

The Tribulation

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Mat 24:21-22

INTRODUCTION

Just how short shall the "Tribulation" be: seven years after the Rapture of the Church. The seven years are divided into two periods of three and one-half years; often in Scripture you will find the three and one-half year periods described as: 42 months, 1260 days or a time, and times and a half-time. The certainty of certain events occurring in the Tribulation will be the subject of this doctrine. Welcome to events future.

In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus Christ, speaking to his disciples, prophesied concerning the Tribulation. The disciples wanted to know:

"Tell us, when all this will take place? And what will be the sign that it is about to happen?" Mar 13:4

The prophecy should not have come as a shock to the disciples; the Old Testament contained many references to this future time of great violence. Jer 30:4-7 speaks of a "time of Jacob's distress" and compares it to a "woman in child birth." Eze 20:34-38 speaks of the Tribulation as a time when Israel shall "pass under the rod." The Tribulation is also represented as God's melting pot, where Israel will be refined as gold and the impurity removed. Eze 22:19-22

**Jer 30:4 These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah:
Jer 30:5 "This is what the LORD says: "Cries of fear are heard -- terror, not peace.**

Jer 30:6 Ask and see: Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale?

Jer 30:7 How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.

Eze 20:34 I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered -- with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath.

Eze 20:35 I will bring you into the desert of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you.

Eze 20:36 As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Eze 20:37 I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

Eze 20:38 I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me.

Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

Eze 22:19 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because you have all become dross, I will gather you into Jerusalem.

Eze 22:20 As men gather silver, copper, iron, lead and tin into a furnace to melt it with a fiery blast, so will I gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you.

Eze 22:21 I will gather you and I will blow on you with my fiery wrath, and you will be melted inside her.

Eze 22:22 As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted inside her, and you will know that I the LORD have poured out my wrath upon you.'"

Perhaps the most familiar term of all is Daniel's Seventy weeks. In his vision the prophet Daniel was told of a seventy week period that God would give the Jews "to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness ... and to anoint the most holy place" Dan 9:24-27

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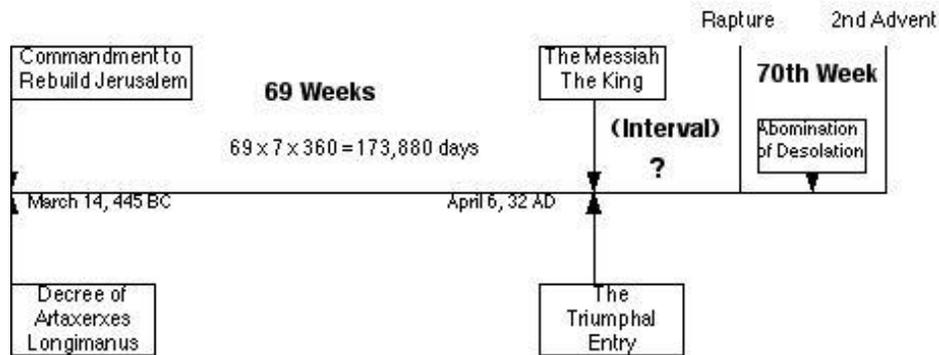
Dan 9:24 "Seventy 'sevens' (*490 years*) are decreed for your people (*Israel*) and your holy city (*Jerusalem*) to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy (*Christ at His Second Advent*).

Dan 9:25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (*1st of Nisan 445 B.C.*) until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, (*the 1st Palm Sunday*) there will be seven 'sevens,' (*49 years*) and sixty-two 'sevens' (*434 years thus 483 years*). It (*the city of Jerusalem*) will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

Dan 9:26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' (*the 434 years that follow the 49 years it took to rebuild the city*) the Anointed One (Christ) will be cut off (*the crucifixion*) and will have nothing. The people of the ruler (*the Romans in A.D. 70*) who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed (*the Church Age*).

Dan 9:27 He (*the Satan indwelt AntiChrist*) will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' (*the Tribulation*). In the middle of the 'seven' (*three and one-half years into the Tribulation*) he (*the AntiChrist*) 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 (*the demise of the Satan indwelt AntiChrist*).

