

End-times Revealed through Bible Prophecy Pt. 5

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Subtitle: The Great Tribulation

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We are journeying through a series of messages on the subject of End Times to gain understanding of certain events that will take place in the near future.

The ultimate event of End Times will be the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ. He will be returning to earth soon to establish His literal Kingdom.

Last Sunday we took a break from this series and focussed on Pentecost. Today we return to the End-times theme and speak about the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 7:13–14 (NKJV) *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” 14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

- The elder speaks of a time period on earth called “the Great Tribulation”
- Jesus also referred to it in Matthew 24:21

A. Points about “the Great Tribulation” that we have previously discussed

- The Great Tribulation is “Daniel’s 70th Week”
- Therefore, the Great Tribulation will last for 7 years
- The Great Tribulation period will be framed by two major events, namely:
 - The Rapture of the church
 - The (visible) Return of Jesus Christ (2nd Coming)
- Dispensationally, the Great Tribulation period ‘sits’ between:
 - the Dispensation of Grace and
 - the Dispensation of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom (1000 year reign)
- Since the Great Tribulation is “Daniel’s 70th Week” it is therefore part of “Jewish Time”, not “Gentile Time”

B. A quick review of the 7 major Dispensations

- i. Dispensation of Innocence – from Creation until the Fall of man

- ii. Dispensation of Conscience – from Fall of man until the Flood of Noah
- iii. Dispensation of Human Government – Noah until the Tower of Babel
- iv. Dispensation of Promise – from Abraham until Moses
- v. Dispensation of the Law – Moses until the Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- vi. Dispensation of Grace – Resurrection of Christ until the Rapture**
- vii. Dispensation of Millennial Kingdom – Christ rules on earth for 1000 years

We note that each dispensation begins (and ends) with a major event.

C.A “flyover” over the 7 year Great Tribulation period

- The Great Tribulation stretches over 15 chapters in book of Revelation
- From chapter 4 onwards to the middle of chapter 19

Revelation 4:1–2 (NKJV) *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.*

Apostle John was “invited” to go to heaven for a time, and observe things that transpired in heaven as well as on earth during the Great Tribulation period.

The invitation “... *come up here* ... “ in vs. 1 is indicative of the Rapture.

Revelation chapter 4

- a. Begins with the rapture of the church
- b. John is observing heaven – he is in the Throne Room of God
 - i. God is sitting on His Throne
 - ii. There are 24 elders each sitting on a throne
 - iii. There are 4 living beings (look like, a lion, a calf, a man, an eagle)
- c. These 24 elders & 4 living beings break into frequent worship of God

Revelation chapter 5

- a. God has a scroll in His right hand, which has 7 seals (locks) on it
- b. A question is asked: Who is worthy to open the seals & open the scroll
- c. Jesus steps forward - only He is considered worthy to open the seals
- d. He takes the scroll from God’s right hand
- e. The 24 elders and the 4 living beings fall down and worship Jesus

- f. They are joined by multiplied thousands of angels who all declare the worthiness of the Lamb of God, and all worship Him

Revelation chapter 6

- a. Jesus opens 6 of the 7 seals from the scroll
- b. (Ezekiel 2:10 speaks of a similar scroll that has “lamentations”, “mourning” and “woe” written on it)
- c. **The opening of the seals by our Lord leads to an announcement of, and release of some disaster or calamity on the earth**
- d. **1st seal** - releases a man on a **white horse** with a bow in his hand and a crown on his head – he goes forth to **conquer** (Antichrist)
- e. **2nd seal** - releases a man on a **red horse** with a big sword – he comes to **take peace** from the earth so people would kill one another
- f. **3rd seal** - releases a man on a **black horse**, with scales in his hand – he caused severe **food shortages & increased prices** on the earth
- g. **4th seal** - releases someone on an **ash-pale horse** whose name was death – together with hades, they have **power over a ¼ of the earth**, to **kill** men through war, famine, disease and wild beasts
- h. **5th seal** - opens a prayer from the martyred saints, asking how much longer before God would avenge their blood on those who dwell on earth—God tells them to wait until all the other martyred saints join them
- i. **6th seal** – releases a great earthquake and great cosmic disturbances, with every mountain and island moved out of its place

Revelation chapter 7

- a. Angels place God’s seal on the foreheads of 144,000 Jewish believers so they cannot be hurt by any of God’s judgments poured out
- b. An innumerable multitude of the tribulation saints stand before God

