

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE JESUS TO RETURN?

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We spoke last week about how the Great Tribulation on the saints will be “cut short”.

Many believe the Tribulation period will be 3½ years. So how can it be “cut short” for the saints if it’s still 3½ years?

Well:

- 1. Jesus said it will be cut short — so it most certainly will be!**
- 2. Although a period of 3½ years is frequently mentioned in prophecy ... there is no actual scripture that says that The Tribulation will be 3½ years.**

I said last week that the persecution of the saints will be cut short by the Heavenly Signs and Jesus’ initial Coming in the clouds.

Also that Jesus final Coming To the Earth at the Battle of Armageddon would be about 12 months later.

The idea that Jesus’ Second-Coming is spread over a period of about a year is not well understood?

Some get confused — wouldn’t that mean Jesus has a Second-Coming (for His saints) ... and a Third-Coming — to fight at Armageddon?

No! If we consider Jesus’ First-Coming — how long was that? One day? No! Jesus birth ... ministry ... crucifixion ... resurrection — was over 30 years. So ... Jesus Second-Coming is more than one hour ... or one day. It appears to be several events spread over about one year.

So let’s review these two separate events — “Comings” ... try to be clear in our mind.

We will read 2 key passages first — then look more closely.

PASSAGE 1

Matthew 24:15-16

15 “**Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation,** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),
16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

The Big Sign: THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Matthew 24:21-22

21 For **then there will be great tribulation,** such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (*Unparalleled in history. Nothing as bad as — nothing as destructive as!*)

22 And **unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved;** **but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.** (*Shortened by how much?*)

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:23-27

23 “**Then** if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ **do not believe it.**

24 **For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

25 See, I have told you beforehand. (*Don’t be fooled*)

26 “Therefore if they say to you, (*at this time — after The Tribulation*) ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. (*Massive and very effective deception! Don’t go to sleep!*)

27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, **so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.** (*Everyone will see it*)

“THE COMING” (Greek: Parousia)

Matthew 24:29

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.** *(No one will miss them!)*

HEAVENLY SIGNS

Matthew 24:30-31

30 **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven,** and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

31 **And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** *(Greek: Episunagoge — gathered together).*

JESUS COMING ON THE CLOUDS TO GATHER THE SAINTS. US! ☺

I think we “get” the outline reasonably well?

PASSAGE 2

This is about a year later.

Revelation 19:11-18

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, **a white horse.** **And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.** *(The Lord Jesus on a white horse)*

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, (Not Jesus' blood — the blood of His enemies!!) and His name is called The Word of God.**

14 **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (“Armies in heaven” — the saints. Also riding white horses. See previous messages)**

15 **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.** And **He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron.** **He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, **“Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,**

18 **that you may eat the flesh** of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

JESUS ON A WHITE HORSE COMING TO CONQUER THE NATIONS.

Revelation 19:19-21

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 **Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

21 And **the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.** **And all the birds were filled with their flesh.**

Are these 2 passages the same event? Most think this is the same as **Matthew 24**. My NKJV Bible Heading of Revelation 19:11 is: “SecondComing of Christ”. **BUT — IS IT?**

I’m going to suggest that they are “not” the same event. **They are two separate events ... perhaps 12 months apart** (though timing somewhat speculative?) between Matthew 24 and Revelation 19.

So we’ll compare. **There are a number of clear differences.** No single difference might be persuasive ... but **as** they mount up??

There's one other passage to add ... which corresponds to Matthew 24.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.**

15 For this we say to you **by the word of the Lord**, that **we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.** (*Until The Coming — PAROUSIA*).

16 **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.**

And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (*"Caught Up" — Greek: Harpazo*)

COMPARISON OF DIFFERENCES:

First Comparison:

The Resurrection of the Dead saints at Jesus' initial coming in Matthew 24 — but **not mentioned in Revelation 19** — because there is no resurrection of the dead at that time.

There is a Resurrection of the Dead which is explicit in 1 Thessalonians 4 and implicit in Mathew 24: We read of "Great Tribulation" such as has never been before. **COMPARE.**

Daniel 12:1-2 (identical to Matthew 24)

1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, (*go into action*)

The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;

And there shall be a time of trouble,

Such as never was since there was a nation,

Even to that time.

**And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.**

**2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall
awake,**

Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

**The Time of Great Trouble (what Jesus was referring to) associated
with the Resurrection.**

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IS A KEY FEATURE.

**So Matthew 24 and 1 Thessalonians 4 are different to
Revelation 19.**

Second Comparison:

**The angels mentioned at Jesus' coming are not mentioned
in Revelation 19.** I think the armies that come with Jesus are us —
the resurrected saints (who have just got married and are wearing white
garments).

Third Comparison:

**Trumpets are mentioned in the coming in Matthew 24 and 1
Thessalonians 4. No Trumpets mentioned in Revelation 19.**

Revelation 19:11-15

**11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He
who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness
He judges and makes war.**

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns.
He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is
called The Word of God.** (*Not the blood of Jesus — His enemies
blood*)

14 **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,
followed Him on white horses.** (*The armies are the saints — recently
married to Christ*)

15 **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.** And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. **He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

There is a Sharp sword (figuratively) in Jesus' mouth. NO TRUMPET mentioned here!

