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The Approaching Tribulation

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

By Mike Wingfield

In the last few newsletters, I have tried to help us understand that our nation and world are being transformed in preparation for the events that will transpire during the Tribulation Period. I am convinced very few people really understand what will unfold during the Tribulation. I pray that God will use this article to open your eyes to a bibli-

cal understanding of what is coming. We will not be here for the Tribulation. But we need to be concerned for those who will be left behind.

Before we begin to examine what the Bible says about the approaching Tribulation, there is one very important matter we must consider – Who is God? If our minds and hearts are not focused upon what the Bible says about God, then we will reject or struggle with what the Bible

teaches about the Tribulation Period. An awesome reverence of God is the bedrock foundation of biblical faith. The Bible declares, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).

The Bible speaks about our God in terms that sometimes seem to be contradictory. God loves, yet He hates. The Bible speaks of God's salvation, but also His condemnation. He is a God of mercy and wrath. He blesses some people and curses others. How can we reconcile all of this? The answer is found in the chief attribute of God —

His holiness. God is morally, intellectually infinitely good in all of His will, His ways, and His words. He is faithful. He will do what He promises. God says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Romans 12:19).

Because God is holy, He hates all sin. He has warned us that He does not and will not ignore sin. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give

account therefore in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). God has promised that individuals will have their day in court with Him. They will give an account of their life. [If you are interested in more details on this judg-



ment, order my book: <u>Your Judgment Day – the Most Important Day of Your Life.</u>]

However, that is not where God's judgment ends and begins. The Bible teaches that God judges cities, nations, and cultures **in this life**. That is why He judged the world in Noah's day, the Tower of Babel, and Sodom and Gomorrah. The Bible promises that at the end of this age, God will judge all nations. This period of time is called, "The Tribulation." Let us examine what the Bible says about this unique period of time that is coming in the future.

The Names of the Tribulation

The significance of the Tribulation is revealed in the titles that the Holy Spirit has given to it in the Bible. Listed below are only a few of these titles.

The Tribulation- The most popular and frequent title of this period is the one given to it by our Lord in His Olivet Discourse. He called it the "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21). Jesus has promised all believers they will have some degree of tribulation in this world (John 16:33). However, in the context of Jesus' discourse in Matthew, it is clear that He was referencing this period of unprecedented global troubles and sorrows. The Greek word for tribulation is thilipsis, which means affliction, anguish due to pressure, or a time of great distress. It is the picture of a person being caught in a deadly trap. The mental anguish is extraordinary to a person, because they do not see a way of escape. Ultimately, they believe this trap will lead to their death. In Luke's record of this same discourse by Jesus, he adds that Jesus described this as a time, when "men's hearts [will be] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26).

The Day of the Lord's Vengeance- Isaiah 34:8; 61:2

In the context of Scripture, this speaks of the future element of time to be considered, and especially the coming day of the Lord's revelation when He returns to earth in all of His holy anger. God has promised that He will bring vengeance against all sin (Romans 12:19). We live in a world where people think that God will not defend His holy honor, His people, His law, or His land. Psalm 10:6, 10, declares that the wicked has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved: for I shall be in adversity. ... God hath forgotten: he hides his face, he will never see it."

God is storing up His vengeance. When He unleashes it, it will be the culmination of His holy justice to man's defiant disobedience and rebellion.



The Year of Recompenses for the Controversy of Zion-Isaiah 34:8

It is abundantly clear from Scripture that the Lord will judge the nations on the basis of how they have treated His people – the Jews, the nation of Israel, and the Promised Land (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 25:31-46). The Bible indicates that the hatred against God's people is motivated by Satan and his demons (Revelation 12:1-17). The recurring and constant plague of anti-Semitism will culminate in the Tribulation Period and surpass anything the nation of Israel, or any other nation, has endured in all of human history (Daniel 12:1). The climax of the world's hatred against Israel will be expressed at Armageddon (Joel 3:1-3). The Tribulation Period will be God's ultimate fulfillment of His pledge to curse all those who have cursed His people.

