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The Rapture and the Great Tribulation

24: 1-23

The rapture and the Great Tribulation REFLECT: Where does the word “Rapture” come from? How can you make sure you are not left behind? What are the three main purposes of the Great Tribulation? What are your thoughts on the Great Tribulation for you personally? Do you dread it or look forward to it? Why?

When the Bible uses the term **mystery (First Corinthians 15:51)**, it does not use it in the traditional sense of the word. It does not mean, “Is there life on Pluto? No one will really ever know; it’s a mystery!” No, when the Bible uses the term **mystery**, it means *something that was once hidden, but now is revealed and made known (Romans 16:25b-26a)*. For example, the Church was a **mystery** to the righteous of the TaNaKh. And because the Church was a mystery, **the Rapture** was also a mystery to them. The Rapture refers to that event where **Jesus Christ** snatches the Church out of this world. **For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with God’s shofar (CJB), and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage each other with these words (First Thessalonians 4:16-18)**. The Greek word *harozō* is a very forceful word. It means *taken by the collar and snatched away violently*, and is translated **caught up**. The Latin equivalent is the word *raptus*, and is where we get the English transliteration *rapture*.⁸² Therefore, at **the Rapture**, both Gentile and Jewish believers will be **caught up together to meet the Lord in the air**. When the restraining influence of **the Holy Spirit** on the world is gone, **the Great Tribulation** will begin suddenly without any notice because **the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape (First Thess 5:2-3)**.



The blessings and judgments prophesied for specific nations in **Chapters 13 to 23**, forms the backdrop for **the Lord's** final judgment of the entire world during **the Great Tribulation**. **There are three main purposes** during that time: first, **to make an end of wickedness and wicked ones (13:9, 24:19-20)**; secondly, **to bring about a worldwide revival** (see the commentary on **Revelation**, **to see link click Cs - God Will Wipe Away Every Tear From Their Eyes**); and thirdly, **to break the stubbornness of the Jewish nation (Dani'el 11-12; Ezeke'el 20:34-38)**. In the TaNaKh the most common name for the Great Tribulation is **the Day of the Lord**. But there are a number of other names, or designations for this time period, found in both Covenants.

Names for the Great Tribulation

The most common name for the Great Tribulation found in various passages in the TaNaKh is **the Day of the Lord**. In every passage of the Scriptures that the term the **Day of the Lord** is found it is always, without exception, a reference to the Great Tribulation period. Even though this is the most common name for this period in the TaNaKh, it has many names and it is also found in various passages of the B'rit Chadashah. These names are found in the **New International Version**.

Names used for the Great Tribulation in the TaNaKh:

- A Time of Trouble for Jacob (**Jeremiah 30:7**)
- The Seventieth Week of Daniel (**Dani'el 9:27**)
- The LORD's Strange Work (**Isaiah 28:21**)
- The LORD's Alien Task (**Isaiah 28:21**)
- The Day of Isra'el's Disaster (**Deuteronomy 32:35; Obadiah 12-14**)
- The Distress or Tribulation (**Deuteronomy 4:30**)
- The Overwhelming Scourge (**Isaiah 28:15, 18**)

- The Day of Vengeance (**Isaiah 34:8, 35:4, 61:2**)
- The Year of Retribution (**Isaiah 34:8**)
- The Time of Distress (**Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 1:15**)
- The Day of Wrath (**Zephaniah 1:15**)
- The Day of Trouble and Ruin (**Zephaniah 1:15**)
- The Day of Darkness (**Zephaniah 1:15; Amos 5:18 and 20; Joel 2:2**)
- The Day of Gloominess (**Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:2**)
- The Day of Clouds (**Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:2**)
- The Day of Blackness (**Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:2**)
- The Day of the Trumpet (**Zephaniah 1:16**)
- The Day of the Battle Cry (**Zephaniah 1:16**)
- The Day of the LORD Almighty (**Isaiah 2:12-21**)

Names used for the Great Tribulation in the B'rit Chadashah:

- The Day of the Lord (**First Thessalonians 5:2**)
- The Wrath of God (**Revelation 15:1 and 7; 14:10 and 19; 16:1**)
- The Hour of Trial (**Revelation 3:10**)
- The Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb of God (**Revelation 6:16-17**)
- The Coming Wrath (**First Thessalonians 1:10**)
- The Wrath (**First Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 11:18**)
- The Great Tribulation or Distress (**Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14**)
- The Distress or Tribulation (**Matthew 24:29**)
- The Hour of Judgment (**Revelation 14:7**)