

# The Tribulation

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## The Terminology of the Tribulation

### 1. Daniel's Seventieth Week

Dan. 9:24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place."

Dan. 9:25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress."

Dan. 9:26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

Dan. 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Daniel is informed by God that there is a period of "seventy-sevens" [shebuim, shebi im] seventy periods of seven or seventy heptads are decreed [chatak, niph'al pf, for determine, divide,] for the Jews and Jerusalem. This is one of the key passages for understanding Biblical prophecy. Here we learn that

- a. The tribulation is a seven year period.
- b. Divided into two, three and a half year periods.
- c. These two segments are divided by the "abomination of desolation."

Context: Daniel is thinking about how long his people will stay in captivity. First the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, and then the Persians under Cyrus. Almost Seventy years have gone by and Daniel is reading in Jeremiah 25:22,23; 29:10.

Notice how precise God's time table is:

Jer. 25:11 "And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of

Babylon seventy years."

Jer. 25:12 "Then it will be when years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation," declares the LORD, "for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation."

Jer. 29:10 "For thus says the LORD, "When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place."

In 605 BC the first invasion; in 537 BC the first group returned from the exile and laid the found in 536.

In 586 BC you have Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed; In 516 BC the Temple is rebuilt.

In 536 BC Cyrus the Great gave the first command to return to the land, recorded in Ezra 1. This decree is eliminated because it does not relate to the walls and city.

In 458 BC:

To finish transgression; kala, to bring to completion

To make an end of sin; Q inf chatam, to bring to an end, culmination

To make atonement for iniquity

To bring in everlasting righteousness

To seal up vision and prophecy

And to anoint the most holy place

Daniel received this revelation when he was still living under Babylonian captivity and was reading in Jeremiah that the end of that time was near. This led Daniel to pray precisely for the future of Israel and this is when he is informed by the angel Gabriel of the exact timetable for Israel.

Here the term Hebrew weeks, shebe'im, is used literally it means a period of seventy sevens.

The first three were accomplished at the cross, but since this prophecy is for Israel, not the Church they are not fulfilled until the second advent, when the sin of Israel is brought to completion.

## 2. The Day of the Lord

1. Emphasizes special interventions of God in human history; His victory over His enemies, His sovereignty over the universe. The term refers to both a time of judgment and a time of blessing. During the current time the Lord is not exerting His rule in a visible way.

2. Nontechnical: God demonstrating his authority over Gentile nations in judgment.

3. Technical term: Future, God's intervention in the tribulation to judge the nations, discipline Israel, and to establish His Messianic Kingdom. It is a time of destruction (Zech 12:4) and comes on us like a thief, 1 Thess 5:2.

Zech. 12:2 "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah."

Zech. 12:3 "And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

Zech. 12:4 "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment, and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

Zech. 12:5 "Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, "A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God."

4. Key Old Testament Passages: Isa 30:23-25; 34:1-8; 35:1-10; Joel 2:28-32; 3:1-21; Zeph. 3:8, 16-20; Zech 14:1-21.

Is. 13:6 "Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty."

Is. 13:7 "Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt."

Is. 13:8 "And they will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of them; They will writhe like a woman in labor, They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame."

Is. 13:9 "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it."

Amos 5:18 "Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light;"

Amos 5:19 "As when a man flees from a lion, And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, And a snake bites him.

Amos 5:20 "Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?"

5. The day of the Lord includes darkness of the heavenly bodies in judgment followed by the light of blessing in the Mill Kingdom.

Joel 2:28 "And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions."

Joel 2:29 "And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."

Joel 2:30 "And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke."

Joel 2:31 "The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes."

Joel 2:32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls."

6. The narrow aspect: the actual event of the Second Coming and the judgments associated with it, e.g., "the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31; Zech. 14:1-5).

7. The broad aspect refers to the seven year period of the Tribulation.

### **3. Jacob's Trouble**

Emphasizes the Jewish focus of the Tribulation. This is a time of unparalleled trouble for Israel.

Jer. 30:7 "Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it."

### **4. The Wrath of God**

This phrase describes the entire tribulation period, since only the wrath of God could qualify as an unparalleled time of trouble. It is not merely a time of Satan's wrath and man's wrath but God's wrath.

Zeph. 1:15 "A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,"

1Th. 1:10 "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

1Th. 5:9 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Rev. 11:18 "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the

small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

Rev. 15:1 "And 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."

Rev. 16:1 "And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth."

## 5. The Tribulation and the Great Tribulation

1. All believer's can expect some level of adversity or tribulation in life.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Rom. 2:9 "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, "

Rom. 5:3 "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;"

2. But this is a time of unprecedented, worldwide suffering. The term tribulation refers to the entire period of Daniel's seventy weeks, the term Great Tribulation should apply only to the second half of that week.

Matt. 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,"

Mark 13:19 "For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall."

Mark 13:24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,"

Great Tribulation

Rev. 7:14 "And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

## The Beginning and Length of the Tribulation

Dan 9:27 and Isa 28:14-22; begins when the Antichrist signs a seven year peace treaty with Israel.