The Year of My Redeemed- Isaiah 63:4

This title of the unique Tribulation Period speaks of one of God's major purposes for it. The entire period will be a time when God heals the spiritual blindness of Israel, and millions of Jews will be saved. Moses and Elijah will return to proclaim the gospel to their people and display the power of God (Revelation 11:3-6). As a result, 144,000 young Jewish men will be saved (Revelation 7:1-8). The Lord will pour out His Spirit upon His people and spiritual deliverance will take place in Jerusalem (Joel 2:27-32). The final living remnant of the Tribulation will be saved on the day of Christ's revelation. They will look upon Him whom "they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him" (Zechariah 12:10). They will see the nail scars in His hands and ask, "What are these wounds in your hands?" (Zechariah 13:6) The Lord will answer, "Those

with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zechariah 13:6). Every living Jew who has not yet repented will do so at that moment. And, the entire nation will consist of born-again believers, prepared for the Kingdom of God. This will be the day when the "LORD binds up the breach of his people, and heals the stroke of their wound" (Isaiah 30:26). Jeremiah 33:8 gives this promise of God to Israel, "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me: and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me."

The Indignation- Isaiah 26:20

The word indignation speaks of God's rage, anger, and fury. This entire period of time should be seen as a time when the wrath (fury) of God will be poured out upon the wicked inhabitants of earth (Isaiah 13:9, 13; Isaiah 63:1-6; Revelation 6:17). It is chilling when a person considers the awesome fury that will be expressed by Almighty God. He will summons all the forces of power within His creation to execute His vengeance. The sheer magnitude of God's fury goes beyond the comprehension of man's finite and depraved mind.

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The Time of the Tribulation Period

The Tribulation Period will follow the rapture of the church. It will prepare the world spiritually and physically for what will follow the God's eternal plan – the Millennial Kingdom. The Tribulation is the same seven-year period that is designated as the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27). In this amazing prophecy, God told Daniel that in His plan there would be a group of 70 sevens of years, or 490 years, that would precede the kingdom of God. This period of time was focused upon Israel and her capital city, Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24). God told Daniel that 69 of these sevens of years, a total of 483 years, would elapse, and then "shall Messiah be cut off" (Daniel 9:26). Exactly 483 years later, just as God had predicted, Jesus pre-

sented Himself to Israel on Palm Sunday, and when they rejected Him, the prophetic clock in heaven stopped! The remaining seven years, the 70th week, is the same as the Tribulation Period.

According to Daniel, this final seven years will begin when the Antichrist confirms a false covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). Furthermore, this evil global leader will break his covenant at the mid-point of the seven-year covenant. All of this agrees with the New Testament teaching of the apostles.

On the last day of this seven-year period, the Antichrist will lead an all-out assault on Israel, attacking the city of Jerusalem will all of his might (Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-3). The Antichrist and all of his army will be supernaturally defeated by Jesus at the battle of Armageddon, as He returns in all of His glory at His revelation (Isaiah 34:1-8; 63:1-6; Zechariah 14:3, 12-15; Revelation 19:15-21).

The Uniqueness of the Tribulation Period

The seven-year Tribulation Period is totally unique. There has never been a time like this in the history of the nations. For thousands of years our world has lived in the age of God's grace. This time is about to come to abrupt end. The Tribulation Period will be an age of the wrath of God. Our world and its global culture will reach a spiritual point of no return. As in the days of Noah, the world will reach a point where God's Spirit will stop striving in the consciences of men. We see this happening When this happens, God judicially turns that culture over to its path of destruction to suffer the consequences of sin. This society is described in Romans 1:18-32. The Bible says it becomes godless and filled with ruthless violence. Immoral, brutality, and sheer hatred are the other hallmarks of such a society.

When men constantly flaunt their rebellion and flagrantly ignore the warnings of their conscience, the conscience is silenced. It is as is it were "seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). In essence, they have no conscience and they become unredeemable. They become like wild beasts and live immorally wicked and violent lives. Without the possibility of repentance and divine restoration, God's only choice is to exercise divine judgment. [For an expanded explanation of this, read my book, Living in a World with No Conscience.]

The human mind cannot begin to fathom the horrors of the Tribulation Period. Speaking of this time frame, Daniel said, "... there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ..." (Daniel 12:1). Jesus said, "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 be no flesh saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:21-22).

