

Signs of the End of the Age

In order to easy compare those texts on "the Signs of the End of the Age" as they are written in three gospels, I put them all together.

In that way they can easily be used as we walk through "Signs of the End of the Age." (starting at page 6).

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<u>3</u> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"	<u>4</u> "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"	<u>7</u> "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"
<u>4</u> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no-one deceives you. <u>5</u> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.	<u>5</u> Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no-one deceives you. <u>6</u> Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many.	<u>8</u> He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and 'The time is near.' Do not follow them.
<u>6</u> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.	<u>7</u> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.	<u>9</u> When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."
<u>7</u> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.	<u>8</u> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.	<u>10</u> Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.	There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines.	<u>11</u> There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places,
<u>8</u> All these are the beginning of birth-pains.	These are the beginning of birth-pains.	and fearful events and great signs from heaven.
<u>9</u> "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.	<u>9</u> "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. <u>10</u> And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.	<u>12</u> "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. <u>13</u> This will result in your being witnesses to them.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<u>10</u> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <u>11</u> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.	<u>12</u> "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.	<u>16</u> You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.
9b and you will be hated by all nations because of me.	<u>13</u> All men will hate you because of me,	<u>17</u> All men will hate you because of me.
<u>12</u> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,		
<u>13</u> but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.	13b but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.	<u>18</u> But not a hair of your head will perish. <u>19</u> By standing firm you will gain life.
<u>14</u> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.		
<u>15</u> "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel	<u>14</u> "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong	
		<u>20</u> "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.
15b --let the reader understand--	14b --let the reader understand--	
<u>16</u> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.	then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.	<u>21</u> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,
<u>17</u> Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.	<u>15</u> Let no-one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out.	let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.
		<u>22</u> For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.
<u>19</u> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!	<u>17</u> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!	<u>23</u> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!
<u>20</u> Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.	<u>18</u> Pray that this will not take place in winter,	

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 17/21
<u>21</u> For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again.	<u>19</u> because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now--and never to be equalled again.	23b There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. <u>24</u> They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
<u>22</u> If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.	<u>20</u> If the Lord had not cut short those days, no-one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.	
<u>23</u> At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.	<u>21</u> At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it.	
<u>24</u> For false Christ's and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.	<u>22</u> For false Christ's and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible.	
<u>25</u> See, I have told you ahead of time.	<u>23</u> So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.	
<u>26</u> "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.		17:23 Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.
<u>27</u> For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.		17:24 For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.
<u>28</u> Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.		17:37 "Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."
<u>29</u> "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'	<u>24</u> "But in those days, following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <u>25</u> the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'	<u>25</u> "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. <u>26</u> Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.
<u>30</u> "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.	<u>26</u> "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.	<u>27</u> At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
<u>31</u> And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.	<u>27</u> And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.	

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 17/21
		<u>28</u> When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”
<u>32</u> “Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.	<u>28</u> “Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.	<u>29</u> He told them this parable: “Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. <u>30</u> When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near.
<u>33</u> Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.	<u>29</u> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.	<u>31</u> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.
<u>34</u> I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.	<u>30</u> I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.	<u>32</u> “I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
<u>35</u> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.	<u>31</u> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.	<u>33</u> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.
<u>36</u> “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.	<u>32</u> “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.	
<u>37</u> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.		17: <u>26</u> “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.
<u>38</u> For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;		17: <u>27</u> People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.
<u>39</u> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.		
<u>40</u> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. <u>41</u> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.		17: <u>34</u> I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. <u>35</u> Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.”
		17: <u>28</u> “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. <u>21:29</u> He told them this parable: “Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. <u>30</u> When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 17/21
		<p><u>31</u> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.</p> <p><u>32</u> "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.</p> <p><u>33</u> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.</p>
<p><u>42</u> "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.</p>	<p><u>33</u> Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.</p>	<p><u>36</u> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."</p>
<p><u>43</u> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.</p>		
	<p><u>34</u> It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.</p> <p><u>35</u> "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn.</p> <p><u>36</u> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.</p> <p><u>37</u> What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"</p>	
<p>Matthew 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.</p> <p><u>45</u> "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?</p> <p><u>46</u> It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.</p> <p><u>47</u> I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.</p> <p><u>48</u> But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,'</p> <p><u>49</u> and he then begins to beat his fellow-servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.</p> <p><u>50</u> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.</p> <p><u>51</u> He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p>		<p><u>34</u> "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.</p> <p><u>35</u> For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.</p>

