

ON THE RAPTURE AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Question:

WILL GREAT TRIBULATION TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE RAPTURE?

This question is from Sister F.T. in London, asking if Great Tribulation will first take place before the Rapture.

ANSWER:

Glad to hear from you ma.

The teaching that Great Tribulation will take place before the rapture is a misconception that some denominations are teaching. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to have the right understanding of what we read. Some particular Scriptures have different and deeper meanings and it is the Holy Spirit that will guide us accurately.

Rapture will first take place before the Great Tribulation. According to the Book of Luke 17, Rapture will not take place during tribulation and sorrow, but during merriment, false peace and enjoyment. That is the clear cue of when the rapture will take place, and the current situation of the world perfectly fits in. From Luke 17 verse 26, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

That is going to be the condition of the world when rapture will take place. Then He said, " I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." Luke 17:34-3

The teaching of Tribulation before Rapture will only mislead people to think that Rapture cannot take place now, by so thinking, it will make them to feel relax and relent of their expectation for the rapture, thinking that Rapture cannot take place any time now, whereas Jesus Christ told us to expect His Rapture any moment, but since they believe that Great Tribulation will first take place, it will be

impossible for them to believe the warning of Jesus that rapture will take place any moment, because they expect Tribulation before Rapture. That is the extend a little misinterpretation of the Scripture can go. When we misinterpret the Scripture, no matter how small, it will lead to serious error. The question is that what will cause the Great Tribulation to start if not the Rapture? There cannot be Great Tribulation without the Rapture.

There is no such thing in the Bible that children of God suffered with the sinners before God came to save them. Before the flood, God first rescued Noah and his people; before the judgment of God on Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord first rescued Lot and his children, and Jesus Himself said His coming would be exactly like those previous two incidents, so where did the pre-rapture Great tribulation teachers got their teaching from? It's from the pit of hell.

So, we should not wait or worry about Great Tribulation, instead we should prepare for the Rapture which can happen any moment from now. After we are caught up with Christ in heaven through the Rapture, the Left-behind on earth are the people who will face the Great Tribulation of the Anti-Christ.

I hope you understand?

This is from Revelation of Truth Evangelical Ministries, RTEM, Nigeria.

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Be blessed in the mercies of the Lord

Response:

Hello.

Although it is not typically my habit to interfere in other people's teaching, I am doing so here both because I have time on my hands and because this is one of the deadliest lies in the Church visible today.

To begin, I am a believer in Jesus Christ committed to following Him according to the Bible.

We'll begin at Luke 17, the passage that you drew on.

[29]but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

[30]It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

[31]On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.

[32]Remember Lot's wife.

[33]Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Luke 17:29-33 NASB

The above includes two verses that you also quoted but ignored in your answer. Clearly, the issue wasn't merely that it was a time of merriment but that it was in the midst of reckless enjoyment that judgment came upon the unsuspecting. This was the parallel that the Lord gave us for His Return.

Throughout the New Testament including passages like 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (especially verse 3 there), Matthew 24:3-31 (especially verse 29 there), Luke 21:7-28, Revelation 12:17, Revelation 13:7-18, (especially verses 7 and 10), and in many Old Testament passages like Daniel 11-12 (especially 11:33, 12:7), the Bible teaches without mincing words that believers have a major time of persecution coming **before** the Lord returns to resurrect the entire Church from Adam and Eve to the last person to believe in Him before His Return, and to claim the world as His to rule.

In Luke 17, the Lord compressed His teaching just like the archangel who brought an answer to Daniel did in Daniel 11:24 as well. The time of prosperous tranquility is the same time that the Lord was alluding to in Luke 17:26-28 and that Paul was speaking of in 1 Thessalonians 5:3. It is the six months of quietness that John was given to see in his vision in Revelation 8:1. It is called "half an hour" in that

verse in prophetic language. During that time, the world will be in great quietness and prosperity, so that only those who take the Bible seriously will actually be ready for what will follow.

It is during that prosperity and quietness that the Antichrist will begin his sneaky campaign to take over the world as Daniel 11:24 teaches. He will take power first in Tribulational Babylon then (the richest parts of the realm). From there he will take power over the territories that once constituted Rome. Then he will launch his campaign for global domination subduing Africa and the Middle East (the South) before going East.

At the end of those six months, before the Antichrist has taken power over the whole world, the seven warning judgments (described as the seven trumpets in Revelation) will begin. These judgments are to warn the unbelieving world against siding with the Antichrist. So, of course, they will not harm believers at all. It is not that believers will be completely immune to the effects of that judgment, no. We will not be immune. For example, when the second trumpet causes those massive tsunamis that will destroy a third of the world's shipping, we may very well lose any commerce that we had tied up with such shipping, but we will not starve then because of it. The Lord will provide abundantly then for all who trust in Him, although He has warned us:

[20]Come, my people, enter into your rooms
And close your doors behind you;
Hide for a little while
Until indignation runs its course.

[21]For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for
their iniquity;
And the earth will reveal her bloodshed
And will no longer cover her slain.

Isaiah 26:20-21 NASB

And we should heed what He said to Baruch too in a similar time:

[2]"Thus says the Lord the God of Israel to you, O Baruch:

[3]'You said, "Ah, woe is me! For the Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning and have found no rest."

[4]Thus you are to say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Behold, what I have built I am about to tear down, and what I have planted I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land."

[5]But you, are you seeking great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I am going to bring disaster on all flesh,' declares the Lord, 'but I will give your life to you as booty in all the places where you may go.'"

