus when He ascended and are yet future. Jesus sent an angel to an exiled apostle on Patmos to signify and confirm this by giving John the Beloved a front-seat, panoramic view of this horrible storm. The only way to escape it is be ready for the rapture.

Many will read this and shrug their shoulders and say, "It's been said before, no big deal. We've been looking for Jesus for 2000 years so what. He's not come yet and He's probably not coming soon now." Others will say "that's what wrong

with the Body of Christ - all those gloom and doomers. We need a message that uplifts and edifies, not one that scares and warns." Certain elements in Body of Christ who have stopped teaching and preaching on the rapture as a way of escape say, "there's no guarantee the church won't face all of this anyway so what's the point in warning people? We're going to go through it like the rest of the world." Some even deny it's going to happen at all.

And then some may read this and it may cause them to take inventory of their lives to make sure they are going to escape this storm for there is only one way of escape - and its through the ONE WHO WARNED THE CHURCH ABOUT IT TO BEGIN WITH - THE LORD JESUS CHRIST and His Blood. Oh, Precious is the flow that washes white as snow. No other fount I know, nothing but the blood Jesus. Judgment is coming, ALL will be there. Those who rejected, those who refused. Oh, sinner hasten, list to the call, then He will pass, He will pass over you! When I see the blood, when I see the blood. When I see the blood, I will pass, I will pass over you! And that's who this journal is for - for it is a warning to us all to make sure we're ready to be raptured and miss the wrath of God that is about to be poured out upon this planet. For the person who has this hope, the "blessed hope" inside Him is purifying himself even as Jesus is pure:

1 John 3:1-3 - Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. [2] Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. [3] And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

The Old Testament and The Great Tribulation

Throughout the Old Testament the prophets predicted a time when God would pour out his wrath and there would be greater distress and trouble than at any other time in human history. Various names and titles are used to describe the event. We won't go into detail here but we want to list a few of the names given to this time in history as follows:

The Day Of Vengeance - Isaiah 34:2-3,8 - For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them; he hath delivered them to the slaughter. [3] Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 8 - For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble - Jeremiah 30:7-9 - Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. [8] For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of

hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: [9] But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

A Time Of Distress - Daniel 12:1 - *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

The Day Of The Lord - Joel 2:1 - *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;*

The Great Day Of The Lord - Zeph. 1:14-15 - *The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hastens greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. [15] 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,*

One of the most detailed descriptions of the Great Tribulation is found in our text taken out of Matthew 24. Jesus described the seven years of Tribulation as having two parts. The first three and one half years are described in verses 4-14; the second three and a half , in verses 15-31. Jesus identified two signs that will point to the end of the world and his coming: natural signs and spiritual signs.

Wars and Rumors Of War

Matthew 24:6-9 - **And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars:** *see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. [8] All these are the beginning of sorrows. [9] Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

One of the first things Jesus predicted for humanity's future is war. It's a prediction that coincides with the Red Horse Rider of Revelation chapter 6 when John saw four horsemen come out of the sea. The first horse was Antichrist bringing a false peace followed by rider of the red horse would take peace from the earth. Jesus told the 12 disciples that they would hear of war and rumors of war prior to His second appearing.

As we approach the end "nation will rise up against nation, kingdom against kingdom." While people seek peace, they will only experience war. According to the United Nations, the three largest industries in the world are:

- ***The Military - 800 billion dollars a year***
- ***Illegal Drugs - 500 billion dollars a year***
- ***Oil - 450 billion dollars a year***

That's a staggering figure and leaves little room to doubt why we live in an unstable world full of conflicts and hostilities. Listen well to me. There will be NO LASTING PEACE in the Middle East before Jesus comes. President Clinton (thank God for just 5 more days as of the time of this journal) is trying his best to get Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak's signatures on a piece of paper so he can sum up his legacy in office as one who brought peace between Israel and the PLO. Israel has made peace with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994). Now Syria has hinted she seeks a deal with Israel for peace in the future. The PLO is the last holdout (or at least it seems like that on the surface) to an "atmosphere of tranquility" in a region where there has been fighting since the days of Isaac and Ishmael. Clinton can have Arafat and Barak sign 10,000 treaties but THERE WILL BE NO PEACE until Jesus comes. All this talk about peace brings to mind Paul's warning in 1 Thessalonians 5 when he says this:

1 Thes. 5:1-4 - But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. [2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. [3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. [4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

We know from scripture that following the rapture; the Antichrist through successful diplomacy and maneuvering will bring a false peace to the world, especially ISRAEL. That peace will not last. John writes in Revelation 6 of the second horsemen of the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse:"

Rev. 6:3-4 - And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. [4] And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Many Bible scholars believe that this represents a great conflagration we might call World War III. When Daniel's "three kings" oppose the Antichrist, he will respond in deadly fashion, swiftly crushing his enemies and bringing death to earth on a massive scale never before known. The ability of modern armies to inflict staggering casualties on their enemies is well known but almost beyond comprehension. Only since the advent of the atomic age has it been possible to

bring this kind of unimaginable, swift destruction to bear on widely scattered portions of the globe.

At the time the Soviet Union collapsed it had 30,000 atomic or neutron warheads, many aimed at population centers? Since the breakup of the evil empire," no one knows what happened to all those weapons. Russia claimed it was too poor to dismantle the ones in Yugoslavia and other struggling republics, and the host countries could not afford to man them, dismantle them, or protect them from terrorists. As a result, these cash-poor countries began selling them to rogue nations like Iran, Iraq, China, India and only God knows who else. Over 10,000 nuclear scientists from Russia are reported to have migrated with these warheads to other countries. For the first time in our history the very chance that a holocaust of millions of people through atomic war could take place EXISTS. And during the coming storm, it will more than just exist, it will become reality. The world remains moments away from nuclear disaster and the situation will get worse - not better prior to the rapture.

The Bible has much to say about this coming storm in regards to war. Nuclear holocaust is foretold in scripture:

Joel 2:28-32 - [28] And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: [29] And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. [30] And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. [31] The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. [32] And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Joel predicts three things here - a great outpouring of the Spirit, wonders in the heaven and earth, and blood, fire and "pillars of smoke," before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. The great and terrible day of the Lord here refers to the battle of Armageddon and the glorious appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. The word "pillar" in the Hebrew here literally means "mushroom cloud" which is synonymous with what happens in a nuclear explosion. I'm not saying man will destroy this planet because we know from scripture that man will not. Jesus is not coming back to a burned out shell of a planet to rule and reign. But WAR is coming to planet earth and millions will die.

Worldwide Famine And Pestilences

Matthew 24:6-9 - And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not

yet. [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. [8] All these are the beginning of sorrows. [9] Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Every year the population of the world increases by more than 90 million people. Seventy years ago the rate was 15 million per year. We will not be able to feed the growing world population indefinitely. According to a report by the Millennium Institute on June 28, 1996, there were nearly 6 billion people in the world. Given the current population growth rate we will run out of land to grow the needed amounts of food. If people were fed a "northern" diet (as in the United States, Canada, and Europe), "humanity would run out of enough available land to grow food to feed everyone in nine years." That statement was released 5 years ago. How much closer are we to the reality of this now? The stage is being set for conflict between the rich and the poor as well as famines of global proportions. Famine would no longer be confined to the shores of Somalia or the refugee camps of the Sudan. The book of Revelation says famine is coming to the entire WORLD as we approach the coming of Jesus:

Rev. 6:5-6 - And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. [6] And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Another school of thought on the worldwide famine predicted in scripture is that after the wars of the first part of the tribulation period rampant inflation will occur as a result of war. Since biblical days a denarius or penny was a common wage for a day's work, and a quart of wheat or three quarts of barley are basically subsistence diets. John says a man will have to work all day just to get enough food to eat, with nothing left, left over for his family or the elderly. On the other hand, the call to not "hurt the oil and wine" symbols of wealth - indicate that more than likely the rich will do just fine during the tribulation period.

The third horseman of the Apocalypse will take a heavy toll in deaths and sickness. The black horse is an obvious symbol of famine and disease, which often follow war.

Another thing Jesus predicted that was in Earth's future was an outbreak of "pestilences."

Matthew 24:6-9 - And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers

places. [8] All these are the beginning of sorrows. [9] Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

The magnitude of the HIV/AIDS problem is overwhelming. The World Health Organization estimated that by before the next decade nearly 40 million people will be infected with the HIV virus, with 60 percent of those cases being in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1994, I visited the city of Kampala, Uganda where some people believe that the first AIDS virus began and spread throughout the world. Polygamy is practiced in Africa without regret or question. The people in Uganda are dying not only from Aids but from the devastation caused by past dictatorships in her past. She is only a mirror of a bigger horror throughout Africa and that part of the world.