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel



Are We Ready?

1. We should not trouble ourselves over the timing of the events of eschatology. When that day and hour may take place we cannot tell. What does matter however, will we be ready to meet Him whenever He comes? There is, no preparation more significant than this: Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have, then you are ready.

1.1 In this the Church Age we are to pray for the Rapture and accept the fact that no man knows the hour or the day of that blessed event. Remember Paul's exhortation: "Comfort ye one another with these words." And what were those words?

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

2. Matthew provided far more details than did his fellow gospel writer Mark. I deem it appropriate to now take a look at Matthew's account and then we will develop just what will happen at the final battle of the campaign of Armageddon.

3. Matthew Chapter 24 Overview

- Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple.

Mat 24:1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.

Mat 24:2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down."

- The disciples ask the Lord when will this happen and what will be the sign of Your return? The disciples assume His coming will end the world. They know nothing about eschatology.

Mat 24:3 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?"

- Jesus first explains there will be certain events taking place before the Rapture. These are things we see today: deception, wars, rumors of war, nation rising against nation, famines and earthquakes.

Mat 24:4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you.

Mat 24:5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Mat 24:6 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.

Mat 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

Mat 24:8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

- Jesus next moves to the events of the Tribulation.

Mat 24:9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Mat 24:10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,

Mat 24:11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.

Mat 24:12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

Mat 24:13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Mat 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.

- Christ warns of the abomination that causes desolation. An event prophesied by Daniel. Daniel says this event will take place in the middle of the Tribulation. See the Doctrine of Daniel's Seventieth Week for more details.

Mat 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel [Dan 9:27]--let the reader understand--

Mat 24:16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Mat 24:17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.

Mat 24:18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.

Mat 24:19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!

Mat 24:20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

- Christ describes further details concerning the events following the abomination of that which causes desolation. It is during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation--commonly called The Great Tribulation. The first three and one-half years of the Tribulation has been called "Satan's Failed Utopia."

Mat 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now-- and never to be equaled again.

Mat 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

Mat 24:23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.

Mat 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible.

Mat 24:25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

Mat 24:26 "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.

Mat 24:27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Mat 24:28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

- King Jesus will return to deliver Israel at the end of the Tribulation.

Mat 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.'

Mat 24:30 "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.

Mat 24:31 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.

- Jesus teaches the parable of the fig tree, Israel is the fig tree and when the nation again appears all should know the end is near.

Mat 24:32 "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.

Mat 24:33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.

Mat 24:34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- The day and hour of the Second Advent is unknown because the time of the Rapture is unknown. Once the Rapture occurs, the Second Advent can easily be predicted. The Second Advent will take place seven years after the Rapture.

Mat 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Mat 24:37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Mat 24:38 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;

Mat 24:39 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.

- Mat 24:40-41 have been erroneously taught as describing the Rapture. The man and woman taken refer to one being taken for judgment and the other left to rule with Him at His Second Advent during the Millennium. Ergo, the parable refers to the Second Advent and not the Rapture.

Mat 24:40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

Mat 24:41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

Mat 24:42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

Mat 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.

Mat 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

- Mat 24:45-51 urges Israel to be ready when the Lord comes. For those who do not prepare (by faith alone in Christ alone) will be assigned a place in hell.

Mat 24:45 "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?

Mat 24:46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

Mat 24:47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

Mat 24:48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,'

Mat 24:49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.

Mat 24:50 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.

Mat 24:51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- Because the Rapture is imminent it will occur before the highly specific and traumatic events of the Tribulation, thus the Church will not go through the Tribulation. Clearly, the imminent nature of the Rapture supports the Pre-Trib view. Paul looked for the Rapture during his generation.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

1Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1Co 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

GRACE BEFORE JUDGMENT

Throughout the Tribulation the gospel will be proclaimed as never before in history. The world will be evangelized by three groups:

- By the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are saved following the Rapture of the Church

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel ...

- By the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah

Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Rev 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Rev 11:5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.

