



## Trumpets – Who Shall Separate Us...

<sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

<sup>37</sup>Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:35-37

### I. 3 MAIN STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT BEFORE YESHUA’S RETURN

- A. Beginning of Birth Pains** (Matthew 24:4-8): we are currently in this stage. From now on there will be increased deception with false Christian leaders, wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes.
1. Yeshua exhorts us: “See that you are not troubled” and lets us know that these things must happen before His return (Matthew 24:6).
- B. Birth Pains** (Matthew 24:9-14): This timeframe follows the beginning of birth pains and includes the persecution and martyrdom of Believers and having all nations hating Yeshua-Believers because of their identification with Him. This seems to presuppose some type of successful globalism. On the heels of this persecution, many will be offended and will hate and betray Believers. There will also be deception from false prophets, lawlessness, and love growing cold.
1. At some point before Yeshua’s return, we as Believers will not be successful in vanquishing the darkness but will actually be overcome (for a short time) by the AntiChrist and the rulers of the nations.
- C. Great Tribulation** (Matthew 24:15-28): this is a 3.5 year period (also described as 42 months or 1260 days in the Scripture) that is the most difficult time ever on planet earth. If this time had not been shortened to this 3.5 year timeframe then no one would survive. During this time half of the earth’s population will die prematurely. The timeclock to Yeshua’s return starts with the initiation of this time with the abomination of desolation where the AntiChrist stops the sacrifices and sets himself up in the Jerusalem temple as God incarnate.

### II. HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

- A. In light of this, how should we then live?**
1. The righteous will not be surprised by the coming events (1 Thess. 5:4-8)
  2. Those of understanding will help many walk in light (Daniel 11:32-35)
- B. Gird Ourselves for Suffering;** Yeshua suffered for us before His exaltation; we will also suffer before our exaltation (Romans 8:17)
1. We Americans are not very good at this
  2. The Scriptures call this coming trial a momentary, light affliction that is producing in us something glorious (2 Cor. 4:17); sufferings can’t compare to the coming glory (Romans 8:18); All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer (2 Timothy 3:12)
  3. We will respond in 2 ways – we will either get bitter or move towards Yeshua with a softer heart. Betrayal, persecution, and the threat of martyrdom will either make us bitter or better – the choice is ours
- C. Persecution Is Allowed For The Benefit Of God’s People**
1. Persecution is both a demonic attack to hinder our spiritual growth and a divine gift to enhance it (Mike Bickle)
  2. God granted persecution (Phil. 1:29) that they may be transformed by it for their benefit in this age (1 Pet. 4:1, 14) and in the age to come (2 Cor. 4:17).  
*<sup>1</sup>...for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup>that he no longer should live the rest of his time...for the lusts of men...<sup>14</sup>If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory...rests on you...[and] He is glorified. (1 Pet. 4:1-2, 14)*  
*<sup>17</sup>Our light affliction...is working for us a far more exceeding...weight of glory... (2 Cor. 4:17)*
  3. Most of us have not yet suffered persecution for our identification with Yeshua in any consequential way.
- D. Betrayal:** In the coming days there will also be an increase of betrayal within families and the community of faith (Micah 7:5-7; Matthew 24:10); we are not to walk paranoid and protectively insulate ourselves; these painful happenings will be used for our good if we walk in the truth of the Scriptures.

1. Example: The response of two young Chinese girls who were betrayed by their own pastor during the Red Guard Era (1966-1969) in Jiangxi, Mainland China: The girls whispered to each other, then bowed respectfully before their pastor. One of them said, "Before you shoot us, we wish to thank you heartily for what you have meant to us. You baptized us, you taught us the ways of eternal life, you gave us holy communion with the same hand in which you now hold the gun. You also taught us that Christians are sometimes weak and commit terrible sins, but they can be forgiven again. When you regret what you are about to do to us, do not despair like Judas, but repent like Peter. God bless you, and remember that our last thought was not one of indignation against your failure. Everyone passes through hours of darkness. May God reward you for all the good you have done to us. We die with gratitude."
 