The emotional trauma to man during this will surpass all generations from the beginning of time. The suffering, pain, anguish, anxiety, stress, and depression will be more than the inhabitants of earth can bear. There will be constant wars, acts of terrorism, and deadly violence. The entire world will suffer great devastation due to a myriad of natural disasters - earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, and famines. These cataclysmic upheavals will be made worse by other disasters caused by radical climate change. All buildings will be destroyed, including homes, hospitals, churches, and schools. Transportation systems will cease to exist, along with the utilities we rely on daily. The food chain will be destroyed and there will be no emergency systems. An overwhelming sense of hopelessness will pervade the globe. Spiritual darkness will permeate all communities. Lies, deception, fraud, stealing, and the breakdown of all law and order will become a common and daily occurrence everywhere. Evil will rule over good. The righteous will be hated, persecuted and martyred by decapitation. A one-world government and a global religion controlled by the Antichrist will be demonically motivated.

As this generation experiences the task of daily living with the immense growing death toll, it will be overwhelmed with the thought of being caught in a deadly trap with no means of escape. By the mid-point of the Tribulation, one-half of the global population will be dead. The task of burying the death will become mentally and physically taxing. Finally, people will cease to bury the dead (Isaiah 26:21). In their mind, everyone will seemingly be doomed to die. Isaiah described this time when he said, "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. ... And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison" (Isaiah 24:17, 22).

The Nature of the Tribulation Period

I must confess that the study of this future time is something that greatly troubles me. The human mind does not want to consider such horrific matters. I am utterly stunned that our loving and merciful God has given us such detail about the approaching Tribulation Period. All of these truths about the nature of the Tribulation are warnings to man from the heart of a gracious God. It is sad that we live at a time when most pastors do not preach on hell or the Tribulation Period. Their silence is not golden. It is a sin. God warned Noah of the approaching flood so that he and his family might be saved from the wrath that was about to come. God has told us of the Tribulation Period so that we might warn this generation to flee from the wrath that is coming. Where are the voices of warning?

The Tribulation Period should be viewed as the final phase of a war within the spiritual realm. ... It is a war between the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Jesus) and the roaring lion from hell (Satan).

Contemplate these verses:

Jeremiah 10:10- "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation."

Isaiah 13:6-9- "Howl ye, for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travails: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

The Tribulation Period should be viewed as the final phase of a war within the spiritual realm. The Scriptures, from as far back as the fall in the Garden of Eden, speak of this war between the good and evil angels. It is a war between the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Jesus) and the roaring lion from hell (Satan). At the mid-point of the

Tribulation, this war will reach its climax in heaven. Read Revelation 12:7-10. Satan and his demons will be cast out of heaven forever. Consequently, he will concentrate his war effort against God by escalating his attack upon Israel and all of the godly inhabitants on earth. At this point, the Holy Spirit caused John to give this terrifying warning, "Woe to the inhibiters of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

The inhabitants of earth will be caught in the middle of this war in the spiritual realms. The wrath of God will be poured out upon the earth. In addition to this, Satan is adding his wrathful and desperate attack upon all that is meaningful to the Lord. From Satan's perspective as a murderer (John 8:44) and destroyer (Revelation 9:11), he does not care about human beings, especially those who are saved. He will especially attack the future generation of Jewish believers that will fulfill the eternal plans of God during the Tribulation (Revelation 12:13-17). Satan will view the inhabitants of earth as worthless pawns in his war against God.

Let us briefly examine the nature of the Tribulation.

Spiritually - The Tribulation will be a time of great spiritual darkness. While speaking about the Tribulation, Isaiah wrote, "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah 60:2). Like the time before the global flood in Noah's generation, the world will be completely shrouded in spiritual darkness. Here is God's indictment of Noah's generation, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:5, 11-12). Remember that Jesus said, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37).

The Bible tells us that, during the Tribulation, the world population will be in love with sin, wickedness, and immorality, while resisting God's Word (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). Violence, murder, and war will escalate out of control (Revelation 6:2-4). People will be openly defiant,

with disorderly conduct, and attempt to overthrow their government because they are lawless (Psalm 2:1). They will want to be free from any restraints that restrict their evil desires. Therefore, they choose to rid themselves of God, His Son, and His commandments (Psalm 2:2-3). Not only do they rebel against God, but they openly and defiantly worship demons and other materialistic idols (Revelation 9:20). They passionately resist the truth, and "Igivel heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). They will be consumed with the occult and mind-altering drugs (Revelation 9:21). They hate what God loves, and love what God hates. They will become the perfect tools for Satan in his war against God.