Rev 11:6 These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

- By angels

Rev 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, language and people.

Rev 14:7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

The Unholy Trinity

There are many passages that describe the maneuvers of the various kings of the Tribulation; this passage explains the evil force that motivates them. The "three unclean spirits" are demons to whom Satan delegates the responsibility of indwelling world rulers and their advisers in order to influence them to execute his will.

Rev 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Rev 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Dan 10:13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Dan 10:14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

During the Church Age, Satan's power on earth is so restrained by the ministry of God the Holy Spirit that men often forget the power and existence of demons. However, during the Tribulation Satan will be free to wreak havoc without restraint.

The Dragon-The Devil

The first member of this nefarious trio is the dragon, or Satan himself. In the Tribulation as in the Garden of Eden, Satan will direct worship away from God and toward himself. His obsession has ever been "to be like the Most High" and to be worshipped as God.

Isa 14:13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

While God has permitted Satan to become the "ruler of this world," this has never satisfied his insatiable power lust to be like the Most High.

Joh 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Joh 12:32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

When the devil took Christ whom he knew to be God to a high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world, he said, "All things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Mat 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

Mat 4:9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

The culmination of Satan's attempts to be worshiped as God is revealed by the power he gives the "man of lawlessness." It is written that the king of the West, as Satan's man, "takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

The seed of rebellion planted in the Garden will bear bitter fruit, for in the Tribulation both Satan and "the beast" are worshiped instead of God.

Rev 13:4 **Men worshiped the dragon** because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

Rev 13:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

Rev 13:6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

Rev 13:7 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.

Rev 13:8 **All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast** -- all whose names are not written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

From the first pernicious innuendo of the Garden until this very hour, Satan denies that a just and righteous God has taken care of the sin problem. Sin is no longer an issue: "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus." Rom 6:23(b)

The devil has succeeded in blinding men's minds "that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4 compare 2Co 3:14-16).

2Co 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2Co 3:14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

2Co 3:15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

2Co 3:16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The simplicity of "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" is obscured by endless systems of works and religion through which man seeks to be saved.

Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved -- you and your household."

Acts 16:32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

The Beast Out of the Earth—The Antichrist

Rev 13:1 "The devil looked out on planet earth's swirling mass of humanity; he viewed the confusion of the Gentile world as opportunity. Then I saw the Antichrist arise out from the confused skein of the nations. There was a ten nation federation ruling Europe. It was from one of the smallest of the ten that the Antichrist rose to power. Soon he took over two other nations and then finally he became ruler over all ten. Each of the ten national leaders served as blasphemous heads of state in open opposition to God.

Rev 13:2 John was impressed with the appearance of the Antichrist. He resembled a leopard, with feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. He saw a dragon who seemed to be behind the scene leading the respective kings. The dragon gave the beast his power, a throne and great authority. The animal symbols represented three of the four major Gentile empires of time past: the leopard, Alexander, the bear, the Medo-Persians and the lion, Babylon. A fourth was an empire yet to come, one whose rise was imminent but not yet revealed; the fourth would be a Revived Roman Empire soon to come. John was amazed at that which had been revealed to him. He would be even more amazed at what would be revealed next.

Rev 13:3 He saw the Antichrist sustain a fatal wound, but was miraculously resuscitated. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast as their political and spiritual leader.

Rev 13:4 Most of the world though unaware, were worshiping Satan. Satan indwelt the Antichrist and gave him his authority and power. This power included a strong military presence. Those who worshiped the new world leader were absolutely devoted and impressed. They asked, 'Who is like the Antichrist? Who can make war against him?'

Rev 13:5 The Antichrist was also given great wisdom to effectively blaspheme God. He ruled the world as a despot.

Rev 13:6 Both the Antichrist and his side-kick the False Prophet took great pleasure in slandering the name of God and His Word. Jews were ridiculed and Christians were considered a lunatic fringe. The Word of God was said to be but an opiate for the downtrodden.

Rev 13:7 The Antichrist in the last half of the Tribulation was given power to make war against all Jews and Christians. All of this was done under the permissive will of God. God permitted the rise of the Antichrist in order to set him up for his grand humiliation prophesied by the 28th chapter of the book of Ezekiel.