The girls bowed again. The pastor's heart was hardened. He shot the girls. Afterwards he was shot by the Communists. As found in *Jesus Freaks: The Stories of Those Who Stood for Jesus*, pg. 109-110.
- E. **Who Shall Separate Us...** No externally bad situation can separate us from a connection to Yeshua's love. If you think about the actual extrapolated meanings of the following words, it is profound to think that every negative scenario is listed. We are so naturally predisposed to think of positive circumstances as indicating that we are in God's good graces. But this is not the Scriptural precedent.
  1. *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword or martyrdom* separate us from connection with the love of God?
  2. All things work together for our good (Romans 8:28)
- F. **Offering Our Love:** we only have this life to express our love to YHWH in the midst of pain and difficulty. In the age to come, we won't have this challenge.
  1. Yeshua offered His love for us first by going to the cross for us. He didn't owe us that, and He doesn't owe us anything else. "When living here has caused us pain; things we just don't understand; the cross of Christ is proof enough that He is good" – David Ruis
  2. "In heaven there won't be any pain, confusion, or loss. So I embrace my moment of pain now and give Him praise in the midst of it. That's an offering I'll never have a chance to give Him in heaven." - Bill Johnson
  3. Free will offering of love - He wants our free will love offered to Him; He can't and won't force it; this is a gift that we can give to Him.
- G. **In summary**, is God sadistic? No! He suffered first and in the greatest way (for us!); He's told us ahead of time what is coming, He will use the coming difficulty for our good as we stay steadfast, and the coming glory far supersedes any momentary, light affliction.

### III. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

- A. **Stay Steady** - this is real! This future hope will stabilize us and help us if we fix our attention on it
- B. **Great Reward:** There is great reward and glory for stewarding this coming tribulation with a joyful endurance
- C. **"You are my Portion"** (Psalm 16:5; Lamentations 3:24) was David and Jeremiah's expression of trust in YHWH
  1. Think of what Jeremiah had lost (Lam 3:1-20) in the midst of him making the statement, "You are my portion"
  2. What are our offense points?
    - a. Something will always not be working in our lives
    - b. Most of us have not yet had persecution for the Gospel; sometimes we struggle with our suffering and blame God
    - c. What dynamics have to be in place for us to serve God?
    - d. What unconscious deals do we have with God? What if we had a Job moment where we lost everything? Is He our everything?
  3. Are we looking at the Gospel to primarily provide for us better friends, more resources, more anointed ministries, etc. or is He our portion regardless of what externally happens.
  4. Run the simulator: imagine losing important things but having God as your portion
- D. **The Positives**
  1. A great harvest of souls; what comes during and after the harvest is the long road of faithfulness in the midst of difficulty—this might be in conjunction with great difficulty; that's what's happening in China, Iran, and Afghanistan: great difficulty in the midst of great harvest.

2. We succeed in bringing the gospel of the kingdom to every ethnic people group (Matthew 24:14) – we’re successful with that but ultimately we’re going to suffer for our identification with Him.
3. We are to be vibrant, shiny love-filled witnesses of whom the world was not worthy within the context of challenge and difficulty; we have what we need to be these types of people

**E. Coming Challenges:** A coming great global challenge precedes the return of Yeshua (Matthew 24:4-31)

1. God will allow the end time church to be sifted - Sifting exposes our heart
2. Ultimately we have exactly the opposite (of triumphalism); the antichrist wears out the saints (Daniel 11:33)
3. A great falling away is coming before Yeshua’s return (Matthew 24:10-12; 2 Thes 2:3)
  - a. Deception, betrayal, and the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:10)

*What will we do with this difficulty?*

**F. Watch & Pray:** Growing in our secret history with God; watching and praying among a community

1. Pray: Time and words in an individual and corporate expression
2. Watch – growing in our awareness of the biblical story and growing in a general awareness of what’s going on around us
  - a. meditating on the Scriptures – can prayerfully go through Lamentations 3 & Micah 7; Habakkuk 3
3. Drawing Close: We are to draw close to a glorious Man who is coming

**G. Develop a Future Focus on the Coming One:** Bible pushes us to look forward towards the great coming day

1. Why is looking at, and prayerfully studying this coming day important?
  - a. It’s about Him and His leadership
2. If we’re prayerfully walking in growing awareness of this coming reality, we’ll be able to better partner with God’s plan and be less prone to fear, offense, lust, or deception.