

## ***Addressing Some Common Pre-Tribulational Arguments***

### **I. Argument 1- We Will Not Go Through God's Wrath**

- a. This argument is developed out of an inference from a few bible passages that are actually referring to different matters (**1 Thessalonians 1:10;5:9**). Context proves that Paul is not referring to the "Great Tribulation" as God's wrath. The "wrath" Paul is referring to in 1 Thessalonians is the eternal destruction for the unsaved. Paul's audience would not have been able to ignore the context of his letter and flip to the book of Revelation (*It hadn't been written yet*) to determine God's wrath was the Great Tribulation.

***(1 Thessalonians 1:10 NASB), "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is, Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come."***

***(1 Thessalonians 5:9 NASB), "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"***

- i. The Greek word Paul used that is translated "wrath" in 1 Thessalonians is "orge". Every time this word occurs in the book of Revelation, it is not a reference to the Tribulation, but to the catastrophic judgments at the end of the Tribulation (**Revelation 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15**).
- ii. In **Revelation 15:1,7; 16:1**, John uses a different Greek term "thymos" (passionate anger) to refer to the bowls of God's wrath, which are poured out before the end, but after the saints are glorified.

***(Revelation 15:1,7 NASB), "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished...7 And one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever."***

***(Revelation 16:1 NASB), "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."***

- b. We must lay hold of two foundational realities pertaining to God's wrath and the Great Tribulation: 1) *The wrath of God is reserved for the unrighteous that reject the God.* 2) *The end of the age judgment series is directed at the antichrist empire and those receive his mark (not the saints. However, The Church may feel the shockwaves of the judgments).* The "tribulation" that the Church will experience, in great measure, comes from the antichrist's response to God's judgments on him and his empire.

***(Romans 1:18 NASB), "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."***

***(Revelation 13:7 NASB), "It was also given to him [antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority was given to him over every tribe, people, language, and nation."***

- c. Even throughout the Old Testament the wrath of God was not directed toward His servants. In fact, God often protected them from the judgments while simultaneously dealing out judgment on the unrighteous.

***(Exodus 8:22 NASB), "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land"***

*(2 Peter 2:4-10 NASB), “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, held for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example of what is coming for the ungodly; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the perverted conduct of unscrupulous people 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from a trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt passion, and despise authority.”*

## II. Argument 2 - Jesus Can Come At Any Minute

- a. This argument states that Jesus can come at any moment, like a thief in the night, which must be before the Tribulation otherwise we'd be able to count down seven years until His coming.
- b. First, Jesus said, “no one knows the day or the hour, (including Himself at that time)”. It doesn't say we can not discern the times and seasons. Second, Jesus' coming like a thief means that He comes suddenly and unexpectedly, *it does not mean that He will not be seen when He comes back.*

*(1 Thessalonians 5:2-4 NASB), “For you yourselves know full well that the Day Of The Lord is coming just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief.”*

- c. Every scripture that speaks of His coming being unexpected, refers to Jesus' coming at the end of the age, not at the beginning of the Tribulation. For example **2 Peter 3** is clear that our imminent hope is not the Rapture, but in His glorious appearing.

*(2 Peter 3:10-12 NASB), “But the Day Of The Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be discovered. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...”*

- d. The “Day Of The Lord” is a phrase that comes from biblical prophets who prophesied of sudden destruction for those that opposed God (*Isaiah 13:6,9; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:14-18*). The Bible clearly explains that the “Day Of The Lord” takes place after the tribulation:
  - i. The “Day Of The Lord” will be preceded by, the sun turning to darkness and the moon into blood (*Joel 2:31, 3:14; Acts 2:20*).
  - ii. The “Day Of The Lord” will be the time of Armageddon (*Revelation 16:14,16*).
  - iii. The “Day Of The Lord” will be the “Day of Judgment” (*Isaiah 2:12; Zephaniah 1:15; Romans 2:5*).
  - iv. The “Day Of The Lord” will be a day Peter identifies with the burning of the heavens and earth (*2 Peter 3:7*).
  - v. The “Day Of The Lord” will come like a thief in the night, characterized by sudden destruction of the unrighteous (*1 Thessalonians 5:2-3*).

- vi. Believers are expected to be ready for that day (*1 Thessalonians 5:4-8*).
- vii. Paul insists that this “Day Of The Lord” will not come until the apostasy and man of lawlessness come first (*2 Thessalonians 2:2-3*).
- e. In Matthew 24 Jesus warns that He will come like a thief, and that no one knows the time of His return. The context of these passages never identifies any coming before the Tribulation; the only coming they explicitly refer to is His coming after the Tribulation.