Rev 13:8 The nations of the world and all their unbelieving citizens were openly worshipping the Antichrist as God--that is to say all those whose names had been removed from the book of life belonging to the Lamb of God.

Rev 13:9 Believers of all ages are urged to pay attention to that which is said in this apocalypse.

Rev 13:10 If you live in the Tribulation you are going to be incarcerated for the cause of Christ. Do not miss the Rapture, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ now! If you are a believer in the Tribulation you might even be executed. This age will call for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints of God but at the end of the seven years the Saints of God will be vindicated.

The Beast Out of the Sea—The False Prophet

Rev 13:11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth, he was a Jew. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. The two horns were symbolic of his ambivalent nature; he was at first sweet as sugar but later took on the nature of the meanest junk yard dog ever.

Rev 13:12 He was given power and authority to speak and act on behalf of the Antichrist, in fact he made certain the earth and its inhabitants worshipped the Antichrist, the same world leader whose fatal wound had been healed.

Rev 13:13 The second beast is called the False Prophet. He was a world religious leader who performed miraculous signs and wonders, even causing fire to streak across the heavens and then on command the fire would fall to earth. He was considered by many unbelievers as the incarnation of Elijah.

Rev 13:14 It was because of the many miracles performed by this second beast that he and the Antichrist were able to deceive the inhabitants of the earth. He received his power from the indwelt Antichrist and made no bones about the source of His power. Consequently he ordered the leaders of Israel to set up an image in honor of the Antichrist. Those living on planet earth had earlier been impressed because of the recovery of the Antichrist from the terrible head wound; his resuscitation to life was just the sign many needed to accept the allegation that the Antichrist was the incarnate messiah and the false prophet, Elijah.

Rev 13:15 The False Prophet was permitted to put the breath of life into the statue of the Antichrist, ergo he spoke and many were amazed. The image had been setup in the ersatz temple. This took place in the middle of the Tribulation. Everyone who refused to worship the image of the first beast was put to death.

Rev 13:16 All people were forced to receive a mark on their hand or on their forehead in order to transact business. An underground economy had to be established to feed the many believers. It did not matter how powerful or how wealthy you might be, without the mark you could not buy or sell.

Rev 13:17 To transact business you had to have the mark. The mark stood for the name of the first beast and for the number of his name.

Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. The wise man will understand and learn from the number assigned to the Antichrist: 666. The entire Book of The Revelation is a portrait of man, without God, in control having power provided by Satan himself.

So much for the Unholy Trinity; by producing great signs and miracles through the power of Satan, the dictator of Palestine is able to sustain the claims of deity made by the Antichrist, and direct worship toward himself.

Thus these two beasts as earthly rulers use and encourage unprecedented demon activity, wars, cataclysms, and pestilence precipitating the greatest suffering the world has ever known. Is it any wonder this period is referred to in Scripture as “the great tribulation?”

The Frog Demons

For centuries demons have operated undercover, but in the Tribulation they assume major roles and their activities become highly visible. These demons are said to be “like frogs.” The croaking noise of the frog is used here as an analogy to the boastful promises of these future tyrants. The summit talks which precede the alliance between the demon-possessed beast and the false prophet are actually the brilliant strategies of demons motivating mankind.

These demons also provide the power for the dictators to perform pseudo miracles which are designed to captivate people. The less people think Bible doctrine, the more they are deluded by the performing of “signs.” In the Tribulation, Satan utilizes every means possible to assemble the “whole world” to do battle against God.

Rev 16:13 Then I saw three demons that looked very much like frogs; they came out of the mouth of Satan, out of the mouth of the Antichrist and out of the mouth of the False Prophet.

Rev 16:14 They performed miraculous signs and wonders before the kings of the earth. By demonic control and possession the leaders of the world were persuaded to send their armies into the Valley of Jezreel near Megiddo to await the battle to end all battles—the destruction of Israel being their ultimate goal.