Comments, Questions, Answers and Thoughts on The speech about the Signs of the End of the Age

- Matthew 24:2 Then Jesus says: "Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."
- Matthew 24:3 The disciples are curious and want to know when that will happen to that temple. They also assume that this will coincide with Jesus coming and the end of the world. (The Greek word used here for world is: *aiōn*. This means era or century). It strikes that Jesus doesn't give a direct answer. Only much further-on He does go deeper into their demand.
- Matthew 24:4
Mark 13:6
Luke 21:8 Jesus answer was as follows: "Let no one give you the idea that I, the Christ, just come without you noticing. If people say I am the Christ, believe them not, or if people say, see, there is the Christ or here, don't believe them. When I come, all will know from first hand.
- Mark 13:7
Luke 21:9 "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."
- Why would they be worried or anxious when they hear of wars and unrest?
They knew the prophets. And one of those prophets spoke in particular about these events. It's Joel.
- Joel 2:1-11 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand-- 2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. 3 Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste--nothing escapes them. 4 They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. 5 With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. 6 At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. 7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. 8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. 9 They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. 10 Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. 11 The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?
- This mighty army conducts war! It is a devastating army. if you know these armies are coming, It is logical to be afraid.
Joel shows us that the day of the Lord will be a terrible day. The sun and the moon will change and the stars will be different on that day.
Jesus speaks about the same events as well. He shows exactly when that will happen.
- Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."
- So there will happen terrible things and then the Lord will send his forces. Then there will be also signs on the sun, moon and stars.
- If the Lord reassures the disciples on wars and rumors of wars, then he does this to make them clear that there will be wars, but not directly related to the great war that will happen on the day of the Lord.

Later Jesus returns to this and tells which events will happen before that war comes, which will be at the time of the day the Lord.

But first Jesus goes further with prophecy of events that will happen before 'the end'.

Matthew 24:7
Mark 13:8
Luke 21:10,11

“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.
All these are the beginning of birth-pains.”

Romans 8:19-23

As a pregnant woman who has to endure pains before her child will be visible, so also the world -the whole creation- has to endure painful things before the sons of God, with Jesus as firstling, will become visible.

Luke 21:11b adds the part about those earthquakes, pestilence and famine with: “and fearful events and great signs from heaven.”

Without doubt this is Joel 2:30 and 31: “I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood”

Luke 21:12
Matthew 24:9
Mark 13:9

“But”, says Jesus, “before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you”, “and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.”

Jesus speaks to the disciples, they are Jews. Jews and Christians will prosecuted.

Mark 13:9

Jesus is talking about: “You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues.” Synagogues are Jewish institutions.

You could of course translate synagogues with: church.

The whip might as well be done with words and with the whip. In that case it can also point on Christians worldwide. Think about the scourge words that some had to endure when they told in their traditional church that they wanted to be baptized by immersion.

Although this spiritualization of this text is possible, I still prefer the literal text to follow.

Luke 21:13 and 12:12
Mark 13:11

“This will result in your being witnesses to them.

But make up your mind not to worry beforehand on how you will defend yourselves.

For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.” “for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say”.

In this texts Jesus shows that the addressed are people who have received the Holy Spirit, so that can be Christians and Messianic Jews.

Jesus continues to tell of some very unpleasant things, that can surely happen.

Matthew 24:10
Mark 13:12,13
Luke 21:16,17

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me”.

Matthew 24:12

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold”.
wickedness = transgression of the law

Transgression of the law?

What law? The law of obligations and regulations? The Ten Commandments?

This is something to think about. This sounds Jewish, but if we think that all these texts are for the church too, what do we do with this comment?