*(Matthew 24:36,43-44 NASB), 36 But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone... 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 For this reason you must be ready as well; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will”*

- i. His coming will be openly visible, like lightning from one end of the sky to the other (*Matthew 24:27*)
- ii. His coming happens after the Tribulation and after the stars fall from the sky (*Matthew 24:29*)
- iii. His post tribulation appearing is when the son of man will appear on the clouds to gather His elect (*Matthew 24:30-31*)
- iv. His coming will be a time of “sudden destruction” (*Matthew 24:39*)
- f. In the book of Revelation, Jesus promises to come like a thief as well. It is interesting that this statement appears not before the tribulation but right before Armageddon.

*(Revelation 16:14-16 NASB), “...which go out to the kings of the entire world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and people will not see his shame.”) 16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.”*

### III. Argument 3 - One Taken Away & One Left

- a. This argument comes from taking a couple of familiar passages out of context to believe that ones “taken” are taken in a secret rapture. However, context proves otherwise.

*(Matthew 24:40-41 NASB), “At that time there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.”*

*(Luke 17:34-35 NASB), “I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.”*

- b. In Matthew’s account, this mention of people being taken, directly follows the mention of the wicked being taken away to judgment. We must interpret the “taking away” based on it’ context, and when we do, it clearly shows the ones “taken” are taken to sudden destruction. Those taken, are not taken away in a secret rapture.

*(Matthew 24:39 NASB), “And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

- c. In Luke's account the disciples ask Jesus, "Where will they be taken?". Jesus answers by saying, "Where the vultures gather around corpses. This was a familiar depiction of the fate of the wicked nations gathered against God (*Ezra 39:4,17-20; Revelation 19:7,21*).

*(Luke 17:37 NASB), "And responding, they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.'"*

IV. Argument 4 - Pray That You May Escape

- a. Some use *Luke 21:36* to support a Rapture before the Tribulation.

*(Luke 21:36 NASB), "But stay alert at all times, praying that you will have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

- b. The Greek text suggests that "having strength to escape", actually means to persevere for Him. Luke also uses this term for "escape" to refer to "physically fleeing".
- i. Have strength (Gk. – *katischyō*) - To be strong to another's detriment, to prevail against; to be superior in strength; to overpower
- ii. Escape (Gk. – *ekpheugo*) – to flee out of, flee away, to seek safety in flight, to escape.

*(Acts 16:27 NASB), "When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped [*ekpheugo*]."*

*(Acts 19:16 NASB), "And the man in whom was the evil spirit, pounced on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled [*ekpheugo*] out of that house naked and wounded."*

- c. The surrounding context of this passage rules out a pre-trib Rapture due to the circumstances surrounding the timing of His coming:
- i. Dramatic signs in the sun, moon and stars will take place (**Luke 21:25-26**).
- ii. Terrified nations will witness the Son of man coming in a cloud (**Luke 21:27**).
- iii. When these events start occurring, Jesus warns, "Your redemption is drawing near" (**Luke 21:28**). In the same way when the signs are evident, "the kingdom of God is near" (**Luke 21:31**).
- iv. The only coming seen within this context is His coming that is visible to the nations.
- d. Jesus commands His disciples to not be weighed down with dissipation, so that this day will come on them like a trap. It is a command to persevere in Holiness despite the surrounding pressures. Verse 19 also sheds light into the main point Jesus is trying to make: *By your endurance you will preserve your lives.*

*(Luke 21:34-36 NASB), "But be on your guard, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that this day will not come on you suddenly, like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who live on the face of all the earth. 36 But stay alert at all times, praying that you will have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

*(Luke 21:19 NASB), "By your endurance you will gain your lives"*

V. Argument 5 - Being Kept From The Hour of Testing

- a. The best possible argument for a pre-trib Rapture is found in Jesus' message to the Church of Philadelphia in **Revelation 3:10**.

*(Revelation 3:10 NASB), "Because you have kept My word of perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of the testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth."*

- b. We have to ask, "What is the hour of testing?" and in what way did Jesus promise they'd be "kept from it".
- c. The "hour of testing" may refer to a brief period near the end (**Revelation 17:12**), but it is more often referring to the very end (**Revelation 11:13; 14:7,15; 18:10,17,19**).
- d. There is one other New Testament usage of the Greek phrase "keep from", and that other passage uses it to mean "protect from" not "secretly take out of". Like **Revelation 3:10**, this other usage in John 17 are words of Jesus.