Early in the Tribulation the false prophet, the dictator and religious leader of Israel, faces a dilemma: how can he defend his little country against the constantly changing balance of powers on every side? The king of the North threatens his destruction; to the south are the Arabs, his hereditary enemies, who are certainly never interested in the protection of the Jews; neither would he consider an alliance with the Asian powers from the East. Therefore, his only hope is the king of the West. Consequently, he enters into an alliance with the Revived Roman Empire for protection. (Dan 11:36-39)

Dan 11:36 Like Antiochus, the Antichrist will do as he pleases. He will magnify himself above every power, both on earth and in heaven. He will, however, display a particular hatred toward the God of Israel. The demon-possessed Antichrist will say blasphemous things against the Trinity. As a world leader he will be successful until the middle of the Tribulation. At the appointed time in God's infinite wisdom, his reign will be brought to an end.

Dan 11:37 The Antichrist in the last half of the Tribulation will openly flaunt his hatred of both true and apostate religion. Particularly will he ridicule the hope of a coming Messiah. He will finally declare himself to be a god.

Dan 11:38 Early in his ministry he will glorify raw power, placing his trust in military might, wealth and international power. The Antichrist will reward his military commanders with gifts of gold, silver and precious stones. He will be unparalleled as a world leader, infatuated with military might.

Dan 11:39 Initially he will attack and defeat those nations that do not submit to his program of world domination. With the help of the False Prophet, he will procure favor from the Jews in the land. He will initially aid and protect them. In fact, all who support his rise to power will be promoted and rewarded.

For a time the covenant between the two dictators provides Israel with a false sense of security. But in the middle of the seventieth week, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire indwelt by an enraged and avenging Satan breaks his treaty, eliminates the Jewish sacrifices in the Temple, and demands that he be worshiped as God (Dan 12:11).

Dan 12:11 From the time the Antichrist rescinds the treaty with your people in the middle of the Tribulation and erects his statue in a wing of the temple until the Messiah destroys the armies of the world will be 1,290 days. The Lord will take 30 days to destroy Babylon, the Armies at Megiddo and Idumaea.

At this point, a statue of the king of the West, the “abomination of desolation,” is set up in the Holy of Holies. All who fail to worship the image are put to death.

Rev 13:15 The False Prophet was permitted to put the breath of life into the statue of the Antichrist, ergo he spoke and many were amazed. The image had been setup in the ersatz temple. This took place in the middle of the Tribulation. Everyone who refused to worship the image of the first beast was put to death.

To believers who know the Word of God, the erection of the abomination of desolation is the signal to flee to the mountains where they are to remain for the next three and one half years.

The Campaign of Armageddon Begins

Just as God has used invading armies to punish disobedient Israel in the past, so the king of the North appears during the Tribulation to ravage the Land and destroy its people. But, his invasion of Israel assures his own destruction. Daniel writes of the campaign in great detail.

Dan 11:37 The Antichrist in the last half of the Tribulation will openly flaunt his hatred of both true and apostate religion. Particularly will he ridicule the hope of a coming Messiah. He will finally declare himself to be a god.

Dan 11:38 Early in his ministry he will glorify raw power, placing his trust in military might, wealth and international power. The Antichrist will reward his military commanders with gifts of gold, silver and precious stones. He will be unparalleled as a world leader, infatuated with military might.

Dan 11:39 Initially he will attack and defeat those nations that do not submit to his program of world domination. With the help of the False Prophet, he will procure favor from the Jews in the land. He will initially aid and protect them. In fact, all who support his rise to power will be promoted and rewarded.

Dan 11:40 In the middle of the Tribulation, a Pan-Arabic coalition led by Egypt will break the peace established by the Antichrist. These Arab nations are led by a man called elsewhere in Scripture-the king of the south. By his military might he will attempt to take over Israel.

With mechanized infantry, he will start to move his forces overland through Gaza and into Israel. This political and military indiscretion will precipitate a response from the Soviet Union. The leader of the Soviet forces is called elsewhere in Scripture-the king of the north. The king of the north will storm out against the Pan-Arabic coalition with infantry, armor, air and sea power. From the Bosphorus will come a naval force, and from the area west of the Caspian Sea will come a large contingent of armor and infantry with tactical fighter support. The king of the north will sweep through Turkey, Syria and Iran like a flood.