HIV/AIDS may be a harbinger of future global struggles with other sicknesses and disease as well. Doctors in the Western world are concerned that common viruses are becoming resistant to traditional antibiotics. The threat of a disease fatal to humans but spread by cows sent shock waves through Europe in the mid-1990s. In a world of advanced medical knowledge and ongoing research for chemical cures, diseases still wreck havoc all over the world. The book of Revelation predicts such challenges will INCREASE as we approach the time of the end.

The Bible depicts "plagues" that will erupt throughout the earth during the Tribulation. Although we don't have medical descriptions of these "Tribulation" plagues, modern medicine has already identified some diseases such as the Ebola virus, AIDS, and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), which have similar effects. Some 40 years ago, the medical profession thought it had eliminated sexually transmitted diseases. Yet today these scourges have returned with a vengeance. Penicillin and antibiotics worked for a time, but the diseases have developed stronger strains, too powerful for the usual drugs to contain, and today they are worse than before.

To say it again, AIDS continues to be one of the most frightening diseases of our time, particularly for the sexually promiscuous. Once it is contracted, it is always fatal outside a miracle from the Lord. It spreads like wildfire, and no cure is seen on the horizon. In 1982, the United States reported its first case; since then cases have reached into the millions.. We already have Revelation-type plagues on our hands in the earth NOW and those will just get WORSE and WORSE. There's a storm coming friend and it's coming quick. AND ALL THE VAUNTED WEALTH AND KNOWLEDGE OF MAN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO STOP IT!

Other diseases such as chlamydia, a genital disease, is spreading like wildfire too. This year, 11 million cases were reported. In the last 15 years, diseases that seemed to be in decline, such as dengue (fever) and tuberculosis,

or diseases that had disappeared, such as cholera, have once again began to take control on the population," according to the World Health Organization. Dengue fever is an infectious viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes and marked by severe pains in the joints. "Infectious diseases are the world's leading cause of death, killing at least 17 million people - most of them young children - every year. Diseases that seemed to be subdued, such as tuberculosis and malaria, are fighting back with renewed ferocity...The world has not seen the end of new epidemics, because the bugs are smarter than we are," said Dr. George Alleyne, director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau of the World Health Organization.

The report also indicates that cholera, dysentery, and malaria are also returning with a vengeance, and the new strains are resistant to present medication. **The golden day of medical cures for man's sins seems to be over.**

All that is needed for Tribulation plagues to sweep this earth, as Scripture teaches they will, is for Christ to rapture his church, the Antichrist to sign his covenant with Israel, and the four horsemen to begin their march to doomsday - ARMAGEDDON. Many of the Tribulation-type plagues are already here! And more is coming...

Earthquakes In Divers Places

Rev. 6:12-17 - 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; [13] 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. [14] And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. [15] And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; [16] And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: [17] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Many of the first four seals in Revelation 6 described judgments inflicted by man. The coming storm will also involve judgments caused by supernatural means as well. John tells of an earthquake in Revelation 6:12-17 so massive that "every mountain and island was moved out of its place." Probably he has in mind enormous volcanic activity, for he says, "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood." Particulate matter scattered in the atmosphere after a volcanic eruption has often turned the sky black and made the moon to turn red. The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington State

or the gigantic explosion of Mt. Krakatau on August 27, 1883 caused similar phenomenon. John also saw crashing meteorites crashing into the earth and what may be huge mushroom clouds of undetermined origin. The people of earth during this time will recognize these phenomena as coming from the hand of God, for they are said to cry out to the mountains where they take cover:

Revelation 2:16-17 - And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: [17] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

My dad has an interesting theory on this earthquake John records in Revelation 6. We know that the United States of America is not mentioned per say in Bible prophecy. No matter how you stretch the interpretation and try to "fit" us into the scheme of God's future plans, WE ARE NOT THERE! That is a sobering, silent thought that hangs in the air constantly with me each day. I started an in-depth study of Revelation for the first time about 11 years ago and I'm still learning and changing my thoughts on various issues. Thank God He has given me the grace to remain open to whatever the Spirit is trying to reveal to me. I still have a hard time figuring out what will happen to the United States in this panorama of events.

