

Judgment on Earth

Isaiah 24:10-23

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If the rapture happens prior to the Tribulation, what is the point in learning about it?

Because, if we are close to the rapture of the church, it explains why things are happening like they are today... the stage is being set for the Tribulation. And Jesus indicated there would be birth pangs as a sign of His soon return (Matthew 24:8).

Isaiah 24:10-16 – The glory of God and the woe of man

¹⁰ The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹ There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.
¹² In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. ¹³ When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.
¹⁴ They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea.
¹⁵ Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

v10 – What is the city of confusion?

Based on the context, this has to be the government of the Antichrist described as Mystery Babylon in Revelation...

Revelation 18:10 – *standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

This may be a literal city from where the Antichrist rules that is destroyed so that *none may go in*.

v11 – Why would there be crying for wine in the streets during the Tribulation?

People will be looking for a way to escape from their reality but there would be no escape. There will be no joy during the Tribulation...

- Mirth means amusement, especially as expressed in laughter... the Tribulation will not be a cheery time

v12-13 – What will become of the government of the Antichrist?

During the Tribulation, God's judgment will bring destruction everywhere. The judgment will be so complete that the cities will look like bare olive trees (*like the shaking of an olive tree*) and grapevines stripped of everything (*like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done*).

How is it desolation characterizes the Tribulation?

The word desolation means a state of complete emptiness or destruction. The Tribulation will have a lot of emptiness and destruction... that is what happens when you execute a depopulation agenda (the global warming true believers will get what they want for a time).

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

v14 – Who will be singing during the Tribulation?

Even in the midst of great judgment, God has His own who will praise Him. Before the Tribulation, God will remove all His people; but many come to trust in Jesus during the Tribulation, and these will praise Him in the midst of judgment (albeit from heaven) ...

Revelation 7:9-14 – *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

What does it mean that God's faithful will cry aloud from the sea during the Tribulation?

The sea in prophetic literature is symbolic of the Gentile nations. And it is clear from Revelation 7:9 that there will be representatives from *all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues* who come to know Jesus as their Savior during the Tribulation.

v15 – What is the dawning light?

Dawn is the beginning of the light of the day, so the dawning light is the beginning of recognizing the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. That is when we should glorify the Lord, from the beginning from recognizing Him.

v16 – Who will be singing glory to the righteous during the Tribulation?

God's people will praise God because even in His judgments, the LORD shows His majesty and glory.

Who will be saying "I am ruined" during the Tribulation?

Those who've been deceived by the agents of Satan, the Antichrist and False Prophet will realize they've cast their lot with the wrong side. These deceivers are the *treacherous dealers*.

Do we have treacherous dealers today?

Yes, there is plenty of ungodly deception going on today as birth pangs. That is why spiritual discernment is so important during these times.

- The church is effectively compromising with the world when they don't expose the evil agenda of today's *treacherous dealers*.

Ephesians 5:11 – *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

Why shouldn't Christians succumb to fear?

The Bible's commands to "fear not" are plentiful and occur in a variety of contexts. God's people should be courageous, not fearful. We have no reason to live in fear.

Proverbs 29:25 – *The fear of man brings a snare*

The fear of God keeps us from sin; the fear of man leads to sin, and that is what we are to avoid.

- The fear we should avoid is concern mixed with anxiety or dread; it is the feeling of alarm we have when we expect trouble or danger.
- Followers of Christ have higher expectations than anxiety from simply anticipating trouble.
- When the Bible tells us, "Do not fear," it means we are not to allow anxiety or fretfulness to rule our lives or take root in our hearts. We are not to be people of panic. We are to be people of faith.

What shouldn't we fear based on these biblical examples?

John 9:22 – *His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.*

The fear of what other people think should never prevent us from obeying the Lord.

Luke 12:6–7 – *Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

We should not fear lacking provision in this world.

Psalm 37:1–2 – *Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

We are not to fear the plans of the wicked, even when they rise to power.

2 Timothy 1:7 – *God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*

A spirit of fearfulness and timidity does not come from God. Sometimes this "spirit of fear" overcomes us, and to overcome it we need to trust in and love God more completely.

1 John 4:18 – *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love*

If, as a child of God, we still fear God's punishment, we have not yet reached the point of maturity in love. To help us be complete in love, God has liberally sprinkled encouragement against fear throughout the Bible.

How is faith and the confidence to face the dangers of life related?

Psalm 91:9-10 – *Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling*

Knowing God and His promises gives us confidence to face whatever can happen to us in this world.

Matthew's account of the resurrection of Christ presents two very different results of that miracle... When the angel descended to the tomb and rolled the stone away, "*the guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint*" (Matthew 28:4, NLT).

The angel let them lie there. But later, the angel spoke to the women who visited the tomb: “*Don’t be afraid! . . . I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead*” (verses 5–6, NLT).

- With one group, God takes away their fear; with the other group, He allows fear to overwhelm them. The difference was one of belief versus unbelief.

How is it perfect love casts out fear per 1 John 4:18?