Dan 11:41 The king of the north will also invade Israel on his way south in blitzkrieg fashion. He will leave carnage and destruction in his wake. Eastern Turkey, Syria and Lebanon will fall. Those countries east of Israel, like Jordan and the Persian Gulf nations, will be spared. The Russian forces seem intent on staying close to the Mediterranean shoreline thus permitting maximum support from their naval armada.

Dan 11:42 The forces of Russia will very quickly drive the army of the king of the south into Egypt.

Dan 11:43 The Soviets will gain control of Egypt and her North African allies, not just defeating them, but taking all of their wealth as earned plunder. The Pan-Arabic bloc will be annihilated and militarily embarrassed.

Dan 11:44 While the king of the north is mopping up in the south, he receives an alarming report. Air reconnaissance indicates a large armada of Asians is moving across the Euphrates, heading toward Israel. Naval intelligence indicates a large naval armada under the flag of the European Union has left Italy, rapidly moving east toward Israel. Rumor has it the Antichrist commands this EU fleet. This demands quick action on the part of the king of the north. He orders his entire army back into Israel. He also orders his naval forces to turn north. They are to engage the EU's fleet and determine their intentions.

Dan 11:45 The Russian ground forces will return through Egypt, across Gaza and into Israel. They will meet token resistance from the remaining Israeli Defense Forces. The IDF will retreat in the direction of Jerusalem. Their plan will be to defend the holy city or die. After securing all the surrounding countryside, the king of the north will establish his command post just west of Jerusalem, near Megiddo. It is there the Soviets will plan to meet the Asian forces and the European Union's expeditionary force just north of Jerusalem. The Antichrist will come ashore to meet with the king of the north, king of the south and the leader of the Asian armies. Using his Satan-supplied gift, the Antichrist will negotiate a settlement. Plans will be made to attack the city of Jerusalem and destroy God's remnant. The plan is soon executed and the small IDF is driven back into the Temple area where they await their expected destruction. Suddenly, a vast darkness will cover the land and the last battle of Armageddon will begin. The Lord Jesus Christ with His angelic army will descend from the heavens. With a fury Christ will destroy the armies of the world, and the remnant of Israel will be delivered.

The Siege of Jerusalem

In the history of Jerusalem there have been many sieges of the holy city. Prominent among them is the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. and to Rome in A.D. 70. Yet to come is the siege at the end of the Tribulation which is a part of the Armageddon Campaign. Joel chapter two describes the powerful armies gathered to destroy Israel.

Joel 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 --

Joel 2:2 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.

Joel 2:3 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.

Joel 2:4 They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry.

Joel 2:5 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.

Joel 2:6 At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.

Joel 2:7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course.

Joel 2:8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks.

Joel 2:9 They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.

Zechariah 12:1-9 and Zechariah 14:1-5 describe the victory of our Lord over the Antichrist's forces.

Zec 12:1 I was then told to declare a special message: This is the Word of the LORD for Israel. I am The I Am, who created from absolutely nothing the heavens and the earth; it was I who stretched out the heavens and then laid the foundation for the earth; after creating a perfect heaven and earth it was spoiled by the incompetent Satan; I chose to restore things, form man from the dust of the ground and breathe life into the first Adam. Now you should know just Who it is that is speaking to you.

Zec 12:2 I, Myself will make Jerusalem a goblet of intoxication for all the greedy nations who arrive to spill the blood of the inhabitants of the city. And likewise shall it be concerning all of Judah.

Zec 12:3 Just before the Second Advent of the Lord, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against Israel at Jerusalem, I will make that city a large immovable rock and all who try to lift it will be injured; Judah too will be a cup of reeling for those who come to the valley of Jezreel. Both Judah and Jerusalem will be used as bait to draw the nations to a single geographical area where they will be easy prey for the returning Messiah and His heavenly army.