Matthew 24:13
Mark 13:13b

Jesus promised: “but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

Matthew 24:14

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Which gospel is this: The gospel of the kingdom?

Is this gospel really preached? Do we preach the gospel of the kingdom?

See the bible study about [The Kingdom of God](#)

The Great Tribulation

Jesus comes, after his comments on the end, back to a period, an event which is before the end.

Jesus has spoken a number of prophecies that will happen before the 'end', but clearly not belong to the 'end'. They are only the first contractions.

Then Jesus continued his prophecy about people who will be turned over and tortured and some even slain.

Huge oppression. The love of most will chill, but who persists to the end, will be saved.

'The end' and 'obtain life' (Luke) are clearly the latest events.

When Jesus then speaks about 'the abomination that causes desolation', then He wants the disciples, and through them us, because we live now in the last days, explain a certain period a bit more.

Jesus want to be sure that there is sufficient knowledge to recognize certain events to the time on the clock of God's plans.

Matthew 24:15,16
Mark 13:14,15

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Matthew and Mark have almost the same text, but Luke adds another specificity to it.

All three say: "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

But before Matthew and Mark pass this incentive, they talk on the "the abomination that causes desolation" who will be seen in the holy place.

Luke 21:20

Lucas, however, speaks about: "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near."

Jerusalem being surrounded is obviously at the same time "the abomination that causes desolation" will show himself in the holy place.

The positioning in the aforementioned text, which follows the call of the

"the abomination that causes desolation" and surrounded Jerusalem, i.e. Judea, indicates two things:

1. This is about Jerusalem which is in Judea. So no possibility to see this spiritual.
2. The Holy place will be in Jerusalem.

When "the abomination that causes desolation" will be in the holy place, Jerusalem will be surrounded, or will be soon surrounded.

Matthew 24:16-19
Mark 13:15-16
Luke 21:21

"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city."

This is clearly spoken on a geographically defined place. What we have here, is the place Jerusalem in the region of Judea.

Similarly, from the various descriptions Jesus would like that this time would be recognized without any doubt. And that time is coming so fast that there is not even time to go into your house to get something.

This text is also meant to say: Do not hold to your property, the fact that you can escape is more important than what you lose on material things.

Matthew 24:19
Mark 13:17
Luke 21:23

"How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."

The pregnant and nursing will find it difficult to flee. Of course they are less mobile.

Jesus advised to pray that the flight will not be in the winter and not on a Sabbath. God's people must keep the Sabbath and may not travel on the Sabbath.

Again I get the impression that this whole prophecy, to a large extent, is for the Jews. It all takes place in the capital and in their country and under their laws. They are recommended to pray that their flight does not fall on a Sabbath. For who else then Jews is such a recommendation? Christians do not keep the Sabbath, do they? Or does Jesus assume that the Sabbath is kept by everybody? Something to think about. See the study about [Sunday or Sabbath](#).

Jesus is not talking about a period during or shortly after his life, but over a period that will be just before his return. Compare the texts: "For then there will be great distress" and "Immediately after the distress of those days "

Now we arrive at a striking point. Matthew and Mark tell the words of Jesus as follows:

Matthew 24:11
Mark 13:19

"For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again."

Luke 21:23b

While Luke tells it like this:
"There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Matthew and Mark are talking about a great distress. They don't say a word who is going to suffer. While Luke talks about "wrath against this people", so, the Jews. They will fall by the sharpness of the sword and be taken away as prisoners to all the nations. And this will last until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. At this time Jesus comes back. By comparing these texts you can draw the conclusion that the great distress, if not entirely, is at least for one important part for the people Israel. The wrath, where Lucas is talking about, is not of God. For a little clearer insight we need to read Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:13-17

13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.
14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.
15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.
16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.
17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 12:9, 13

9 "The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."
13 "When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child."

The woman who gave birth to the male child is Israel. That child is Jesus.

After these verses we read about the beast from the sea. By comparing these texts with Daniel, we can see, that this beast from the sea, is a world power. That world power will slander God for forty two months.