The length, seven years, is based on Daniel 9:24-27

### **The Purposes for the Tribulation**

- a. To execute judgment on the wicked and on the rebellious nations who have both rejected Christ and Israel. (Ps 2:5; Jer. 25:30-32; Zech. 12:3; 2 Thess 2:12; Rev. 3:10; 6:15)
- b. To demonstrate the inability of Satan to rule the planet.
- c. To provide time for millions to be saved. This is fulfilled in Rev. 7:1-17. This is accomplished through the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.
- d. To prepare the nation Israel for the Messiah and His kingdom.

Dan. 12:5 "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river."

Dan. 12:6 "And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"

Dan. 12:7 "And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed."

Jer. 30:7

The Jewish character of the Tribulation: Dt. 4:30; Dan. 12:1; Ezek 20:37; Zech 13:8-9; Matt 24:25-20

The coming of salvation to Israel; Dan 9:24; Ezek 36:25-36; 37:1-14; 39:21-29; Jer. 31:31-34; Mal 4:4-6; Rom 11:25-28; Rev 7:4-14

### **Key People in the Tribulation**

#### **Antichrist**

The key human leader during the Tribulation who opposes the plan of God, is the pawn of Satan, and who attempts to destroy the Jews. Scripture uses several different titles for him, the one most commonly used is ANTICHRIST, which comes from 1 John 2:18

1John 2:18 "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour."

1John 2:22 "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son."

The Greek proposition anti can have the idea of opposition, it more often indicates substitution, so he is a substitute Messiah.

### **Other Titles**

The little horn (Dan. 7:8)

The insolent king (Dan. 8:23)

The prince who is to come (Dan. 9:26)

The one who makes desolate; the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27; Matt 24:15)

The man of lawlessness ( 2 Thess 2:3)

The son of destruction (2 Thess 2:3)

The lawless one (2 Thess. 2:8)

The beast (Rev 11:7; see also 13:1; 14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 17:3; 13; 19:20; 20:10)

The despicable person (Dan. 11:21)

The strong wiled king (Dan. 11:36)

The worthless shepherd (Zechariah 11:16, 17)

### **Other characteristics**

1. He rises to power during the transition between the Rapture and the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week. Dan. 9:27; Dan. 7:24, 25.
2. He is the head of a confederation of western powers during the tribulation years.
3. The Antichrist rises to power following the confederation of ten nations. He assumes control by force and subdues three of the ten members (Dan. 7:24). So he is a political leader.
4. At the midpoint of the Tribulation he sets up his statue in the Holy of Holies of the Tribulation temple.
5. He is usually pictured in the Bible as a warrior. He pursues peace and wages war. He operates on deceitful tactics.
6. He is personally indwelt by Satan.

7. The first 3.5 years represent his rise to power. He persecutes Christian and other opponents in a reign of terror that goes beyond any persecution, pogrom, or holocaust ever before experienced in human history.

8. At the end of the 7 years, his worldwide coalition begins to fragment, an army from the east invades in concert with one from the south. Which culminates in the campaign of Armageddon.

9. His destiny is to be sent to the Lake of Fire with the False Prophet Rev 19:11-21.

10. Jewish or Gentile? Gentile: a. typology, Dan 11 type is Antiochus Epiphanes, a Gentile. Second, imagery, he arises from the sea, Rev 13, 17:15; c. as part of the times of the Gentiles he is a Gentile who rules over Jerusalem., d. he is of Roman descent.

### **False Prophet**

1. Rev 13:11-18 he is a distinct personage from the Antichrist and also portrayed as the second beast., "another beast". He is a prophet or spokesman for the Antichrist.

### **Pentecost**

He is a Jew, arising from the earth, i.e., the land

He is religiously influential,

He is motivated by Satan

He has a delegated authority

He promotes worship of the first beast

He performs signs and miracles

He deceives the unbelieving world

He promotes idolatrous worship

He has the power of death over people who do not worship the beast

He has great economic power

He will establish the mark of the beast

**144,000**



Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5

1. They are Jews, from every tribe of the sons of Israel (7:4) and 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes (none or lost).
2. They are "bond servants of our God" (Rev. 7:3), they are believers who become the evangelistic corps for the Tribulation.
3. They are sealed which suggests they cannot be harmed.

### **The Two Witnesses**

These are variously identified as Elijah, Moses, Enoch. But there is no clear support for this. They come in the power and in a ministry similar to these. They are two Jewish prophets who will be used in remarkable way. They fulfill Zech 4:11-14. \

### **The Course of the Tribulation**

Phase 1: The First Three and a Half Years

Israel is in the land, but as an unregenerate people.

The SEAL Judgments; These are the beginning of judgments

Phase 2: The Midpoint

Abomination of Desolation

The Head Wound

Satan's Temper Tantrum

Phase 3: The Second Three and a Half Years

Trumpet Judgements

Bowl Judgments

Concluding Phase: Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