Zec 12:4 Within 24 hours of the return of Christ, God will cause absolute panic in the battle lines of Israel's foes. I will impose a total darkness over the battlefield, all lines of communication will cease, there will be no command and control, even the sophisticated infrared and radar controlled ordinances will mal-function for I as the God of Israel will provide a supernatural protection over the house of Judah, the forces of the nations will come to a screeching halt.

Zec 12:5 When the Lord returns all of Judah will say, "The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is again their God."

Zec 12:6 After the Lord of the Armies has established peace in the land He will make the leaders of Judah militarily superior, they can best be described as a flaming torch among sheaves. They will rule all the nations surrounding Judah and the city of Jerusalem will stand as the world's capital.

Zec 12:7 At the return of the LORD, He will deliver all of the Northern Kingdom first; that is to say before He delivers Judah and Jerusalem; this in order that there be no jealousy stimulated between the north and the south.

Zec 12:8 The Lord Jesus will protect those who live in Jerusalem, even the feeblest will be made strong, and David will return and serve as Christ's Executive Officer, he will be like the Angel of the Lord Who was often seen going before Israel to destroy and route their enemies.

Zec 12:9 On that day I, as the Lord of lords and King of kings, will destroy all the nations in and around Jerusalem.

As perhaps the best trained army in all human history, they might have ruled the world but for one detail---the intervention of Jesus Christ. No man or group of people can progress further than God allows. No army advances once God calls a halt. Jesus Christ controls history, past, present, and future. Let me give you an expanded translation of Zec 14:1-5 where we find a further description of the events of Armageddon. The highlight of these two chapters is deliverance from heaven above.

Zec 14:1 Note well Israel, God's judgment day for you and your countrymen is on the way. Plunder will be piled high and handed out to the nations, particularly destructive will be the forces of the King of the North.

Zec 14:2 I'm bringing all the godless nations to war against Judah and particularly Jerusalem - your houses will be plundered, your women will be raped; half of the population of the city will surrender and be killed or enslaved and half will be left in Jerusalem to defend it.

Zec 14:3 But then the Messiah will return, with His heavenly angelic army; Christ will destroy the godless nations and fight on your behalf, just as He has done so often in the past.

Zec 14:4 Jesus Christ will return at His Second Advent to the Mount of Olives and when His nail scarred foot touches earth there will be a great earthquake splitting Mount Moriah.

Zec 14:5 All those trapped in the city will flee to the east using the great valley caused by the Lord's return. When Jesus' foot touches earth atop the Mount, it will split open making a way of escape. The valley will extend all the way to Jericho, a city located some 25 miles east of Jerusalem. Then the Lord God will move out with His Angelic army against the armies of the world.

The Deliverance of the Saints

Everyone will be able to see Jesus Christ as He comes out of heaven. His divine essence is the “light of the world,” the only Light which can penetrate the abysmal darkness even as He is the only Light who can penetrate the darkness of the human soul lost in sin. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows [believes in] Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of [which comes from] life.”

The Lord shall “fight.” The paradigm for the Lord doing battle was at the cul-de-sac of the Red Sea. The Jews of the Exodus generation were hopelessly trapped with the Red Sea in front of them, the mountains to the side, and the Egyptian army in rapid pursuit. The Israelites panicked. Then Moses shouted “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord . . . the Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”

As they quieted down they beheld the miracle of the sea opening up before them to let them pass through dry-shod, and then they watched the waters return and drown the Egyptians. Grace was the principle of deliverance then as it will be in the future. Grace depends entirely on who and what the Lord is. As divine intervention won the day for the Jews in the past, so grace wins the day in that future siege.

As the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth in glory, the first place His feet touch is the Mount of Olives. The personal presence of the Lord on the Mount of Olives converts this obstacle into a portal of refuge. The Lord splits the mount and through the valley will move the believing remnant of Israel. Just as the exodus generation passed through the Red Sea to safety, so the future, generations surviving the Tribulation will pass through the valley east of the city.

After the Tribulation the Lord prepares planet earth for implementation of 1000 years of perfect environment and the Millennium.