Forty two months is three and half years, but also: a time, times and a half-time. The great distress will be that long. The world power. will be led by another beast that leads over the first beast.

And this beast, that leader will set himself into the temple to show that he is a god.

Matthew 24:22
Mark 13:20

That time will be horrible. "If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

Matthew 24:23-26
Mark 13:21-22

Then we read again the warning against of Christ's.

"For false Christ's and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.

See, I have told you ahead of time."

Luke 17:23

"Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other."

Matthew 24:27
Luke 17:24

The son of man does not come secretly. His arrival will be clearly perceptible as the thunderbolt.

Luke 17:37
Matthew 24:28

"Where, Lord?" they (the disciples) asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

What body?

Which vultures?

Does Jesus mean the body of Christ, the church? Are the vultures demons?

Or is the people of Israel mentioned and are the vultures the nations who will attack Israel?

None of both is the right answer for me...

Matthew 24:29
Mark 13:24
Luke 21:25

More clear are the next verses:

"Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."

The timing to these texts is clear.

What is described will happen "immediately after the great distress".

Immediately after the great distress

Verse 29 of Matthew 24 provides a clear timing.
This verse is the beginning of a few verses that describe 'the end'.

Matthew 24:29	"Immediately after the distress of those days" there will be signs on the sun, moon and stars.
Joel 2:30-31	Joel gives the same description of the signs in these bodies, which signs will happen before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.
Matthew 24:30 Mark 13:26 Luke 21:27	"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky," What that sign will be is not clear from these verses. Perhaps the answer can be found in Revelations.
Revelation 11:19	"Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm." In the Old Testament the ark was already an image of Jesus.
Matthew 24:30	"and all the nations of the earth will mourn"
Revelation 6:15-17	Compare this text also with Revelation 6. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man will hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They call to the mountains and the 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 their wrath has come, and who can stand?"
Matthew 24:30b Mark 13:26 Luke 21:27	"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."
Acts 1:11	Here is what the angels had already predicted: "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."
Matthew 24:31 Mark 13:27	"And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."
Luke 21:28	"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Who are those elect? There are two possibilities.
Deuteronomy 7:6	In Deuteronomy among others, we read: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

- Isaiah 49:5-7
Isaiah says that God says to the Word (Jesus): "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." This is what the LORD says--the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."
- In this way the salvation came to the people. In this way salvation came to us.
- 1 Peter 1:2
We can also read in Peter among others, that the foreigners, i.e. people who do not belong to Israel: are "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"
- Romans 11:1
Has God rejected his people Israel? "By no means!" Says Paul.
If God has not rejected Israel, than both Israel and the Christians are elect of God.
- Matthew 24:31
Mark 13:27
If so, in the 'speech on the Signs of the End of the Age' we read: "And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ", then this can be for both, the people of Israel and the believers.
- About the people of Israel is prophesied the following including:
- Jeremiah 31:7-8
" 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.' See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth."
- Jeremiah 31:10
"Hear the word of the LORD, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands: 'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'
- 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18
About Christians we read among others: "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.
For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, 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 for ever.
Therefore encourage each other with these words."
- When the Lord gathers His elect, which will be both Israelites and believers from the nations.
The Israelites 'in the flesh', the natural people, will be gathered in the land Israel.
The believers turned into 'spirit', the spiritual people, will meet the Lord in the air.
The reference in 1 Thessalonians 4 to the clouds, reminiscent of Acts 1 and Matthew 24 / Luke 21 / Mark 13.
The Lord will come in the clouds.
We will come to meet Him in the air, in the clouds.
- Luke 21:28
Luke goes on with: "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
- Of what things does Luke speaks here?
The text actually begins at 21:20
"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies ..."
- Matthew 24:15
And at Matthew and Mark: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation' ...".
- Luke 21:28b
"... stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
- This salvation can refer to both peoples: The natural and the spiritual people.

