
CHAPTER 13

THE TRIBULATION

[DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK (vs. 27 of Dan. 9:24-27)]

The Tribulation popularly referred to as the Great Tribulation is a period of time affecting the whole world when God's wrath is poured to judge sin, sinners and the earth. This seven (7) year Tribulation period on earth is known as Daniel's 70th Week and is biblically divided into two halves. It will come at the times of the end or the end of this world (Dan. 12:9; Matt. 13:40, 41). It starts after the rapture of the Church to begin the 70th Week of Daniel (also popularly called time of Jacob's trouble) and is therefore of Seven (7) years duration (Daniel 9:27). Half of the period is said to be 42 months or 1,260 days (Rev. 11:2-3). It ends after the great and terrible day of the Lord (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:21), when Jesus returns with His saints (Ezek. 14:4, 5). The eschatological day of the Lord will therefore start during but before the end of the Tribulation (Is. 2:12; 1Thess 5:2; 2Thess. 2:2) It is called by other names:

1. The indignation (Is. 26:20; Dan. 11:36)
2. The day of God's vengeance (Is. 34:8)
3. The time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7)
4. The overspreading of abomination (Dan. 9:27)
5. The time of trouble such as never was (Dan. 12:1; Zeph. 1:15)
6. Seventieth week (Dan. 9:27)
7. The great day of the wrath of God (1Thess. 1:10; 5: 9; Rev. 6: 16-17; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15: 1, 7; 16:1)
8. The hour of His judgment (Rev. 14:7)
9. The Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21, 29)
11. The year of recompense (Is. 34:8)
12. The day of Israel's calamity (Deut. 32:35; Ob. 1: 12-14)
13. Overflowing scourge (Is. 28:15, 18)
14. Jehovah's strange work (Is. 28:21)
15. The Hour of Trial (Rev. 3: 10)

The purpose of the Tribulation

The purpose of the Tribulation will be:

1. To demonstrate God's faithfulness to judge and punish sin. It will be direct judgment upon the world. The three series of judgments describe these judgments are Seals (Rev. 6:1-17); Trumpets (Rev. 8:1-13); and Bowls (Rev. 16:1-21).
2. To complete the redemption of Israel through intense persecution and purification of Israel (Matt. 24:9, 22; Rev. 12:17).
3. To punish sin in preparation for Christ's earthly rule (Rev. 19:11-21).
4. To give a last chance to test man (Rev. 9:20, 21).
5. To prove that Satan is a usurper in the rise and dominion of Antichrist (2Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 13:1-18; 19:11-20:6).
6. To fulfill Bible Prophecy (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27).
7. To judge creation for man's sin and later to purify it in order to be redeemed (See Rom. 8:18-25).

The Distinctiveness of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 6:15-17)

The Tribulation is a time on earth of the most horrific and horrendous plagues and calamities in the history of mankind as seen by the releasing of the seven (7) seals, the seven (7) trumpet judgments and the seven (7) bowl judgments. It will be a period of very, very intense persecution for all Tribulation saints (including the 144,000 sealed Jews) as godlessness and wickedness will be at its peak (Matt. 24:9ff). Matthew 24:21, 22 read: *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* Both the Olivet discourse in Matthew and Revelation give us the vivid distinctive of the period.

MATTHEW	OBSERVATION	REVELATION
Matt. 24:9-14	the seven seals	Rev. 6:1-7:17
Matt. 24:15-26	the seven trumpets and the seven bowls	Rev. 8:1-18:24
Matt. 24:27-51	the final triumph of Christ	Rev. 19:1-21

Matt. 24:9-14 [Rev. 6:1-7:17] describes the FIRST 3 ½ YEARS TRIBULATION

Matt. 24:15-26 [Rev. 8:1-18:24] describes the SECOND 3 ½ YEARS GREAT TRIBULATION

Matthew 24:27-51 [Rev. 19:1-21] describes the Second Coming of Christ to earth.

For details on the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls judgments during the Tribulation, refer to the "THE TRIBULATION" in Chapter 15 – An overview of the Book of Revelation.

The Description of the Tribulation

It will be time of great distress, trouble, persecution, affliction and judgment for sin when the full fury of God's holy wrath is poured out against sin (Rev. 15: 1). The war, devastation, destruction and death, famine, plague etc. will be like nothing even seen before or after. The apostasy, idolatry, blasphemy and false worship will also be unparalleled. The Anti-Christ will set up his false counterfeit one world religion, government and economy requiring worship of himself instead of God in fulfillment of prophecy (Dan. 7:19-27; 9: 24-27).

