

God's End-times Grace: Tribulation and Wrath!

By Rich Jacobs, MD

1. War, famine, disease, pestilence, destruction, anarchy, cruelty, persecution, and tyranny characterize the final days of man's time of earth. These include the Great Tribulation.
 - a. The first five seals from Revelation give more specific details about this time of great trouble.
 - i. Seal 1: Tyranny - The "Conqueror" arises, felt by many to be Antichrist (**Revelation 6:2**)
 - ii. Seal 2: War - Global war waged by the Conqueror (**Revelation 6:3, 4**)
 - iii. Seal 3: Famine - Food shortages and price inflation because of war and chaos (**Revelation 6:5, 6**)
 - iv. Seal 4: Satan's Incarnation - Who now kills people with the sword, starvation, and by wild beasts (**Revelation 6:7, 8**)
 - v. Seal 5: The Great Tribulation - (**Revelation 6: 9-11**) This is the Great Tribulation, spoken of by Jesus, that would destroy all Believers if God did not cut it short.

"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." **Matthew 24:21, 22**

- b. Demonic-controlled men, not God, cause the calamities of the terrible Seals Event; God uses them for His gracious purposes, however.

*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. . . always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. . . But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **2 Timothy 3:1-5, 7, 13***

*Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." . . . But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. **2 Peter 3:1, 2, 7***

- c. The testimony and deeds of the Church are a major channel for God's grace in the end-times.
 - i. Times of great wickedness and impurity require a powerful testimony of Christ's love. This is the purpose of the Martyrs of the Great Tribulation - God's grace!

*And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. **Revelation 12:11***

**** (Note: See **1 Peter 4** for God's instructions that target the end-times Church in the midst of tribulation persecution and suffering.) ****

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- ii. Unbelievers will have until the final moments during the "Seals Trouble" to repent and believe in Christ.

*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. **2 Peter 3:9, 10***

*A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness. . . .
Before them the earth quakes,
The heavens tremble,
The sun and the moon grow dark
And the stars lose their brightness.
The LORD utters His voice before His army;
Surely His camp is very great,
For strong is he who carries out His word.
The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome,
And who can endure it? . . .
Let the bridegroom come out of his room
And the bride out of her bridal chamber. . .
And it will come about that a
whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved . . . Joel 2:2, 11, 16, 32*

- (I) Compare the events described in **Joel 2** with the events of the Seal 6 (Revelation 6:11-17), which describes the when Christ will come with all His Holy Ones to resurrect and rapture the saints (see **Matthew 24:27-31**).
- (II) Even as these terrifying events transpire, "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" up unto the last minute as Christ appears. But grace to the gentiles may end with the Sixth Seal and Christ's return to rescue the Church. When grace ends, it is time for judgment.
 - (a) It seems no one repents during the Trumpet Judgments, in spite of their awesome horror. (**Revelation 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11**)
 - (b) Following the Rapture of the Church, only the Remnant of Israel seems to be redeemed, as outlined in the events of **Revelation 12**.
- (III) NOTE: Although **Joel 2:32** is spoken to Israel in the context of her salvation, Paul makes it clear that this promise from God also extends to the gentiles (see **Romans 10:13**).
- (IV) It takes God allowing the great wickedness of the end times trouble to define a stark contrast between good and evil so that unbelieving men might, if possible, choose the good and be saved. This is divine grace.
- (V) It takes the Great Tribulation and martyrdom of the saints to purify the Bride of Christ for the Coming of the Bride Groom and to provide a powerful witness to a wicked and corrupt final generation. This, too, is divine grace.
- (VI) Only when these purposes in God's plan have been completed, does God turn his grace away from the unbelieving gentile world to focus on the godly, but as-yet, unbelieving Remnant of Israel. (see **Romans 11**)

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(VII) The Church is spared God's wrath by Christ (**1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9. Romans 5:0**)