- Matthew 24:32
Mark 13:28
Luke 21:29
- Jesus wants the disciples, and later us, to understand this well, that's why He gives an example, a parable.
He talks about the fig tree. When that buds you know that summer is nigh. So you need, when you see predicted things happen, know that the end is near.
- Matthew 24:34-35
Mark 13:30-31
Luke 21:32-33
- “ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”
- Which generation?
Possibly, this sinful generation, but also: this generation of Israel. Another possibility is: this generation that sees these things happen (like ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing in the holy place), this generation which will live at that time will not pass away until all these things have happened.
- When this will happen is unknown. But Jesus doesn't want the disciples to be totally unaware about what will happen so He described the signs.
He also wants them to learn something and He does it with two examples.
Both examples are true and relate to God's wrath and punishment and salvation of His elect.
The first example deals with Noah and the time in which he lived.
- Matthew 24:37
Luke 17:26
- “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”
- Just as it happened in the days of Noah.
What happened then?
The people who lived before the flood ate, drank and were married until the day that Noah entered the ark. Noah warned them a long time before, that they should repent, because otherwise the punishment of God would be upon them, but they didn't care. They were just eating, drinking and marrying, as if God had not warned.
So it will be just before Jesus comes back. The people will live as if God will do nothing, but suddenly, God will still perfect His plan.
Noah went in the ark on the day of God's wrath, on that day he was removed from the destruction by God.
- Jesus says: The same way it will happen when the Son of men comes.
The day that He comes will also be the day of His wrath.
And just like Noah was saved on that day, God's people will be saved from the wrath.
- Revelation 11:19
- We read in Revelation that the ark of the covenant will be visible.
- The second example deals with Lot, who is saved from the wrath that befell Sodom and Gomorrah.
Everything went well in those city's. Lot was just extracted before God destroyed all in Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Luke 17:30
- Luke says: “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”
- The people will on that day, that Jesus is coming, eat, drink, buy, sell, plant and build, but on the day that God's people will be initiated, on that day the wrath of God will explode.
- Revelation 6:17
- “...and who can stand?” at that day...
- Luke 17:34
- On that day, or as Luke says: night, there will be two in one bed, one will be adopted and the other left behind.
- Matthew 24:40
- Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.
Is this Divine arbitrariness?
- John 6:47
- No! Jesus said: “he who believes has everlasting life.”

- John 3:17 Anyone who believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."
- Luke 17:31-33 "On that day no-one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no-one in the field should go back for anything.
Remember Lot's wife!
Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it."
- Matthew 24:42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."
- Hebrews 2:1-4 In Hebrews we read: "We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.
...how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him."
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9 "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Mark 13:33 Be on guard! Be alert! You won't know when that time will come.
- Matthew 24:43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you must also be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4 Now, brothers "you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."
"But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief."

Jesus wants to make clear with many examples how those last things will happen. Recently he gave the example of the owner of the house and the thief, now another example:
- Mark 13:34-37 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.
"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.
What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

In this example Jesus is the one who is "going away". ("A far journey" in KJV)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:3 "While people are saying, "Peace and safety", destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." says Paul.
- Matthew 24:44 So you must also be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
- Matthew 24:45-47 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."
- Revelation 20:4b ".... They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."
- Matthew 24:48-51 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow-servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

1 Thessalonians 5:7, 8

Paul says: "... For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

Also in this section of that slave and the return of the lord, we can see that the faithful and sensible slave does have an idea when his master can be expected. From the wicked slave Jesus says his master will come back the day that he does not expect, and at an hour that he does not know.

In other words, the good and wise slave will know this.

About the wicked slave Jesus goes further:

Matthew 24:50, 51

"The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

That Jesus does not just give an example, but this example is used, to show awareness how the return of the Lord will be and how we must be prepared, is evident from the last lines of this example.

Jesus here talks clear on the punishment that sinners will get.

Matthew 13:41-43

"The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

Revelation 20:11-15

This penalty will be carried out after the millennial kingdom.

Luke 21:34-36

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.

For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.

Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Schedule on "the LAST THINGS" according to Matthew 24 and Revelation 6

With the following question:

Will the church go through the great tribulation?

The disciples asked: "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Aaioon=century-era.)