Jeremiah 45:2-5 NASB

The Tribulation will begin with these warnings. We believers should actually rejoice because that is the beginning of the Day of the Lord. It is the most definite signal that we are about to see our Lord return in power not only to resurrect us but to destroy Satan's rule over the world and replace it with His Own. This is exactly what the Lord tells us in Matthew 24:33 and in Luke 21:28:

[28]But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Luke 21:28 NASB

It is during these warnings from the Lord that the Antichrist will be taking over the world through war and through subterfuge. His rule over the world will be fully established by the midpoint of the Tribulation, that is, three and a half years into the Tribulation. It is at that point that he will begin to seriously and enthusiastically persecute believers. Nowhere in the Bible is it taught that believers will already have been "raptured" by then, nor is there any teaching in the Bible about any kind of rapture (*pace* wrong interpretations of 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

What the Bible teaches is Resurrection, that is, the bodily change of all those who believe in Jesus Christ from mortality to immortality. Those who have died or will die before the Lord Jesus returns will be raised from the dead with new powerful bodies just like the one that our Lord already has now, then those who are alive at His Return will be changed in their bodies to become just like the Lord too. Then we will all assemble to Him in the air where He is waiting. Right after that, we will enter the final battle of Armageddon with Him where He will destroy all the world's human forces led by the Antichrist to destroy Israel, while we resurrected believers then will wipe out all rebel angel forces arrayed against the Lord.

But this will all come after the last three and a half years of worldwide persecution that will be carried out against believers with a third of all believers living at that time killed for their Faith, and another third seduced or threatened into falling away into apostasy because of the times, and a final third living to see the Lord return in His Second Advent (Daniel 8:10; Revelation 12:4, Zechariah 13:8-9). It is that

persecution that will occasion the seven punitive judgments that Revelation calls the seven bowl judgments. At the end of those judgments, the Lord will return to fight the battle of Armageddon. That Return is His Second Coming. And it is also at that Return, as I have said, that we will be resurrected to be with Him forever.

In conclusion, there is not a single part of the Bible that teaches at all that there will be a rapture much less that such a rapture would precede the Great Tribulation. The seven-year Tribulation including the Great Tribulation of three and a half years when believers will be horribly persecuted worldwide is the prophetic threshold of our Lord's Return and our Resurrection to rule over the restored Earth for a thousand years.

Finally, when you say that teaching that the Rapture follows the Tribulation will make believers relax and not be ready, you are joining in a two-century-old lie. It is not true at all. It is actually the opposite that is true. When believers think that they have been exempted from the Tribulation, it tells them to be lazy about their Faith. After all, they will be caught up and taken away from all the horror that will come upon the world. What then is their concern except to go to church religiously and try to be nice people? Here is the Truth:

We are called to learn everything that the Bible teaches and to live according to it and to help others who are willing to learn it too. This is how we build the spiritual backbone to face down all of the troubles of this life that oppose our faith. Whether we live to see the Tribulation or not, we will all experience personal tribulations in our lives as tests of our faith (Acts 14:22; 1 Peter 1:6-7). The seven-year Tribulation is a most horrendous time, no doubt, but it is really just what all believers experience at various points in their individual lives, only this time it is on a global scale embracing an entire Church era, that is, the Laodicean Church. We cannot escape Tribulation, certainly not by being believers, even if we are nice ones who go to church every Sunday. Tribulation is our business. It is a huge part of why we are still on Earth after we believe. After we have believed in Jesus Christ, our faith must grow and be tested. If we take the pains of growing our faith, we will come through our tests stronger and glowing like gold that is precious in the sight of our God. If we don't, we may lose even what faith we do have, when we are tested. Therefore, knowing that the seven-year Tribulation will precede the Resurrection will tell any sensible believer to get cracking on the job of spiritual growth and ministry. It is not nearly an easy thing to grow up spiritually when your enemy is throwing everything and the kitchen sink at you. The Tribulation is not a pleasant time to get serious about spiritual growth. That is why as much as a third of the true Church will be lost to apostasy at that time. Many believers will not make it because the pressure will prove too much for them. Another third will be tested right up to the point of giving up their physical lives just to prove that the Lord Jesus is more important to them than their very own lives. For those who live to see the very end of the Tribulation and our Lord's glorious return, you can imagine what sorrow and pain they must endure until that time. So, no, it is not true that teaching the Truth in

this case will cause anybody to relax. In fact, it makes those who aren't serious about their Faith to simply turn away and follow after the lies they please, while those who are willing to grow will get serious very quickly.

PS.:

I think that it is necessary to add that the whole business of not knowing when the Lord will come for us is occasioned in the Bible by the fact that the precise day and hour of the Lord's Return is kept from all creation (Zechariah 14:6-7). So, even at the end of the Tribulation, *especially* at the end of the Tribulation, believers will need to stay ready because the precise moment of the Lord's Return is unknown.

Keep in mind that the last moments of the Tribulation will be a time when all the world's armies are on the verge of destroying the Third Temple and Jerusalem. Many believers will be in Israel then, having fled from Tribulational Babylon before it is destroyed by the Antichrist. The pressure then will be so intense and the outlook so bleak that it will take strong faith in the Lord to continue to wait for the Lord. It will take such faith too to not fall into any trap that the Lord has come when He hasn't. As the pressure grows, and the seven years look like they're already up, but the Lord is still not back, it will grow easier to be discouraged or to be deceived into following a false Savior in the hope that he will deliver us from the marauding forces right outside the door at the time. It will take tremendous faith then to continue to wait for the Lord's Deliverance no matter what.

When the precise Day of His Return arrives, His actual Return will be unmistakable even if still surprising because the exact moment is unknown. He will rip apart the sky like lightning, and descend with a shout and the sound of the trumpet calling for the assembly of all resurrected believers to Him.

This is what the Lord has told us so that we will not be deceived at that time by any false Messiahs.