

Great Tribulation



The White Horse of the Gospel (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

You see, these Scriptures make it absolutely clear that Jesus envisaged the restoration of the Jewish state in that area before the age closes. There is no other way to explain these Scriptures. Since 1948 that situation has existed. That's one of the greatest indications that we're very near the close of the age. Somebody has said the Jews are the minute hand on God's clock. And the minute hand is about two minutes away from midnight.

Then Jesus says:

> "...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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

So at this period humanity is going to know a period of suffering such as humanity has never known and never will know again.

Now when I think of what was involved in World War II, particularly in the Holocaust, I have to say I shudder to think of what could happen worldwide that would be worse than the Holocaust. But, it's coming. The New Testament calls this the Great Tribulation and refers to it in the book of Revelation, we will not turn there.

Then there come further warnings against being deceived.

> "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the messiah,' or 'There,' do not believe him. For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

So here's going to be a period of tremendous religious deception. And bear in mind that a person may show miraculous signs and yet not be a true prophet. These are false prophets but they will show miraculous signs and wonders. The only ultimate test is the Scripture and their fruit.

I can see the faces of some of you, you're shocked. Well, I have to tell you it's time you were shocked because you've been living in a dream world. You've not been face to face with reality and reality is right face to face with you.

Going on, Jesus says:

> "See, I have told you before."

What's the good of Him telling us before if we don't listen?

> "Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the desert,' do not go out, or 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of man be."

So Jesus said it's not going to be something that's going to happen in a corner. You won't have to go out to meet Him, look for Him in some obscure place. When He comes the whole earth is going to be illuminated with His glory. Every eye will see him. The Scripture says that.

Then Jesus makes this rather cryptic remark:

> "Wherever the carcass is, the vultures will be gathered together."

In, for instance, in the Middle East, particularly say in Egypt, you'll see a little dot appear in the sky, hover there. And then another dot and another dot. They're vultures. And then they'll begin to circle lower and lower and more and more vultures will gather. And when you see that you know something. There's something dying down there. And even before it's fully dead they will fasten on the carcass and feed on it.

So Jesus said when you see all these things coming together and more and more of them, and they're coming lower and lower, and nearer and nearer, that's it. That's just a little parable.

Now, we've got to go on further. Two more verses.

> "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..."

Notice the next thing after this period of tribulation, very immediately, is tremendous signs in the whole solar system.

And the next thing after that is what? The coming of the Lord. And this is stated in verse 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."

So there is the answer. What will be the sign? This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations. Immediately after that the focus will transfer to this little piece of earth at the east end of the Mediterranean, to the Jewish people, to the city of Jerusalem. Certain things will take place there, a period of tribulation will be ushered in which will ultimately affect the whole earth. For Paul says in Romans 2, tribulation is to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Whatever comes on the Jews is ultimately going to come on the Gentiles. That's what makes for me the Holocaust so significant. Because we who are not Jewish cannot stand back and say there you are, but it doesn't affect us. Because sooner or later it will touch us, and worse.

And immediately after that tribulation there'll be the final signs which will be in the solar system, and then the visible return of the Lord Jesus in power and glory.

Now that's a little outline. I could take hours to fill in the details but I don't have time. And I think it's appropriate that I don't.

Now I just want to give you two pictures from Revelation to close this message with. Revelation 14:14–20. This is what I call the two harvests. Jesus said the harvest is the end of the age. In other words, the age is going to end with harvest. And in this passage we have two harvests, one immediately following the other. The first is the harvest of grain, the second is the harvest of grapes. Now, in Israel this is the order in which they come. They gather in the grain harvest; the last harvest to be gathered in is the grape harvest. The grain harvest is a picture of the ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God. And, it's the outcome of the proclaiming of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. Immediately following that is the harvest of grapes which is called the harvest of the grapes of wrath. This is the harvest of judgment. And the thing that I want to emphasize as we come to the close of this age is God will extend mercy to all nations in the offer of the gospel in one quick, I believe, brief opportunity. And then after mercy there will come judgment on those who have refused mercy. So this is the order, now let's look at the picture. Revelation 14:14:

> "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 on his hand a sharp sickle. 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 [or dry].' So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

That's the harvest of grain. And the Greek says the harvest is not just ripe, it's dry, it's getting overripe. It has to be reaped instantly or it will be lost. And to me the picture of the casting in of the sickle and the reaping is of a tremendously rapid move of the Spirit of God that will sweep across the face of the earth and bring millions into the kingdom of God. The last great ingathering. And after that God will release His wrath.

So we have the next picture.

> "Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.'"

Now, in the traditional Bible economy, when they gathered the grape harvest, in order to get the juice they would put the grapes in a stone sort of pit that was carved out called a vat. And then they would trample the grapes with their bare feet, squeeze the juice out and they had a little channel running to a lower pit where the grape juice was gathered. So the way to get the juice out of the grapes was to trample them underfoot. And this is the picture.

> "So the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs [which is about one hundred and eighty-four miles]."

I could spend time commenting on that but I just want to emphasize we need to be aware, we need to tell people. Mercy is coming but it's going to be followed by judgment. First the ingathering of the grain, then the ingathering of the grapes of wrath.

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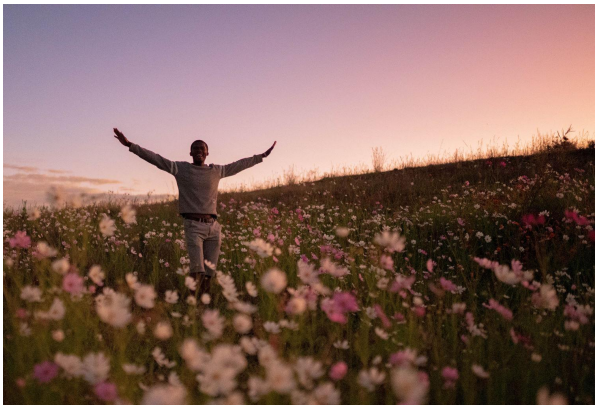

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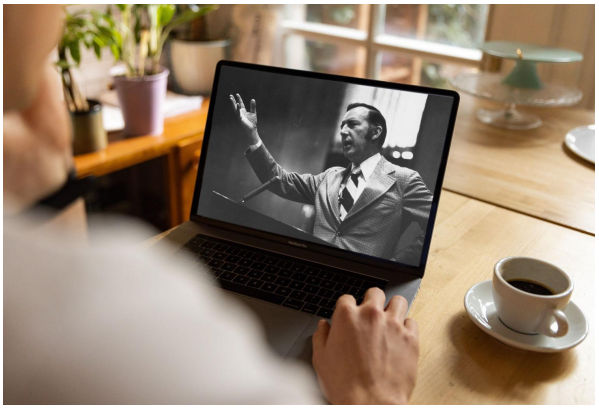

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