

THE TRIBULATION

Jesus is coming back soon! God has prepared an exit for His people; however, we will miss it if we aren't watching for it. As such, we should study what God said would happen in the last days so we can watch and prepare.

eschatology: *the study of the end times*

What is the tribulation?

- Basic: A period of great suffering which will signal the return of Christ (Matthew 24:29-31).
- One Step Deeper: two 3.5 year periods God will use to: 1) put an end to sin and 2) bring about righteousness in the last days—essentially to make the wrong things right (Daniel 9:24-27, 12:1-13; Revelation 11:1-3, 13:5).

Will the church go through the tribulation?

pre-trib: *the belief that the church will be raptured prior to the tribulation period*

post-trib: *the belief that the church will be raptured after the tribulation period*

- Basic: Yes, but God will keep you! (Luke 21:35-36)
- One Step Deeper: the Bible supports a clear chronology of events that must take place before, during, and after the tribulation. We see clearly in Matthew 24:29-31, among other places, that Jesus's return and the rapture will occur *after* the tribulation period.
 - As we read Jesus's words in Matthew 24, we get a picture about where we are on the apocalyptic timeline. He listed a number of events that indicate we are at the "beginning of sorrows," (v. 8) including:
 - Wars and rumors of wars - let us not forget that the year 2020 began with rumors that the United States would go to war with Iran, likely igniting a third World War.
 - Famines - due to locusts, droughts, COVID-19, and more, famines are beginning in many parts of the world.
 - Pestilences - nearly every human being on earth has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.
 - These are only a few of the many examples of Jesus's words coming to pass. Jesus instructed us to perk up our spiritual senses when we see these things occurring because they are signs that the end is drawing near! In verses 29-31, we see these events must precede the rapture of the saints.

What is our responsibility?

- Basic: Prepare and preach the gospel! (Acts 1:8, Matthew 5:14-16)
- One Step Deeper: Prepare and preach the gospel! (Ephesians 6:10-20)
 - We have a wonderful opportunity to witness the gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of adverse circumstances. God has already blessed us—we don't need to be weighed down with the cares of this life. Rather, let us spend our time putting on our whole armor, praying, and telling someone else how they can be saved from eternal destruction. In these dark times, we must shine our lights, telling the world that Jesus is Lord!