The Lord answered as follows and note great similarity between the revelation that is recorded in Matthew 24 and the revelation that Jesus gives to John on Patmos: Revelation 6.

Matthew 24	Revelation 6
<p>5 "Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.</p>	<p>1 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" 2 I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. (This person is similar to the Lord, but he is not. see Revelation 19 :11-16)</p>
<p>6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.</p>	<p>3 When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" 4 Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.</p>
<p>7b There will be famines</p>	<p>5 When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" (Wheat and barley are everyday foods for the ordinary man. The price goes up to scarcity. Oil and wine for the rich. We see that the rich countries are not too short and that poor countries have famine.)</p>
<p>7b and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (KJV) 8 All these are the beginning of birth-pains.</p>	<p>7 When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.</p>
<p>9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.</p>	<p>9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.</p>

Matthew 24	Revelation 6
<p><u>21</u> For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again.</p> <p><u>22</u> If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.</p> <p>(The verses 15 to 28 are a further explanation of Jesus of the verses 9-14.)</p> <p>Verse 9 explanation in verse 11</p> <p>Verse 11 explanation in verses 23 till 26</p> <p>Verse 14b explanation in verse 27</p> <p><u>15</u> "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--</p> <p><u>21</u> For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again.</p> <p><u>29</u> "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'</p> <p><u>30</u> "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.</p> <p><u>31</u> And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.</p>	<p><u>10</u> They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"</p> <p><u>11</u> Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.</p> <p><u>12</u> I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,</p> <p><u>15</u> Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.</p> <p><u>16</u> They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!</p> <p><u>17</u> For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"</p>

SUMMARY Matthew 24:1-31

1. False Christ's
2. Wars
3. Famines
4. Death, through wars, famines and pestilences
5. Great distress, whereof the beginning is foretold with the announcement: " So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- For then there will be great distress".
6. Signs in nature. Immediately after the distress God will show mighty signs in nature.
7. Jesus appears on the clouds in the sky.
8. The elect will be gathered by the angels.



The beginning of the labor pain

Is the GREAT TRIBULATION the same as THE DAY OF THE LORD?

Often the argument is used that the church is not going through the great distress because God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, as we can read in Thessalonians.

“9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

There is a difference between 'tribulation' and 'wrath'. The Christians have always been oppressed. Oppression remains the same whether it is large or not. Large only indicates the scale. What is the difference between being martyred in the first century to the testimony of Jesus, or being martyred for the same testimony in the last century? The persecuted from the past and those of the (near) future need all God's help.

“so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.” (1 Thessalonians 3:3).

But is the day of His wrath then the same as "the Lord's day"?

To find out we compare a number of Bible passages . We begin in 2 Thessalonians

"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, NIV).

Paul reassures the Thessalonians “ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him ... that the day of the Lord has already come.”

Paul here clearly states the time of our being gathered with Jesus right at the beginning of the day the Lord. But he says, before that happens, the rebellion must occur and the man of lawlessness be revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

The prophet Daniel speaks also about that man of lawlessness.

“ 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9:27).

And:

31 “His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. (Daniel 11:31).

And:

11 “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.” (Daniel 12:11).

The context of these verses (verse 24) shows that there is a period set which lasts 70 weeks. We can not look into this, but meant are annual-weeks. This means it is 70 weeks x 7 years = 490 years.

In that last year-week (7 year), “ the abomination that causes desolation” will occur. In that last year-week too the people of Israel will finish transgression, put an end to sin, and atone for wickedness. These last things will happen when Jesus comes back.

The ruler of a people that will come, says Daniel, will be in the middle of that last year-week will put an end to sacrifice and offering and he will be revealed as 'the abomination that causes desolation'.

Jesus also cites Daniel in his speech on the last things:

15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’, spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--”....

“21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again.” (Matthew 24).

Thus that time will be three-and-a-half-years. Half a year - week. Daniel speaks in this context about 1290 days. Thirty more than 1260 days. Why? Frankly, I have still no certainty about what this means.

These 1260 days are mentioned in Revelation as well.