The context here is important: verse 17 says, “*This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.*”

- The “fear” that perfect love casts out is the fear of God’s judgment. We know that Judgment Day is coming, but those who are in Christ know the love of God, which drives away fear of condemnation.
- The dismissal of the fear of judgment is one of the main functions of God’s love. The person without Christ is under judgment and has plenty to fear (John 3:18), but, once a person is in Christ, the fear of judgment is gone.

Isaiah 24:17-23 – The judgment touches everything

¹⁷ *Fear and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.* ¹⁸ *And it shall be that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who comes up from the midst of the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken.* ¹⁹ *The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly.* ²⁰ *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.*

²¹ *It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.* ²² *They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished.* ²³ *Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously.*

v17 – What will characterize the people on earth during the Tribulation?

- Fear* – this is what the Antichrist will use to control people... we saw that being used effectively during Covid.
- the pit* – This is a reference to the abyss that is the abode of demons that God incarcerated for their egregious actions prior to the flood. It is opened during the Tribulation so that the demons there could torment God’s enemies.

- the snare* – This is the trap that will deceive people into following Satan rather than the Lord God...

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 – *God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

What is significant about the reference to *the inhabitant of the earth* here?

The Book of Revelation makes constant reference to those who dwell on the earth during the Tribulation (Revelation 3:10, 6:10, 11:10, 13:12, 13:14).

- This is in contrast to those who dwell in heaven (Revelation 13:6), who are seated with Jesus in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).
- Referring to the inhabitants of the earth are talking about those whose hope is in the world.

v18 – What does fear lead to?

Fear...pit...snare: Simply put, the judgment of the LORD is inescapable. If you escape the fear, you will fall into the pit. If you escape the pit, you will fall into the snare. God’s judgment has enough back-up plans to catch everyone.

- The only way to escape the judgment of God is to satisfy it, and the only place God’s judgment was ever satisfied was on the cross.
- The images are taken from the different methods of hunting in use during ancient times.

What does it tell us *the windows from on high are open*?

God sees what is happening on earth and indeed, He is in control of what is happening. God often steps aside and lets natural consequences happen as a result of mankind’s evil but that doesn’t mean He isn’t in control.

How is it *the foundations of the earth are shaken*?

During the Tribulation, God will shake everything the inhabitants of the earth trust in... the world system of the Antichrist; political, economic and religious.

v19 – What does it mean *the earth is violently broken and split open*?

The Bible describes some of this judgment during the Tribulation (Revelation 6:13-14), and specifically mentions a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth (Revelation 16:18).

- No wonder Isaiah says, the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard (v20).
- Trying to walk during an earthquake is like a drunkard would walk.

What will be shaken along with the earth during the Tribulation?

Haggai 2:6-7 – *For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations*

The people of all nations on earth will be shaken, Israel included (*the sea and dry land*). Heaven will be shaken because the fallen angels will be banished from the spiritual realm...

Revelation 12:9 – *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

What do you think things will be like when all the fallen angels are banished from the spiritual realm?

Revelation 12:12 – *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.*

It will be hell on earth. This probably happens around the mid-point of the Tribulation based on where it is described in the book of Revelation and the fact that Revelation is presented in chronological order.

Back to Haggai, what is this once more shaking? When was heaven and earth shaken before?

This has to be the flood, the only other time God poured out His wrath on the whole earth. Heaven was shaken at that time because of the fallen angels that were incarcerated in the abyss.

Jude 6 – *the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*

v20 – How is it the earth will fall, and not rise again?

The satanic human system of the Antichrist that is on earth during the Tribulation and before will be totally replaced by the Millennial Kingdom of the Lord.

v21 – Who will the Lord punish during the Tribulation?

The LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones:
One of the more frustrating aspects of life is to see the rich, powerful, and wicked escape the consequences of their sin. But in His judgment during the Tribulation, no one will be able to escape judgment or bribe a politician to come out without being hurt.

Who are the exalted ones that God will punish?

The host of exalted ones refers to rebellious angels that are judged at the end of the age and imprisoned in the pit until the final rebellion at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-10).

v21-22 – What will become of the kings of the earth?

Both the exalted ones and kings of the earth will be *gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit.* Under God's judgment, their status on this earth will buy them nothing. Poetically speaking, even the *moon will be disgraced* and the *sun ashamed* (v23). No degree of earthly greatness, and no degree of heavenly greatness will help ungodly kings or angels on that day.

v23 – How is it the Lord of hosts will reign gloriously?

At the end of the Tribulation, God will usher in a thousand years of His glorious reign over all the earth on Mount Zion (Jerusalem).

- God's purpose in judgment isn't simple vengeance or vindictiveness, it is to bring about a glorious new world.

How is it the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed?

This is a direct reference to what will happen during the Tribulation:

Joel 2:31 – *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

This is also described in John's vision:

Revelation 6:12 – *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

Jesus also spoke of this in His Olivet Discourse...

Matthew 24:29 – *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- Christians have no reason to be fearful, our relationship with Jesus should give us courage.
- God will use the Tribulation to shake up people on earth... it will be much better to be shaken now.