Demons are always looking for a person to inhabit as described above. Demons want to take control of a person and enslave him to become a pawn they can use to advance their kingdom of darkness in their opposition to God. One of the demons' chief ways to gain control over the lives of people is to appeal to their sensual appetites (James 3:15). Both history and the Bible demonstrate that demons destroy cultures and nations by seducing people into perversions of immorality (Romans 1:24-27). The remains of ancient depraved civilizations that suffered the judgment of God are littered with pornographic images and statues.

The Bible declares that demons and their leader, Satan, will capture the allegiance of the leaders of the world. Demons will deceive these global leaders to hate Israel and believers in Jesus, and to seek for their demise.

The Bible also declares that demons and their leader, Satan, will capture the allegiance of the leaders of the world (**Revelation 17:2; 18:3**). Demons will deceive these global leaders to hate Israel and believers in Jesus, and to seek for their demise (**Revelation 12:13-17; 13:7; 17:6**).

Finally, at the mid-point, Satan will indwell the Antichrist to personally direct his hellish kingdom on earth to its climax at Armageddon (**Revelation 13:1-7**).

<u>Politically</u> – During the Tribulation, the world will openly embrace a one-world government that will be radically

controlled by a religion. This religion will have a great impact on the leaders of the world and their economies (Revelation 17:2; 18:3). This religion is known as "mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots [religions] and abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5). In Revelation 17-18, the Apostle John quotes from Isaiah 13, 47 and Jeremiah 50-51. These Scriptures point to a religion centered in the Persian Gulf area of the Middle East. I believe that the overwhelming evidence in these two chapters point to the religion of Islam. [Although Islam followed the book of Revelation by almost 500 years, this religion is really a revival of an ancient religion under the banner of the crescent moon that permeated the Middle East for 700 years before Christ.] John symbolically pictures the harlot riding the beast (Revelation 17:3), which indicates that this religion will control the beast, who is the Antichrist. This would mean that he would also be a Muslim. There is a reason why Islam is currently thought to be the fastest-growing religion in the world. This religion has great control over many world leaders, and within the United Nations. The Antichrist's hatred for Israel and believers in Jesus is driven by the same hatred of the religion that controls him. Both of them will kill believers by decapitation (Revelation 17:6; 20:4).

Economically - When governments and people attempt to manage the resources that God has given them, while rejecting Him, it will always lead to the loss of those resources. The Bible says, "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man spends it up" (Proverbs 21:20).

The Tribulation Period will open with a time of global hyperinflation (Revelation 6:5-6). The uniqueness of lifethreatening global developments will quickly lead to one of the most devastating economic disasters of all time. According to the Bible, wars, radical climate change, alarming natural disasters, pandemics, and a global drought during the first half of the Tribulation will produce an economic nightmare. The most precious commodities on earth will be fresh water and food. All of these problems will intensify with government intervention into the personal affairs of the global population. Then, at the peak of man's desperation, the Antichrist will introduce his 666 plan to control the economy of every person on the planet. This will occur at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Revelation 13:11-18). His plan will be used as a

measure of everyone's commitment to his declared divinity and ruthless control. Those who refuse to accept his policies will become enemies of the state and they will be hunted down and eliminated. Revelation 13:10 probably hints that the Antichrist will place those who rebel against him in some type of concentration camp and ultimately behead them (Revelation 20:4). At the top of his list to be eliminated will be believers in Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7; 17:6).

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Climatically - According to the Bible, increased solar radiation (Revelation 16:8-9), alarming destructive global earthquakes and volcanoes (Revelation 6:12-14), and man's reckless destruction of God's resources (Revelation 11:18) will bring about a very dangerous rise in global temperatures. [God controls the sun and the geological upheavals – not man. Man will not be able to stop the radical climate change that will occur during the Tribulation Period. God has His hand on earth's thermostat, not man!]