*(John 17:15 NASB), "I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one."*

- e. Throughout the book of Revelation we only see believers protected from judgments (**Revelation 7:3; 9:4**) while only suffering in the world at the hands of their enemies (**Revelation 12:11; 13:7**).

VI. Argument 6 - Come Up Here

- a. Those who hold to a pre-trib rapture view believe it is proven in **Revelation 4:1**. They state that John is functioning as a "type" of Church.

*(Revelation 4:1 NASB), "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."*

- b. There is nothing in this verse, or the context that would suggest John is referred to a "type" of Church. "Types" can be quite a flimsy theological practice, because you could use them to argue almost anything.
- c. John is also told "Come here" in **Revelation 17:1** and **21:9** just like in **4:1** so that he could be shown something. The voice also spoke to him in **Revelation 1:10**. No one understands any of these other passages as a "type" of rapture taking place.

VII. Argument 7 – There is No Church In The Book of Revelation

- a. A common question pre-trib believers ask is, "where is the Church in the book of Revelation?".
- b. The term "church" does not appear in Revelation after chapter 3. We also must observe that the term "church" also doesn't appear to be used in scriptures that depict saints in Heaven either. After chapter 3 believers are called "saints" or God's people" thirteen times after the letters to the churches whether on earth or in heaven. The book of Revelation does show that there are saints in Heaven during the tribulation, but it is not clear that they have resurrected bodies.

- i. Revelation clearly depicts saints on the earth suffering persecution from the antichrist. Nowhere in Revelation is there a suggestion that these believers under persecution are different than other believers throughout history (such as Tribulation Saints).
- c. It is clear that the Lord's return is not explained any time before chapter 19, when He comes to judge the nations. There is no resurrection that appears before the first resurrection, which happens in **Revelation 20:4-5** where it contrasts the second death. This would be a really late "pre-trib" rapture since this scripture mentions those being resurrected are the martyrs during the Great Tribulation.

***(Revelation 20:4-5 NASB), "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection."***

#### VIII. Argument 8 - The Marriage Supper

- a. Some argue that believers must be raptured before the Tribulation so that they can participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb during the Tribulation.
- b. No biblical text actually says that we eat with Jesus during the Tribulation. In fact **Revelation 19** shows that it takes place only when Jesus is about to return to judge the Earth. This announcement follows the celebration of the Harlot Babylon's demise, while also contrasting the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with the great supper of God in which the corpses of Christ's enemies are devoured by birds. The context is clear; the Marriage Supper of the Lamb does not precede the Tribulation.

***(Revelation 19:7, 11-16 NASB), "Let's rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself... 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."***

- c. Jewish people expected the Messianic banquet (**Isaiah 25:6-8**) to begin with the consummation of God's Kingdom (**Luke 14:15**). Jesus also spoke of eating and drinking with believers "in the kingdom" (**Mark 14:25; Luke 22:30**), and also mentioned Gentile believers joining that banquet "in the kingdom" (**Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:29**).

#### IX. Argument 8 - Removing The Restrainer

- a. Some that hold to a pre-trib belief, believe that the Church (or the Spirit in the Church) restrains the man of lawlessness from appearing (**2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**).

***(2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 NASB), "And you know what restrains him now, so that he will be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is removed."***

- b. This argument would be more reasonable if the passage or its context identified the restrainer. Paul speaks ambiguously about the restrainer because the Thessalonian Church already knew who or what the restrainer was (*2 Thessalonians 2:6*).

*(2 Thessalonians 2:6 NASB), “And you know what restrains him now, so that he will be revealed in his time.”*