Over the Christmas holidays I went home and asked my father who is also a student and teacher of Bible prophecy what he felt our role in the rise of Antichrist and other Tribulation events be? He calmly looked at me and said plainly, **"I DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE PERIOD."** Wow, that was not the answer I was expecting. He believes that this earthquake John saw in his vision that moves very mountain and island out of its place will be the judgment that will befall America and destroy her for her rebellion against God. Looking at a map you can easily see that the North American and South American Continents (USA, Mexico and Canada) is an island - surrounded by the Pacific Ocean to our west, the Atlantic Ocean to our East, the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea to our South and the Artic Ocean to our north. In addition, we know that when Jesus sets up His earthly kingdom on earth that all nations will be required to come to Jerusalem hinting that the earth will once again be one land mass as it was before a shattering event recorded in Genesis 10 that separated or divided the earth into the continents we have today. The Bible says the islands "fled away," indicating quite simply - they were destroyed.

Gen 10:25 - Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.

No one knows for certain what will happen but one thing is for sure. The wrath of the Lamb will be so great that this world will be shaken to its core -

including the United States of America! Judgment is coming. There's a storm coming. And it's coming quick.

And Death And Hell Followed With Him

Rev. 6:7-8 - And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. [8] And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The fourth horse John saw in his vision was pale. Its colorless appearance symbolized DEATH. John said the rider on the horse "was Death," and Hades or Hell followed with him. One quarter of the earth's population at the time this horse appears will die - well over one BILLION PEOPLE - as a result of World War III. That Hell follows Death shows that many of those slain are unbelievers, for upon death unbelievers go immediately to Hell in contrast to believers who go straight to the Savior's side. There's a storm coming.

Isaiah 14:9 - Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirs up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

Isaiah 5:14 - Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

During this horrific time on earth, hell will enlarge itself with untold lost millions who will die in these battles. Isaiah made two references to it in his writing - he said hell "enlarged itself...without measure," "is moved," and "stirs up the dead" for those coming from earth. Those are graphic illustrations of what will happen in full force during the Great Tribulation period that is coming. **It illustrates the need to be ready to meet Jesus when He comes.** Certainly we don't need a scare message about the Tribulation to make it necessary to be ready. We all can die at any second for our life is but a vapor. But if the Lord grants us mercy and we live, we need to be ready for the rapture of the church by the Lord Jesus Christ and NOW!

The End Is Not Yet; These Are Just The Beginning Of Sorrows

Matthew 24:6-9 - And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. [8] All these are the beginning of sorrows.

All these things, while yet horrific, will just be the BEGINNING of the sorrows on planet earth after the rapture. After the seven seal judgments through which the earth has known the wrath of the Antichrist, it will then experience the direct judgment of God Almighty. Even before just the first half of the tribulation ends seven trumpet judgments will occur as well. We wont go into detail here (another journal coming soon) but we want to summarize what happens with each of them:

Rev. 8:1-3 - And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. [2] And I saw the seven angels, which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. [3] And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

- ***First Trumpet - Hail, Fire and Blood***
- ***Second Trumpet - A Mountain Of Fire - Waters Of Sea Turn To Blood***
- ***Third Trumpet - Wormwood - Waters Poisoned, Thousands More Die***
- ***Fourth Trumpet - Darkness Descends - It's A Darkness That Will Be Felt***
- ***Fifth Trumpet - The Release of Demonic Locusts (Apollyon) Upon Earth - Sting Unbelievers For Five Months; Men Cannot Die, Only Tormented***
- ***Sixth Trumpet - Release of Demonic Horsemen Upon Earth - 1/3 of Remaining Population Killed, Perhaps 1 billion people from: fire/sulfur/brimstone and the stings in their tails***
- ***Seventh Trumpet - Loud Voices In Heaven, then.....***

The Great Tribulation And A Great Choice Over Eternity - God's Mark Or The Mark Of The Beast

In the first half of the Tribulation, vicious plagues sweep the earth, flaming meteorites poison a third of its water warring armies kill millions, demonic beings torture the unredeemed, darkness swallows a third of the sun, and half the world's post-Rapture population dies horribly. AND THEN IT GETS WORSE.

