

Day the Music Died

Isaiah 24:1-9

By Scott Huckaby

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
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The connection between this chapter and the preceding ones appears to be that the judgments pronounced upon the various countries are drawn together here into a focal point. The specific divine judgments described there become here the general judgment upon the nations, which will take place before the Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

Isaiah 24:1-9 – The scope & reason for judgment

Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants. ² And it shall be: as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. ³ The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the Lord has spoken this word. ⁴ The earth mourns and fades away; the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. ⁷ The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. ⁸ The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. ⁹ They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

v1 – What will the Lord do?

Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty: Isaiah invites us to behold, to look upon the scene of God's judgment. The principles revealed here apply universally to the judgment of the LORD, but the ultimate fulfillment of this will be in the ultimate period of judgment, the time of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22), which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:29-30).

Will the Great Tribulation make the earth literally empty?

No, but Isaiah's poetic description applies because the earth will seem empty in many places.

Daniel 9:26 – *The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined*

More than one-half of humanity will die in the judgments of the great tribulation (Revelation 9:15-21), making the areas hardest hit seem as if the earth were empty.

v2 – Who will be affected by the Lord's judgment?

In these comparisons, Isaiah shows that a high station in life (priest...master...mistress...seller) will not protect one from the judgments of the LORD. As well, a low station of life (borrower...debtor) will not protect one either. When the judgment of the Great Tribulation comes, it will be complete in its scope.

How does this passage reinforce the pre-trib rapture of the church?

Some who believe that the church will be left on the earth to endure the Great Tribulation believe that God will miraculously protect Christians during that time, so they face none of the judgments of the LORD, only perhaps persecution from the Antichrist.

- This passage reinforces the idea that the judgments of the Lord during the Great Tribulation will be universal in their scope, and that no class of people will be immune from the general judgment of the Lord.
- Therefore, it makes sense for God to remove His redeemed before this period of Great Tribulation, so only those who do not trust in Him during the Great Tribulation have to suffer under these judgments.

v4 – How is it the earth will mourn and fade away?

This is rhetorical... but in the Great Tribulation, the earth will be terribly afflicted by the judgments of the LORD. Revelation 8:7-13 describes the terrible effect of the judgments of the LORD upon the earth: *a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up... a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died... A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.*

Does God's judgment on earth mean He hates the earth?

No, this is the fault of man: The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants. Man has defiled the earth with his sin and great wickedness, so the earth must endure some of the righteous judgment of God also.

- The most ecologically responsible thing anyone could do is to honor the LORD God, walk right with Him, and in obedience to Him.

How is this passage a reminder of the principle that God is greater than His creation?

The Bible never teaches the New Age idea that God is bound up together with what He has created. God is separate from His creation, and when the earth fades away, the LORD God will remain unchanged.

V5 – How have people *transgressed the laws*?

The idea of transgression is to step over the line that God has established. God has set boundaries for us, but many of us don't want to see or respect God's boundaries.

How is transgression the spirit of our age?

We see this in the slogans from national advertising campaigns in decades past: Nothing is taboo.... Break all the rules.... To know no boundaries.... Relax: No rules here.... Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road.... Living without boundaries.... Just do it.

- The idea is you don't have to respect God's boundaries, you can make your own to live by.

How have we *changed the ordinance*?

The Hebrew word for ordinance here is torah, which often means the Law of God. Mankind is ripe for judgment because we have changed God's word into something "lighter," into something "more acceptable," "gospel light."

What basic moral codes which men have recognized and lived by for centuries have been changed?

When once it was universally recognized that it was wrong to lie, wrong to cheat, wrong to be sexually immoral, wrong to do so many other things, today all of that is approved and celebrated!

What has been substituted for the word of God?

Preachers distorting or not giving the whole gospel, Bible translators going woke, politicians twisting the Scriptures, counselors taking the Bible out of context to support a crazy psychological theory...

How is changing God's Law the spirit of Antichrist?

Daniel 7:25 – *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.*

Anyone who seeks to change God's Law is doing what the Antichrist will do and thus is foreshadowing his spirit.

1 John 4:3 – *every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

What *everlasting covenant* has been broken?

God has entered into covenant with man, and man has turned his back on it. Instead of receiving God's everlasting covenant, man wants to make up his own way with God.

