

# They That Dwell on the Earth During The Great Tribulation

By Tom Stephens

In the study of the Word of God, I have been amazed at the value of word/phrase searches. For instance, while in the study of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, I have learned these searches have a great deal of “teaching value”. Consider the topic of this short paper “*They That Dwell On The Earth*” It seems that John used the phrase often in his vision of the Tribulation Period in the book of Revelation. In fact, he used it so often, I decided to see just how the phrase was used in the rest of the Word of God. I used phrases such as “inhabitants of the earth”, and “earth dwellers” in Bible searches to get answers.

My results were interesting—I learned precisely what Jesus, Paul and John referred to when they used the phrase—concerning God’s judgment of evil activities. Note, that in the Old Testament, the phrase was hardly ever used *except* to deal with Israel and God’s Judgment on her, especially in the prophetic books. However, when written in the New Testament, we find phrases dealing with the inhabitants of earth, *are in every case*, God’s judgment against evil acts by mankind--and especially during the Great Tribulation!?

**Here’s What I Found: Note statements on #10 and #12 are stated by Jesus Christ Himself.**

1. When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly. The **earth and all the inhabitants** thereof are dissolved: I bare up the pillars of it. Selah (psalm 75: 2-3).
2. **All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on Earth**, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet hear ye, (Isaiah 18:3)
3. Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste and turneth it upside down, **and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof**. (Isaiah 24:1)
4. The **earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof**; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured **the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate**: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isaiah 24:5-6)
5. For Behold the Lord Cometh out of His place **to punish the inhabitants of the earth** for their iniquity: the earth: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. (Isaiah 26:21).
6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the **earth** shall wax old like a garment, **and they that dwell therein** shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished (Isaiah 51:6).
7. For Lo, I begin to bring evil on the city that is called by My Name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon **all the inhabitants of the Earth**, sayeth the Lord of Hosts. Therefore prophecy thou against them all these words, and say to them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation. He shall mightily roar upon his habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread [the grapes], against **all inhabitants of the earth**. (Jeremiah 25:29-30).

**Comment** – All who fail to come to Jesus during the Church Age—to include Israel—will enter directly into the 7 year period of Great Tribulation; and from that group will come an “uncountable number” saved—mainly because they have weighed the value of Jesus Christ against the perils of the antichrist system. They will remain faithful to Him from that point on; they are those who will give their lives as martyrs. **But that portion of Israel who is saved during the Church Age will meet the Lord in the air with the Church at the pre-tribulation rapture. The only part of Israel who remains on earth during the tribulation will be those who do not accept the Lord Jesus during the Church Age.**

8. **And all the inhabitants of the earth** [are] reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, **and [among] the inhabitants of the earth**; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:35).
9. The Mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, **the world, and all that dwell therein**. (Nahum 1:5).

10. **THIS STATEMENT IS MADE BY JESUS: 35) For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth. 36) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these thing that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.** (Rev. 6:10).
11. And hath made of one blood all **nations of men for to dwell on the face of the Earth:** and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Acts 17:26).
12. **Jesus Said, Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.** (Rev. 3:10)
13. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, **How long, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?** (Rev. 6:10).
14. And **they that dwell upon the earth** shall rejoice over them, and make merry and shall send gifts one to another; **because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth** (Revelation 11:10).
15. And they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12) **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell on them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and for the sea!** For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time (Revelation 12: 11-12).

**Comment:** Rev. 7:9 speaks of “*a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne,*” and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne...*” These were the saints who were born again during the Tribulation Period, and have washed their robes in the blood of Christ. Read this portion of scripture to prove these believers are truly different from the raptured Saints (Revelation 7:9-17).

16. **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship Him,** whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).
17. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the **earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed** (Revelation 13:12).
18. And deceiveth **them that dwell on the earth** by [the means of] those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to **them that dwell on the earth**, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live. (Revelation 13:14).
19. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto **them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. (Revelation 14:6).
20. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: **and they that dwell on the earth** shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev.17:8).
21. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, **and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.** (Revelation 17:2).

Without doubt, when John mentions in Revelation, **the inhabitants of the earth, dwellers of the earth, or any related statement**, we know he is always speaking of those who have no deed to eternal life!

