

"Kept from the Hour!"

1 Thessalonians 3:1-4; 5:1-11; Revelation 3:7-11; Luke 22:34-36

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- MISSING PEOPLE
- The "Great Disappearance" with the rapture of the church
- When will this "great disappearance" take place?

"Kept from the Hour" -- Evidence for a Pre-tribulation rapture

A. Best Accommodates the Imminent Return of Christ.

B. God's Promised Deliverance from His Wrath.

1. God never promised that life would be free from persecution and suffering.

a. Jesus says that we will suffer persecution.

- Matthew 5:11-12-- *"Blessed are you when they are reviled and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
- Matthew 10:22-- *"you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."*
- Matthew 24:9-13-- *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of man will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved."*

b. Paul seconds the motion

- 2 Timothy 3:11-12 -- *"persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecution I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

c. We have been "appointed to suffer affliction"

- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4 -- *"Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that you should not be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For in fact we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know."*

2. God promises that we will not suffer His wrath.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 -- *"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."

a. **The Tribulation period as a period of God's wrath.**

1) Meaning of the "Day of the Lord"

2) The INTENSITY of God's wrath in the Tribulation

- Jeremiah 30:7-- "*Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; And it is a time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.*"
- Daniel 12:1-- "*At that time Michael shall stand up, 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, everyone who is found written in the book.*"
- Matthew 24:21-- "*For then there will be great tribulation, such as not has been since the beginning of the world until the time, no, nor ever shall be.*"

3) The SCOPE of God's wrath during the Tribulation

- Revelation 6:15-17 -- "*And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'*"

b. **We have NOT been "appointed to suffer wrath but to obtain salvation or deliverance"**

1) The way we are delivered from God's wrath is by "living together with Christ"

2) Could Jesus shield us here on earth as the Jewish remnant will be shielded during the tribulation?

- Revelation 12:6-- "*fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days*"
- Revelation 12:13-14-- "*when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the woman was given wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and a half of time, from the presence of the serpent.*"

3. **God promises to 'KEEP US FROM THE HOUR' of trial.**

• Revelation 3:7-10 -- "*And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write, These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David. He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.'*"

a. **Important Observations from the text**

- 1) "Hour of trial" is future, not speaking of their present trials or suffering
- 2) "Hour of trial" is universal, that is, it affects the whole earth.
- 3) The purpose for this period of time is to "test or to try" the earth dwellers.

b. **Identification of the "earth dwellers" in the book of Revelation**

- 1) Murdered the tribulation believers -- Revelation 6:10
- 2) The ones on whom the "three woes" will specifically fall upon --Revelations 8:13
- 3) The ones who murder the two witnesses --Revelation 11:10
- 4) The ones who will worship the Antichrist—Revelation 13, 8, 12
- 5) The ones deceived by the false prophet —Revelation 13:14

- c. Understanding the meaning of “KEPT FROM THE HOUR”
 - d. We are “kept from” the hour by the return of Jesus Christ
 - Revelation 3:11-- *“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast to what you have, that no one may take your crown.”*
 - I Thessalonians 1:9-10-- *“For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”*
 - 4. Jesus Christ promises us an “escape” from the terrible events of Tribulation
 - Luke 22:34-36-- *“Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day comes on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things which will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*
- C. The Absence of the “Church” in any passage dealing with the Tribulation
- 1. Especially evident in the Book of Revelation
 - a. The prevalence of the “church” in Revelation 1—3
 - b. The “church” is not mentioned once in Revelation 6-18 when describing the Tribulation period
 - c. John is called up to heaven and views the events of the tribulation from a heavenly vantage point.
 - Revelation 4:1-2a-- *“looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit”*
 - 2. Although this is an argument from “silence”, it is quite powerful when combined with the other evidence.