- c. There are over 30 views about what could restrain the man of lawlessness from being worshiped at the site of the Temple.
- i. If this is a political statement, Paul could be talking about Judean strength at that time. The temple would be desecrated only once Judean resistance was taken out.
  - ii. If Paul is speaking spiritually, some suggest that he refers to Michael, the guardian angel of Israel that would “stand out of the way,” when Israel would face its final tribulation before the raising of the dead (*Daniel 12:1*).
  - iii. Some think that the restrainer is simply just God’s restraining hand.
  - iv. The phrase “taken out of the way” can also be understood as, “come forth from the midst”. This might refer to the presence of God leaving the sanctuary, as happened before the Temple’s destruction (*Ezekiel 10:4, 18; 11:23*).
  - v. It could also refer to the community of believers in Jerusalem leaving when they recognize judgment is coming, thus “coming out of the midst” of the city.
  - vi. It could have also been their prayers that prevented an evil emperor to install his image in the Temple. If Paul is referring to saints in Jerusalem, He wouldn’t want to expose them of committing “treason” which is why he speaks ambiguously.
  - vii. Because the restrainer holds back the full revelation of the man of lawlessness, it could refer to the respect for the Law (Torah).
  - viii. The removing of the restrainer could also refer to the Church in a different sense, such as, the Church being driven underground or losing all public influence.
- d. If the removing of the restrainer means removing the Church from the earth then we have to ask how and why saints currently restrain the man of lawlessness, while the saints in the Tribulation do not. If Paul were speaking of the Spirit in the Church, we have to ask how people are converted and testify of God during the Tribulation.
- e. Regardless of the identity of the restrainer in this passage, it can not speak of the Church or the Spirit in the Church being removed before the Tribulation because the context surrounding it explicitly states we will not be gathered before the man of lawlessness appears and is seated in the temple.

*(2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 NASB), “Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit, or a message, or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”*

X. Does The Old Testament Support A Pre-Trib Rapture?

- a. Often times when people try to prove a pre-trib Rapture, they go to Old Testament judgment texts to try to prove the validity of their theory. Often times “pre-tribbers” will move to these Old Testament texts without taking into account the five New Testament passages that talk specifically about the rapture of the Church. It is easy to look at these Old Testament texts and make a supporting case for both a pre-trib rapture and post trib rapture. However, they’re still worth addressing.
- b. Noah & The Flood - Noah’s generation was characterized by sudden destruction, not several years of tribulation. God released judgment on the wicked and gave instructions for Noah, a righteous man, to thrive in the hour of Judgment. God did not remove or snatch Noah and his family away, but gave him divine blueprints to persevere in the midst of the judgment. Noah felt every wave of the flood but was not the target of God’s judgment.

*(Genesis 6:9-14 NASB), “Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for humanity had corrupted its way upon the earth. 13 Then God said to Noah, “The end of humanity has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of people; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. 14 Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.”*

*(Genesis 7:4 NASB), “For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”*

*(Hebrews 11:7 NASB), “By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”*

- c. Lot and Sodom & Gomorrah – When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He spared Lot because he was a man of righteousness. In this account, Lot too was not snatched away by God, but given urgent instruction by angels to flee the city. Even when Lot hesitated, the angels led Lot out of the city according to God’s instruction.

*(Genesis 19:15-17, 29 NASB), “When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.” 16 But he hesitated. So the men grasped his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, because the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out and put him outside the city. 17 When they had brought them outside, one said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the surrounding area; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away... 29 So it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the surrounding area, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the destruction, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived.”*

- d. Israel & The Ten Plagues – While the children of Israel were captive in Egypt, God released plagues on Pharaoh so that he would let Israelites go. While Israel may have been impacted by the first three plagues, from the fourth plague on, the Lord made a clear distinction between His people in Goshen, and the Egyptians. God is able to preserve His people on earth while pouring out judgment on the wicked.

*(Exodus 8:20-23 NASB), “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water; and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: “Let My people go, so that they may serve Me. 21 For if you are not going to let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people, and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians*

*will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they live. 22 But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that you may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of the land. 23 I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.*

*(Exodus 9:6 NASB), “So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but not one of the livestock of the sons of Israel died.”*

*(Exodus 9:25-26 NASB), “The hail struck everything that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, from people to animals; the hail also struck every plant of the field, and shattered every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, was there no hail.”*

*(Exodus 10:22-23 NASB), “So Moses reached out with his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.”*

*(Exodus 12:12-13 NASB), “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and fatally strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the human firstborn to animals; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will come upon you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”*

- e. The Inhabitants of Jerusalem When The City Was Destroyed – When the city of Jerusalem was destroyed the prophet Ezekiel received important messages related to how God was pouring out judgment while sparing those who had a mark of protection on them. God is able to release His judgments and protect His servants at the same time just like He will do at the end of the age.

*(Ezekiel 9:3-7 NASB), “Then the glory of the God of Israel ascended from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose waist was the scribe’s kit. 4 And the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and make a mark on the foreheads of the people who groan and sigh over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.” 5 But to the others He said in my presence, “Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. 6 Utterly kill old men, young men, female virgins, little children, and women, but do not touch any person on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary.” So they started with the elders who were before the temple. 7 He also said to them, “Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with the dead. Go out!” So they went out and struck and killed the people in the city.”*