The horrendous events of the Tribulation period will be so severe and so intense that men will pray and plead for the rocks to fall on them. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17)

Personalities in the tribulation

1. The Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28, 30-32; Rev. 7:9-17)
2. The Devil (Rev. 12:12).
3. The Two Special Witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12).
4. Antichrist (2Thess. 2:3, 4, 9).
5. The False Prophet (Rev. 13:11).
6. 144,000 Sealed Jewish people (Rev. 7:4)

Salvation during the tribulation

Salvation will still be provided by the Godhead through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit as in the Old Testament period. The Bible mentions the Salvation of Multitudes both Jews and Gentiles (Rev. 7:1-17) and the Sealing of 144,000 Jews-Servants of God (possession and

ownership). There will still be the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Ministry agents will be:

1. The two witnesses of (Rev. 11:11-12).
2. The 144,000 Jews who will be sealed (Rev. 7:3-8; 14:1).
3. The message that will be preached by angels (Rev. 14:6-7).
4. The direct conviction of those who earlier on though had heard the gospel but did not repent before the rapture.
5. The miraculous acts of God as punishment for sinners may cause some to repent.

Many people from every tribe, nation and language will be saved. Many of these will be martyred or killed for their faith in Jesus Christ (Rev. 6:9-11). But many also will not repent (Rev. 9:20-21).

THE END OF THE TRIBULATION

The Tribulation will end after the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16: 12-21; 19: 11- 21). The will take place on the final day(s) of the Tribulation after Christ lands on the Mount of Olives to defeat the forces of evil.

The beast (Anti-Christ) and the False Prophet (the Second Beast - Rev. 13:14) will be cast into the lake of Fire (Rev. 19:17-20). Satan will be bound and sealed in the bottomless Pit; and all the forces of evil will be destroyed by the word from the Lord's mouth.

Thus the return of the Jesus Christ - the glorious Second Coming to the Earth - concludes the Tribulation as He, the Lord Jesus judges Satan, evil and the forces of evil and all the wicked people of the Earth (Rev. 1-21).

A Chart of the Main Events of the Great Tribulation.

First Half of 3½yrs	Mid-Point	Second Half of another 3½yrs
1. Antichrist appears on the scene (6:2) and is given crown by 10-nation confederation. (cf.17:12) 2. Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel promising peace and protection—part of 1st Seal (6:2) and fulfills Dan. 9:27. Begins Israel's time clock. 3. The Two witnesses (11:3-12) and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists sealed by God near the start of the time. (7:1-8) 4. False Church is organized (17:1-6) 5. Seal judgments poured out on earth a. Antichrist – false peace and security (6:1-2) b. War – campaign of Armageddon begins in early stages (6:3-4 see Dan 11) but this could also be the Russia and Allied Nations War, Gog & Magog War I, which concludes as God intervenes to save Israel c. Famine & inflation – economic chaos (6:5-6) d. Death – from war, famine as one-fourth of world's population killed (6:7-8) e. Saints persecuted and martyred (6:9-11) f. Cosmic disturbances and earthquakes and earth convulsions occur (6:12-17) 6. War Occurs near end of first 3½yrs. God protects Israel, especially the sealed evangelists.	1. Antichrist breaks covenant with Israel. Sets up abomination of desolation in temple in Jerusalem and demands to be worshipped (11:7; 13:1-10). 2. Satan is cast out of heaven and loosed on the earth (12:7-12) to fully empower and guide Antichrist (the beast) and his false prophet. Jews persecuted. 3. God's mercy is still seen throughout the Tribulation a. Through the witness of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (7: 3-4) and the two witnesses (11:3), many Jews and Gentiles come to Christ during the Tribulation (7:9; 20:4). b. However, many people refuse God's offer of mercy and still do not repent (9:20, 21; 16:9, 11), thus sealing their eternal judgment.	1. Persecution of Israel greatly increases 2. Antichrist controls world religion and economy (13) 3. Trumpet judgments poured out on earth a. Earth – 1/3rd of vegetation destroyed (8:7) b. Salt water – 1/3rd turned to blood (8:8-9) c. Fresh water – becomes bitter (8:10-11) d. The heavens – stricken with chaos (8:12-13) e. Scorpion-like stings – on men for five (5) Months. (9: 1-12) f. Mankind – 1/3rd of men are killed (9: 13-21) 4. Mark of beast necessary to participate in economic system (13:16-18) 5. Bowl judgments poured out on earth toward end of second half a. Grievous sores (16:1-2) b. Oceans turn to blood, fish die (16:3) c. Fresh waters turn to blood (16:4-7) d. Sun scorches human kind (16:8-9) e. Throne of beast in darkness (16:10-11) f. Euphrates dried up (16:12-16) g. Earth disturbance including hailstones (16:17-21) 6. The apostate Church will be destroyed (17:16-17) 7. World economic system destroyed (18) 8. Armies of world gather for final battle of campaign ending at Battle of Armageddon (14:20; 16:14; 19: 19). 9. Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ in great power and glory to defeat enemies and save Israel (19:11-19). 10. Beast and false prophet thrown into lake of fire and rest of God's enemies are killed (19:20, 21)