12:1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

9 The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.

4 Men worshipped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling-place and those who live in heaven.

7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

(Revelation 12:1-9, 12-14, 13:1-8)

The woman who gave birth to a male child is Israel. The male child is Jesus.

1260 Days long Israel will be protected by God in the desert. 1260 days is 3 1 / 2 years. It is also a time, times and half a time. Verse 6 and verse 14 tell the same story.

We read also about this same time in Chapter 13 of Revelation. The beast will have forty-two months power to say and do profane things and to persecute the saints. This is the time of the great tribulation. This is not the time of the Lord's day. Before that day dawns first signs are visible in the sky.

"31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." (Joel 2:31)

9 See, the day of the LORD is coming--a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger--to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.

10 The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.

11 I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.

12 I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir.

13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger. (Isaiah 13:9-13)

Signs on sun, moon and stars "I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. ..."

This is the "Lord's Day" (vs.9), the day of His burning anger.

If we compare these Bible passages, it appears that the Lord's day, the day of His wrath, comes after the signs at the Stars, Sun and Moon.

Matthew 24 shows that these signs are immediately after the tribulation.

*29"Immediately after the distress of those days
"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,"*

Conclusion:

The "great tribulation" is NOT the same as the Lord's day".

Is the church going through the GREAT DISTRESS?

When we think over the previous texts it has to be clear that we, Christians, are destined for oppression, but God did not appoint us to suffer wrath. The day of his wrath will pass us.

Let us read again 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4.

2:1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have

come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Paul mentions the coming of our Lord and our 'gathering' to Him in one breath with the coming of the day the Lord. This shows that the church is gathered at the dawn of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. The day of His wrath. We already have seen that the dawn of the day the Lord is coming is after the end of the great oppression.

Let us read some more Bible parts to make the image more clear.

We begin with a few verses from Revelation.

The church will, once it is gathered, reign along with Jesus on earth.

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:10).

6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." (Revelation 1:6).

Daniel speaks about the same things.

17 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.

18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it for ever--yes, for ever and ever.'" (Daniel 7:17-18).

It is not like that this goes without incidents. The believers will endure a lot of trouble before it happens.

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them," (Daniel 7:21).

That horn is the beast from Revelation 13.

7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them."

Fortunately Daniel 7 shows that it is no permanent victory over the Saints. When Jesus comes He will right the saints.

18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it for ever--yes, for ever and ever.'" (Daniel 7:17-18).

In Revelation 20 we read again of people who will be king with Jesus. This is particularly talked about them coming from the great distress. (They didn't worship the beast nor his image.)

And then in verse 4b:

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word

of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4).

Is the kingship then only for them who are beheaded? No, because Jesus says:

26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--

27 'He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'-- just as I have received authority from my Father." (Revelation 2:26-27).

And: 21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Revelation 3:21).

Paul explains to the Corinthians that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That's why he says:

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--

52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

He explains the same to the Thessalonians:

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 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 for ever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

It is thus clear that the church will be caught up and those who had died (in the Lord) will be resurrected. This is a resurrection.

If in Revelation 20:6 it is explicitly stated that at the beginning of the millennium (the thousand years of the Kingdom of God on earth) and after the great distress the "first resurrection" takes place, then that has to be the same as in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

Conclusion: The church will have to go through the great tribulation.

There is another point which makes it clear the church has to go through the great distress, whether we like it or not. We just read in 1 Thessalonians that the Lord will come from heaven with the trumpet call of God.

In 1 Corinthians we read that Paul tells a mystery: At the last trumpet the dead will be raised imperishable, and we, who are living at that time, will be changed.

From Revelations 11:15 we know that this last trumpet is the seventh trumpet. When that trumpet sounds Jesus will come to the earth and be King. What is written in verse 11 is the same as what Jesus told in Matthew 24:29-30

“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.”

And that’s exactly what the angels told to the disciples in Acts 1.

“he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

With all of this it is not sure when that happens. Happily there is a clue. Jesus didn’t start the sentence in Matthew 24:29 with: *“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light...”* But He started that sentence with the words: *“Immediately after the distress of those days...”*

So, the last trumpet, and the resurrection, and our being gathered to Him, will all be at the same time. And that will be after the great distress (or also called: the great tribulation).