Many passages testify to the great heat that will be a part of God's divine judgment during the Tribulation (Malachi 4:1; Revelation 16:8-9). The heat will be so intense that it will melt the polar caps (Job 38:22-23). The water from the huge amounts of melted polar ice will cause ocean levels to rise and flood coastal areas around the globe. The late Henry Morris, who was the founder and director of the Institute for Creation Research, stated this will cause ocean levels to rise about 200 feet. This would lead to flooding of all the leading major cities of the world that are located near the ocean to be suddenly underwater, inundating them so they would not be habitable (Henry M. Morris, The Revelation Record, p. 304).

In addition to this, near the beginning of the Tribulation, the Lord will supernaturally restrain the jet streams around the globe that control the world's water cycle (**Revelation** 7:1-3). Without these powerful winds, there will be no rain. This will be the cause of the global drought during the first half of the Tribulation (**Revelation 11:6**).

Geologically - One of the main instruments of God's wrath poured out upon the wicked inhabitants of earth during the global flood was a massive global earthquake. God told Noah, "Behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13). The Lord is in complete control of His creation. The various components that make up the physical creation are the servants of God that accomplish His word (Psalm 148:8). A study of all of the earthquakes mentioned in the Bible, indicate they are perfectly timed to accomplish God's purposes. In the days of Noah, God opened up the earth, allowing the eruption of subterranean waters to gush upon the earth for 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:11, 8:2).

Once again, during the Tribulation, God will use the geological domino impact of earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis to bring colossal destruction upon the earth, and to reshape the topography [land surfaces] of the earth. Jesus said that one of the signs of the approaching Tribulation Period would be the increase of earthquakes in frequency and magnitude in different places (Luke 21:11). According to the prophetic Scriptures, there will be at least three global earthquakes (Ezekiel 38:19-20; Revelation 6:12-14; 16:18-20). The earthquake mentioned in Revelation 6, near the beginning of the Tribulation will cause, "every mountain and island [to be] moved out of their places" (verse 14). In the final earthquake in Revelation 16, the islands and mountains disappear (verse 20). These earthquakes will radically alter man's daily lifestyle due to the complete destruction and disruption of all of the modernday conveniences that we are dependent upon to sustain life.

The Church in Heaven

During the Tribulation on earth, the church will be in

heaven (Revelation 3:10). We will be in heaven watching everything unfold from the control center (God's throne). The book of Revelation showcases all of this. In the final book of the Bible, the church in heaven is symbolically depicted as 24 elders. Throughout the Tribulation, this redeemed group of people are described as kings and priests who have been redeemed to God "by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And has made [them] unto [their] God kings and priests: and [they] shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

Throughout the Tribulation, we will join the angels of heaven in anthems of praise and adoration as our God unleashes His holy wrath against the nations in preparation for His approaching kingdom on earth. Read about our future praise services in heaven in **Revelation 5:9-14**; 11:15-19; and 19:1-8. After the first 6-seal judgments, our praise in heaven will fall silent as we will, in awe, anticipate the 7th seal judgment to be thrust upon the earth (**Revelation 8:1-2**). Finally, after our marriage feast in heaven as the Bride of Christ, we will return with Him "upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (**Revelation 19:14**).

At His revelation, Christ will complete His final destruction of the kingdoms of this world. All of the rebellious leaders of the world, including the antichrist and his false prophet, will be killed. The armies of all the nations gathered in Israel will be supernaturally slain by the spoken word of the King of kings and Lord of Lords. God will have completed His judgment against the nations and will enthrone His Son upon the throne of David in Jerusalem to rule over all of His creation.

This article is one of the chapters in the next book Mike will soon publish, **Your Future in God's Eternal Plan**. Watch for details next month.

Mike's Speaking Schedule

Mike is currently scheduling prophetic conferences (either on-site, Zoom, or available as prerecorded DVD messages) for late spring or later in 2021. Call him if you are interested in scheduling a prophetic conference or seminar. Due to the continued risk of COVID-19, Mike has decided not to travel until he and his family feel it is safe. He hopes that he will be able to resume a limited schedule for on-site conferences. For any changes or updates, check out our website- www.ptnews.org.

March 4, Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Church	1-540-798-5110
March 18, Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Clearbrook Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110
April 1, Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Church	1-540-798-5110
April 15, Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Clearbrook Baptist Church	1-540-798-5110