There is no single covenant known as the everlasting covenant because this term applies to several different covenants:

- Noah & with mankind after the flood, never to judge the world again by water is called an everlasting covenant (Genesis 9:16).
- Abraham and his descendants is called an everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7, 13, 19).
- Israel and the priesthood is called an everlasting covenant (Leviticus 24:8).
- David, to bring the Messiah from his line, is called an everlasting covenant (2 Samuel 23:5).
- The New Covenant is called an everlasting covenant, both prophetically (Jeremiah 32:40) and after its establishment (Hebrews 13:20).

v6 – What is the curse that *has devoured the earth*?

This not just referring to the general curse that is a consequence for mankind's sin, the context here indicates that this is the curse of the Great Tribulation resulting man's hardened, repeated rejection.

What does it mean that those who dwell on the earth will be desolate?

A better translation of this Hebrew word is guilty. This actually reinforces the pre-trib rapture. God removes those to whom to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed due to their trusting in Him. Following the rapture of the church, only the desolate or guilty remain. Certainly, some come to believe in Christ during the Tribulation but they are in a minority.

What happens to the inhabitants of the earth during the Tribulation?

They are burned...

Revelation 16:8-9 – *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.*

Global warming is real, but it is not caused by man producing carbon dioxide or cows producing methane. It is caused by God cranking up the heat from the Sun. This foreshadows God's ultimate reboot of earth for the Eternal State:

2 Peter 3:10 – *the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

This passage must be harmonized with:

Revelation 21:1 – *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.*

v7 – Why will all the merry-hearted sigh?

When the LORD brings the judgment of the Great Tribulation, there will be no more "partying as usual." The days for eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage (Matthew 24:38) are for before the Great Tribulation. When the Great Tribulation comes, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases.

v8-9 – What happened the day the music died?

Singer Don McLean actually revealed a lot as he memorialized three famous singers, Holly, Valens and Richardson who died together in a plane crash February 3, 1959 in his 1972 No. 1 hit "American Pie..."

Does God speak through unbelievers?

He has in Scripture...

- King Cyrus of Persia in allowing the Jews to rebuild the temple
- Balaam who blessed the Israelites despite being commissioned to curse them by the King of Moab.
- A demon possessed man speaking the truth about Jesus and apostles.
- Gamaliel to the Sanhedrin on Christianity being the work of God
- Paul addressing those who preach Christ out of envy and strife.

*But February made me shiver
With every paper I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step*

How does this bring to mind the Tribulation?

All Tribulation news will be bad news... kind of like today during the times of birth pangs.

*Drove my Chevy to the levee
But the levee was dry
Them good old boys were drinking whiskey and rye
Singing, "This'll be the day that I die"*

Will this be the case during the Tribulation?

The Levee was a bar in McLean's home town and he was recalling a time he arrived there after last call but this does point to the Tribulation...

See Isaiah 24:9 – Why will they not drink wine & the strong drink will be bitter?

There will not be much celebrating during the Tribulation.

- The wealthy elite will be the only ones making merry with wine during the Tribulation...
Revelation 6:6 – And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

*Did you write the Book of Love?
And do you have faith in God above?
If the Bible tells you so
Do you believe in rock 'n' roll?
Can music save your mortal soul?*

What will get people through the Tribulation?

Only faith in God above will get you through the Tribulation and the Bible does indeed tell you so.

What do you think, can music save you?

Music can't save your mortal soul, only Jesus Christ can save you but music from saved souls will praise God and God can use music to point people to Him.

*I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck
With a pink carnation and a pickup truck
But I knew I was out of luck
The day the music died
I started singing bye-bye, Miss American Pie*

What kind of luck will people have during the Tribulation?

From a worldly perspective, you will in fact be out of luck the day the music died. Of course, with God in control, there is no such thing as luck, good or bad.

What does Miss American Pie represent that will go away during the Tribulation?

The world's beacon of freedom, the American dream will be dead for sure... *bye-bye, Miss American Pie*

- This was foreshadowed in McLean's day by prominent assassinations, war protests, riots, and burning cities in the 60s.

*Oh and while the King was looking down
The jester stole his thorny crown
The courtroom was adjourned
No verdict was returned
And while Lenin read a book of Marx
The Quartet practiced in the park
And we sang dirges in the dark
The day the music died*

What King with a thorny crown will be looking down?