One of the things that gives confusion are the words: “the one who now holds him back” as used in 2 Thessalonians 2. We will look into that now.

“The one who now holds him back”

We read 2 Thessalonians 2 again.

2:1 “Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

3 Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

5 Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”

To understand what Paul is talking about, we have to ask ourselves some questions. These answers have to be answered by the bible, otherwise it remains guessing.

The subject is the man of lawlessness.

Question 1: Who is this man of lawlessness?

The answer is given in the same text. Although the NIV translation is not that clear as the KJV. The NIV says: the man doomed to destruction. The KJV says: the son of perdition. That is the son of satan. Satan brings also a son in this world, but to its nature, he will be an opponent of God.

The Son of God brings peace and eternal life and Jesus came to fulfill the law. (Matthew 5:17).

But the son of Satan will bring destruction and lawlessness. His coming will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders.

God’s Son came exactly opposite.

He made no false miracles, but real wonders.

Jesus did not seductive iniquity, but He brought God’s justice.

Question 2: From whom gets the son of satan his power?

The answer is logical: from his father. Like father like son.

“44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44)

Jesus got His power from His Father when the Holy Spirit descend on Him like a dove.

Jesus was in the dessert for 40 days after that. Then, when John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus began to preach the gospel of God. This was the first time He went public.

Satan will give the son of perdition his power. We read in Revelation 13:11

“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.

12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.”

The beast had two horns LIKE the lamb, but he spoke like the dragon.

This is clearly an imitation of the Lamb, the Son of God, but the imitation was not perfect: the beast spoke as the dragon.

And this beast exercises all the power of the first beast before his eyes. The first beast is the fourth empire -the resurrected Roman Empire- that got his power from the dragon (the devil). (Revelation 12:9 and 13:4).

The imitation-lamb (the son of the devil) speaks as the devil and performs great miracles. (2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:13).

From Revelation 12 and 13 it shows that the son of perdition gets his power when the devil is removed from heaven. (Revelation 12: 9) (see also 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

Here too we see a parallel with the Son of God the Father: The Son of God received all power when God opened the heavens and His Spirit, Who is one with God, sent to earth and declared with that being one with the Son.

The son of the devil will receive his power when his father, who himself is a spirit, comes from heaven to earth.

I believe that this parallel is not meant by the devil, but equally done the way it goes.

When we compare Bible with Bible it is clear that "he who now holds him back" is satan.

Again a parallel.

Jesus was on earth thirty years, but He was, as it were, held back by His Father, to act publicly with power. After the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, Jesus showed himself publicly for 3½ years.

The son of perdition will set himself in the temple to be known as a god. But he will not do that earlier than when his father is removed from heaven.

And then the great tribulation begins. That will last for three and half years.

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

9 The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them

before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” (Revelation 12:7-12).

How much time?

“When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.” (Revelation 12:13-14).

“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 12:17).

“He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.” (Revelation 13:7).

This is the offspring of Abraham.

“Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.” (Romans 9:7-8).

Paul speaks here about people who confess that Messiah (Christ) is the Lord.

The time of satans distress will be 3 1/2 year. (Compare Revelation 12:6, 12:14 and 13:15).

But this is not everything...

The GREAT DISTRESS is the end of an era. But not the end of everything!

At the end of that tribulation Jesus is coming.

29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."
(Matthew 24:29-31).

He will gather His elect.

The dead shall be resurrected, and we, if we are still alive at that moment, will be changed and from that time be together with Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Then what will happen is foretold in Revelation 20:6. We, who have part of that first resurrection, will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him as kings, for thousand years.

A wonderful future.

When we stay focussed on Jesus and expect all our strength from Him, we will be given the strength we need to endure all that horrible things of the great tribulation.

He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can bear under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Let us prepare spiritually to persevere in our faith in Him who loves us.

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." (James 1:12).

"if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us." (2 Timothy 2:12).