Fourth comparison:

In Revelation 19:11 ... Jesus returns seated on a white horse. **In Matthew 24 —at His coming ... He's on clouds — possibly seated on a throne.**

Matthew 24:30

30 **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven,** and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

Matthew 26:64

64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see **the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.**"

Revelation 14:14-16

14 **Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man,** having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, **crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud,** "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

16 **So He who sat on the cloud** thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

When Christ initially returns — He is sitting on a cloud. There is no horse in Matthew 24.

Fifth Comparison:

In Matthew 24 and I Thessalonians 4 — the saints are gathered together at Jesus' coming — in the clouds. (Greek: Episunagoge — gathered together). **Not mentioned in Revelation 19.**

Sixth Comparison:

At Jesus' initial Coming — most people are living relatively “normal lives” — they are caught out completely by surprise.

Matthew 24:36-39

36 “**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.**

37 **But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (*Parousia*)**

38 **For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,**

39 **and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (*Coming = Parousia*)**

At The Coming (PAROUSIA). People will essentially be living relatively normally lives — eating ... drinking ... marrying. Just like in the days of Noah — they will be caught utterly by surprise.

It is evident therefore that none of the Trumpets or Vials of Wrath have taken place. No normal life could continue when they happen!!

Just consider the 5th and 6th Trumpets:

Revelation 9:3-6

3 **Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.**

(Demonic locusts)

4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, **but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**

5 And they were not given authority to kill them, **but to torment them for five months.** Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

6 **In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.**

Five months of torment. They will seek to die — desire to die! In **Matthew 24** when Jesus returns — people are living more or less a normal life. **They certainly aren't here!**

Revelation 9:15-18

15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, **were released to kill a third of mankind.**

16 **Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.** (*I think these are demons*)

18 **By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.** (*Demonic*)

One third of mankind to die!

Nobody is living a normal life and caught by surprise with all of this going on!

Seventh Comparison:

Revelation 19 comes after the Trumpets and Bowls of Wrath.

People are devastated!

When we read Matthew 24 — up to the point of Jesus' coming (PAROUSIA) ... Jesus gives lots of information ... including the sign (Abomination).

But makes **no reference to demonic locusts ... torture ... 200 million-strong armies killing — wouldn't these be fairly clear signs??**

Not mentioned because they are not there! They are after Jesus' initial coming. **And Revelation 19 is after them.**

Eighth Comparison:

The Heavenly Signs at Jesus' initial coming. Not mentioned in Revelation 19.

Matthew 24:29-30

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.**

30 **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

CONCLUSION:

Jesus' coming in Matthew 24 — immediately after the Tribulation of those days — is a separate event from Jesus' return in Revelation 19. Two very different events!

The initial coming of Jesus for His saints is well before Jesus' return on the white horse with His armies.

At least 5 months gap — since the 5th Trumpet alone lasts this long.

There is a reason to believe it's a full year.

Judgment on the nations.

Isaiah 34:1-4, 8

1 Come near, you nations, to hear;
And heed, you people!
Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,

The world and all things that come forth from it.

2 For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations,

And His fury against all their armies;

He has utterly destroyed them,

He has given them over to the slaughter.

3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;

Their stench shall rise from their corpses,

And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,

And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;

All their host shall fall down (*Heavenly Signs*)

As the leaf falls from the vine,

And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

8 For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance,

The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

YEAR OF RECOMPENSE/RETRIBUTION. God is going to deal with the wicked of the earth!

Isaiah 63:2-6

2 Why is Your apparel red,

And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

3 "I have trodden the winepress alone,

And from the peoples no one was with Me.

For I have trodden them in My anger,

And trampled them in My fury; (*The Trumpets*)

Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,

And I have stained all My robes. (*With the blood of His enemies*)

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart,

And the year of My redeemed has come. (*The saints delivered from God's wrath*)

5 I looked, but there was no one to help,

And I wondered

That there was no one to uphold;

Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me;

And My own fury, it sustained Me.

6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,

Made them drunk in My fury,

And **brought down their strength to the earth."**

YEAR OF MY REDEEMED (When God's plagues are poured out on the earth)

Isaiah 61:1-3

1 **"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,**
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
2 **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,**
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOUR TO HIS SAINTS

We know from Daniel 9:27 there is a final 7 year period. At mid-point the sacrifices are stopped and we get the Abomination of Desolation.

It looks like Jesus' initial coming is one year before the end of the 7 year period? He gathers His saints ... who have a Sabbatical Rest (The final year of the seven).

Initiates the Trumpets and the Bowls — His wrath on sinful mankind.

The Sixth Bowl — right at the end of the 21 events of the Book of Revelation ... brings us to the Great Battle of the Lord at Armageddon.

That's when Jesus' feet stand on the Mount of Olives and He becomes King of all of the earth — about 12 months after He delivers His saints.

**So ... there is one second-coming — but in several phases.
Just as the First Coming included more than one phase.**