- d. The 7th Seal (**Revelation 8:1**) is broken only after the "Remnant of Israel" has been divinely marked (**Revelation 7:1-8**) for survival during the last 42 months (3.5 years) of the end times. This occurs only after the Bride of Christ has been delivered by the Bridegroom from annihilation. The 7th Seal defines a brief interlude before God's wrath begins.
2. At the time of the 7th Seal, Antichrist will attempt to exterminate the Remnant of Israel. This Remnant flees to a place called "Azal (**Zechariah 14:5**), where it is divinely protected from Antichrist for 42 months (3.5 years).
 - a. It will take divine wrath in the form of Exodus-type plagues and the witnesses of a Moses and an Elijah to get the Remnant of Israel to repent and accept Christ as their Messiah.
 - i. Israel has a multi-millennia-long history of persecution and pogroms from the gentiles. The trouble of the Great Tribulation will not be enough to shake their unbelief.
 - ii. The first 6 Trumpet Judgments (**Revelation 8:2-9**) take place during the last year or two of the final seven years of time. They begin when the Scroll of God's Wrath (**Revelation 5:1**) is opened, after the 7th Seal has been broken, which is after the resurrection and rapture of the saints (6th Seal).
 - iii. These Trumpet Judgments execute God's wrath on a wicked, reprobate gentile world (**Revelation 12**).
 - (I) These supernatural Trumpet Judgments will remind the Remnant of Israel of God's intervention on their behalf in Egypt (**Exodus 7-11**), almost 2000 years before Christ.
 - (II) The Remnant of Israel will not experience the Trumpet Judgement while they reside in Azal. The rest of the world will feel the full brunt of God's wrath. In the same way, while in Egypt, Israel was spared the brunt of the divine plagues against the Egyptians (**Exodus 8:22; 9:4, 11, 26; 10:23**).
 - (III) Recall that Pharaoh was an antichrist-like figure who tried to exterminate the Jews during the days of Moses (**Exodus 1:15, 16**). The correlation with the end-times Antichrist will not be lost on Israel.
 - b. It will take the testimony and witness of a Moses and an Elijah to persuade the Remnant of Israel that Jesus is the Messiah. There is good evidence that this takes place!
 - i. Scripture explicitly states that God will send Elijah to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord (**Malachi 4:5**). The context of this verse is clearly eschatological. Christ Himself confirms this (**Mark 9:12**).
 - ii. Both Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1-5**). Christ appeared in His glorified state at this time.
 - c. Two prophets will oppose Antichrist in Jerusalem during the last three and a half years before Christ's Second Coming (**Revelation 11**).
 - i. They will be the men who call down the Trumpet Judgments on Antichrist and his kingdom (**Revelation 11:6**), even as Moses did in ancient Egypt.

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- ii. Although they actively speak out against Antichrist, he will not be able to do them any harm (**Revelation 11:5**), just as Moses could speak against Pharaoh with impunity, even in his presence.
- iii. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Remnant of Israel will prayerfully trust in Moses and Elijah to deliver them from Antichrist, just as Moses had delivered Israel from Pharaoh and Elijah prevailed against the false prophets and idols (**1 Kings 18**).
- iv. When both witnesses are finally killed in Jerusalem (**Revelation 11:7-10**), the world parties but the Remnant of Israel, their last apparent hope dashed,
 - (I) Israel will go into great mourning, humbling themselves with sackcloth, ashes, and fasting. They will seek the Scriptures and God will open their eyes so that they realize they crucified their Lord and Messiah. (**Zechariah 12:9-14**)
 - (II) On the third day of repentance, fasting, and prayer, Jesus Christ will appear before the Remnant of Israel as their Lord and Messiah (**Hosea 6:2**). Israel will finally have emerged from her unbelief and disobedience, even as Jonah did from the whale on the third day!
 - (III) Because of Antichrist, God's Trumpet plagues, the Jerusalem witnesses (probably Moses and Elijah), all Israel finally is saved, as Paul prophesied! (**Romans 11:26**).