<sup>20</sup>*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: <sup>21</sup>Neither repented of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts (Revelation 9:20, 21).*

<sup>9</sup>*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. <sup>10</sup>and the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the*

*beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds (Revelation 16:9-11).*

*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (Revelation 22:11-12).*

### **B. According to Revelation, what ministries are active during the Tribulation Period?**

Jesus has never before, and never will forsake those who are truly washed in His blood. We need only to study the prophetic books concerning the tribulation period to realize that this period—still in the future—was designed to complete God’s dealings with Israel—in bringing them into His Kingdom; for between every set of seven plagues mentioned in Bible Prophecy/revelation, our Lord will continue to use several methods in His strong attempt to bring into His Kingdom every person possible. The ministries on earth during the Tribulation are as follows:

#### **ALL the Ministries on Earth During the 7-year Tribulation:**

1. Those saved during the Tribulation (6:9-11; and 7: 9-17). The *only* Gentile Ministry. This ministry is only by personal testimony as shown in Revelation 12: 11-12). These will be martyred saints.
2. The Two Witnesses—Israeli ministry (Rev. 11). Remain in Jerusalem till killed/raptured.
3. The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet—angels preaching God’s victory over the earth. (Rev. 11:15-19).
4. The 144,000 Israelites (Revelation 14:1-5). God sends these around the earth, preaching the Gospel.
5. Angels soaring through the air preaching the Gospel (Revelation 14:6-13).
6. The final angelic message to the fowl of the air (Revelation 19:17).

You will not find other ministries of any sort on earth during the Tribulation. If any present Church-age ministry believes it will continue as is in the tribulation, that person should reassess his thinking, for it cannot happen.

### **C. What does Revelation say about those who dwell upon the earth during the Great Tribulation Period?**

1. They will slay one another with a great sword.
2. They will murder those who murder the Tribulation believers in Revelation 6:10.
3. The wrath of God in the judgments called “three Woes” specifically fall upon this group (Revelations 8:13).
4. They slay the 2 prophets/witnesses of God (Moses/Elijah?), rejoicing over their deaths (Rev. 11:10).
5. The message given by these two prophets will torment them (Revelation 11:10).
6. They worship antichrist: their names are not listed in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 13:8, 12).
7. They are deceived by the miracles of the False Prophet (Revelation 13:14).
8. They will be intoxicated and blinded by the false one-world religious system (Revelation 17:12).
9. These will worship the beast and will accept his mark (Revelation 20:4).

From this survey we can easily see why God is going to have an hour of testing for this group (earth dwellers). It is to so demonstrate the hard, evil hearts of “**those who dwell upon the earth**”. God’s judgment upon them will be shown as fully just; and because it is fully just, it will encourage many in the Great Tribulation to make decisions for Christ Jesus, our Savior.

There is a very important contrast in Revelation between “**Those who dwell upon the earth**”, and another special group called “**those who dwell in Heaven**”

Let us consider who “**those who dwell in heaven**” (elders) are. **First**, they cannot be angels because of a statement made in Revelation 12:12 about this same group of “Heaven Dwellers.” It says, “**For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them, woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short.**” God’s angels would not be exhorted to rejoice, as they are not dwelling on earth during the devil’s unrestrained wrath. Satan couldn’t hurt them.

**Second**, this is not a reference to the departed souls of those massacred during the Tribulation. Though a non-resurrected believer’s soul does go to be consciously with the Lord after he dies, he is never said “**to dwell in heaven**” until after he receives a resurrection body. It would make no sense for the devil to blaspheme the souls of those whose bodies he has just murdered.

***Third***, there is a direct contrast made between “those who dwell on earth,” who are the unbelievers, and “**those who dwell in heaven**.” The “heaven dwellers” are the believers. So the question is: If they are not angels, and they are not the souls of departed believers, ***who are they?***

I believe the answer is that they are the translated (Raptured) saints (Elders) of the Church who are now dwelling in heaven in glorified bodies. This explanation gives an intelligent reason for why the devil would take the time to blaspheme them. After all he couldn't very well hide or sweep into a corner the news of millions of Christians vanishing. So Satan must give an explanation to his followers lest they slip into the other camp.

I believe the Holy Spirit has given us here a clear clue as to the whereabouts of the missing Church.

When Jesus prayed for His disciples, – “***I do not ask thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one***”, He wants the believer to be protected from falling under the authority of the evil one (Satan) (Jn. 17:15). That's the reason for the ministries of the Holy Spirit to the Church. We have the authority and the power to finish what Christ began – **to destroy the works of the devil!**

*“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”* (Luke 10:19).

Then, in Revelation 3:10, John again expresses the same idea, saying God will protect the believer ***from the time of testing, not just from the testing***. The hour of world-wide tribulation (testing) must be understood in light of the main focus of the book of Revelation. Revelation specifically details the judgments, events and personalities of the seven years of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. It begins with the world-wide deception and takeover by the Antichrist. It ends with the worst holocaust of all time! (selah). Its purpose is to bring the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to faith in the true Messiah and to judge the unbelievers from all nations called – those who dwell upon the earth. So – the hour must apply to the whole seven-year tribulation when all these things fall upon the world.

This is only one part of a multiple set of parts entitled “**The Rapture as Taught in Revelation**”. This series can be found on “Tom's Page,” at the link below.

Blessings from Tom and Linda Stephens, [www.christsbondservants.org](http://www.christsbondservants.org).