King Jesus will be looking down from heaven during the Tribulation; and we'll be with Him!

What jester will seek to usurp the King's authority?

Jesus warned the Tribulation saints of the jester:

Matthew 24:4-5 – *Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.*

Certainly, the Antichrist will come on the scene seeking to be in place of Christ.

How is it socialism will be studied during the Tribulation?

Marxist socialism will be studied during the Tribulation because the Antichrist will spread the wealth around...

Daniel 11:24 – *he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches*

What kind of singing will there be during the Tribulation?

Certainly not celebratory... any singing during the Tribulation will be dirges which is a lament for the dead because there will be a lot of death. And the dirges will indeed be sung in the dark, at least following the 5th bowl judgment...

Revelation 16:10 – *Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness*

*Helter skelter in the summer swelter
The birds flew off with a fallout shelter
Eight miles high and falling fast
It landed foul on the grass,
The players tried for a forward pass
With the jester on the sidelines in a cast*

How does helter skelter describe the Tribulation?

Helter skelter means disorderly confusion, turmoil... it came from a British spiral slide around a tower at an amusement park. The Tribulation will indeed be full of confusion and turmoil!

What role will fallout shelters play during the Tribulation?

People will indeed be using their fallout shelters...

Revelation 6:15 – *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains*

What falls fast on the grass?

Could this be a reference to the trumpet judgments when a great mountain is thrown to the earth and a great star falls from heaven?

Revelation 8:7 – *The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

When would the jester be on the sidelines?

The Antichrist will be assassinated and apparently resurrected to mimic Christ...

Revelation 13:3 – *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.*

Will the Antichrist really be resurrected? Jesus said there would be a lot of deception... maybe he wouldn't really die or maybe Satan possess a look-alike to appear like a resurrection.

*Oh, and there we were all in one place a generation lost in space with no time left to start again
So come on, Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack Flash sat on a candlestick
'Cause fire is the devil's only friend
Oh, and as I watched him on the stage my hands were clenched in fists of rage
no angel born in Hell could break that Satan's spell
And as the flames climbed high into the night to light the sacrificial rite
I saw Satan laughing with delight the day the music died
He was singing bye-bye, Miss American Pie*

To what place will they be gathered during the Tribulation?

Representative of all the Gentile nations will all be gathered at Armageddon...

Revelation 16:16 – *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

How will the people during the Tribulation constitute a lost generation?

This is the generation that will suffer the wrath of God.

How would the Tribulation be *no time left to start again*?

The Tribulation will suddenly overwhelm those who are not spiritually prepared with no time left to start again ...

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 – *the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

How is it that fire is the devil's only friend?

In the end, that is where he'll end up...

Matthew 25:41 – *He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*

What is that Satan's spell that no angel could break?

No angel, holy or fallen, could break the seals and end the curse on the earth except for...

Revelation 5:2-5 – *Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it... But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*

Why would Satan laugh with delight for the Tribulation?

The Tribulation will be his day when he will be able to unite the world under his influence and oppress the image of God unhindered. And he will take special delight in orchestrating the end of the American pie.

*And in the streets, the children screamed
The lovers cried and the poets dreamed
But not a word was spoken
The church bells all were broken
And the three men I admire most
The Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost
They caught the last train for the coast
The day the music died*

Why will there be screaming, crying and dreaming during the Tribulation?

It will be a terrible time with the only escape from dreaming.

Where will not a word will be spoken during the Tribulation?

In heaven...

Revelation 8:1 – *When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

How is it the church bells will be broken during the Tribulation?

There will be intense persecution of those who come to trust in Christ. All the churches will be state churches.

Daniel 7:25 – *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.*

Who should we admire most?

Certainly, the *Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost* are three persons to admire most but only the Son is a man.

Will God abandon the people of the earth during the Tribulation?

It will certainly look like the Father, Son and Holy Ghost have abandoned the earth during the Tribulation but only the Holy Spirit departs at the rapture of the church... actually He won't really leave, His ministry of restraining evil will cease which makes it look like He left...

2 Thessalonians 2:7 – *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- The Tribulation will be a terrible time... it is much better to become a Christian now and escape it with the Church.
- God speaks in many ways, even into the culture, and even through rock & roll. But biblical discernment is important