It's in the middle of the Tribulation that the Antichrist who begins the terrors of this time on earth by signing a godless treaty with Israel will usher in the "great tribulation" with the desecration of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem while proclaiming his divinity. In so doing he breaks the treaty after three and half years and bring upon his kingdom the terrible wrath of God. So unspeakably dreadful is the period he triggers Jesus said (OUR TEXT):

Matthew 24:21-22 - For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Jesus says that if it were not for the elect's sake (who that is is not clear - it could be speaking of Israel and it could also be speaking of all the tribulation saints (Jews and Gentiles) there should NOT be ANY FLESH saved. In other words, if not for a chosen remnant on earth during this time, ALL OF MANKIND WOULD DIE. It is very clear that after the "abomination of desolation" appears in Jerusalem that the Antichrist will have total control of the world's economy during the last three years of the Tribulation. His primary tool will be absolute domination of the money supply. He will accomplish this by the ability to put his mark "666" on the hands and foreheads of the people in the world. Without this mark no one will "buy or sell except one who has the mark...or the number of his name." There can be no greater human control than total control of the supply and flow of money. In addition, the storm that is coming will include a time when the Antichrist will order all men and women to bow down before the image of the Beast and worship him. All those without the mark and who refuse to worship will be killed.

Scripture makes it clear that receiving the mark of the Beast is no accident but the result of a deliberate choice made during the Tribulation. That choice involves rejecting the sources of the gospel during that time - the two witnesses (Rev. 11); the 144,000 Jewish witnesses, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32), and the angel with the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6-7). Twice in chapter 14 an angel warns the inhabitants of the earth that the price for taking the mark is eternal damnation and torment:

Rev. 14:6-7 - And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, [7] Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Rev. 14:9-11 - And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, [10] The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: [11] And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

Taking the mark will be NO ACCIDENT or MISTAKE. The person taking the mark will be pledging loyalty to Satan and the Antichrist or declaring Christ as their Lord. If they declare Christ as their Lord they will be beheaded. Make no mistake about it. The lines will be drawn more clearly in the Tribulation than at any time in history. There will be no fence stragglers. The mark of the beast is obtained only by those who sell their soul to the beast and the devil who will give him power. This involves a willful rejection of God - something that even during the Tribulation a person with the mark of GOD in their foreheads and heart will never do. Christians alive now need never worry about accidentally taking the mark. Those who MISS THE RAPTURE and are LEFT BEHIND to go through the Tribulation period need to worry A LOT! There's a storm coming friend and it's getting late.

A Final Word

If you're reading this then you are not experiencing the coming storm YET. We are approaching these times rapidly but there is still time to make a decision for Christ. The Holy Spirit was sent to convict us of our sin and our need for Jesus. You don't have to be here on planet earth when this horror is being played out. **Jesus Christ is the only harbor of refuge from the coming storm.** Jesus Christ is your protection and safety from the coming time of distress and peril on planet earth. You can keep yourself from ever having to be put in a place to make a choice between your head or your soul. TODAY is the day of salvation according to Paul the great Apostle. Taking the mark of the beast is an unpardonable sin - which is why if you're lost you are in danger of one day facing this choice if you don't accept Christ as your Savior today! It will be an irreversible decision.

2 Cor. 6:2 - (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Jesus loves you. He died for our sins and the deliverance of our souls from Satan's power. He wants to be a friend and companion for life through the power of His Spirit and the instruction His Word. If you have not received Christ or you are backslidden and need to make things right with God do it now. It's getting late neighbor. It's getting late. Please take a moment and pray this prayer with me if you've never accepted Christ...

Father in heaven, I'm a sinner. I see the lateness of the hour and know I need to make things right between me and you. I admit that I have sinned against heaven and You and ask you to forgive me or my sins. I repent of my sins and ask your power to help me turn from them and live a holy, dedicated life for you. I ask Jesus to come into my heart as my personal LORD and Savior. I give myself to Him since He gave Himself for me. I ask

Him to take away my guilt, my pain, my failures and my past and give me the joy of salvation as He promised in His word. Give me the power to tell others of the urgency of the hour and make me a witness for you. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Your word says, 'If I confess with my mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, then I shall be saved.' Lord, I believe you raised Jesus from the dead for ME and I receive Him into my life today. Cleanse me Lord Jesus with your precious blood. I put my faith in your blood that you shed on Calvary. Thank you Lord for saving me. In Jesus Name, Amen!