Revelation chapters 8 to 12

- a. Jesus opens the 7th seal from the scroll
- b. This is the prelude to 7 angels preparing to sound 7 trumpets
- c. **1st trumpet** – hail, fire & blood causes 1/3 trees & all grass to burn up
- d. **2nd trumpet** – burning mountain cast into the sea, turning 1/3 of sea into blood, and causing 1/3 of all sea life & 1/3 of all ships destroyed
- e. **3rd trumpet** – meteor falls on 1/3 of rivers & springs, poisoning 1/3 of drinking water, causing many to die because of the poisoned water
- f. **4th trumpet** – 1/3 of the sun, moon and stars are struck, causing 1/3 of the daylight and 1/3 of the night light to be withheld

- g. An angel flies and proclaims a further 3 woes on earth's inhabitants
- h. **5th trumpet** – **1st woe** - scorpion-like locusts are released from the bottomless pit, to sting and torment earth's population for 5 months
- i. **6th trumpet** – **2nd woe** - 4 angels are released. They command an army of was two hundred million demonic horsemen to kill 1/3 of mankind through 3 different plagues
- j. **2 witnesses** prophecy in Jerusalem for 3 ½ years (Moses? and Elijah?)
- k. They cannot be killed, and fire proceeds out of their mouth towards anyone who tries to hurt them
- l. After 3 1/3 years they are killed, and after 3 days they come back to life and ascend to heaven in full view of people
- m. Then follows a **great earthquake** that destroys 1/10th of Jerusalem and kills 7,000 people
- n. **7th trumpet** – **3rd woe** – a woman (depicting Israel) flees to the wilderness to be cared for by God for 3 ½ years (1,260 days)
- o. **We are now about halfway through the 7 year Tribulation**
- p. The dragon (satan) is now cast out of heaven down to earth, along with 1/3 of the fallen angels
- q. Satan now tries to persecute the Jewish people, but since he cannot touch those who are in the wilderness, he goes after Christians

Revelation chapter 13

- a. A beast arises out of the sea – this is the antichrist arising out of the revised Roman empire
- b. He is given power to continue 42 months (3 ½ years)
- c. He is given power over every tribe, tongue and nation (one world rule)
- d. He blasphemes against God & sets up his throne in the temple of God
- e. He is empowered by the dragon (satan), and people now worship the dragon (satan) and they worship the beast (antichrist)
- f. Another beast arises out of the earth – this is the false prophet who is the leader of a one word religion
- g. This false prophet deceives people by performing miracles (demonic powers), and promotes worship of the antichrist
- h. He kills those who refuse to worship antichrist, and he rolls out the mark of the beast on people's right hand or foreheads

Revelation chapter 14

- a. The 144,000 Jewish believers are raptured, and stand in heaven with Jesus
- b. Then 3 angels fly across the whole earth preaching to the inhabitants:

- c. The 1st angel preaches the everlasting gospel and warns people that the hour of God's judgement has come
- d. The 2nd angel proclaims the destruction of Babylon
- e. The 3rd angel warns people that if they worship the beast or his image, and receive his mark on their right hand or their forehead, they will receive imminent and everlasting punishment
- f. Then, an angel tells Jesus to thrust in the sickle and reap the harvest of the earth (salvations)
- g. Another angel comes to thrust in a sharp sickle, and this time grapes (of humanity) are gathered and thrown into the winepress of God's wrath (this speaks of the gathering of the armies at Armageddon)

Revelation chapter 15

- a. 7 angels appear, having the last 7 plagues to complete the wrath of God on earth
- b. Then, multitudes of tribulation saints stand in heaven and sing to God
- c. They had the victory over antichrist, over his image, his mark and the number of his name
- d. The 7 angels have 7 bowls filled with God's wrath which manifests in 7 different plagues

Revelation chapter 16

- a. **1st bowl** is poured out on the earth, resulting in painful sores on those who had the mark of the beast, and who worshipped his image
- b. **2nd bowl** – turns the sea into blood and kills all sea life
- c. **3rd bowl** – all rivers and springs are turned to blood
- d. **4th bowl** – changes the sun to scorch men with heat and fire
- e. **5th bowl** – plunges the antichrist's kingdom into complete darkness, causing people to gnaw their tongue because of the pain of their sores
- f. **6th bowl** – dries up the waters of the Euphrates river which prepares the way for the kings of the east and their armies
- g. Then, **3 frog-like demons** come out of the mouth of satan, the antichrist and the false prophet
- h. These demons perform signs, and they go out to the whole world to draw the kings of the earth & their armies to the battle of Armageddon
- i. **7th bowl** – causes the biggest earthquake ever, which divides Jerusalem into 3 parts, destroys the cities of the world, flattens mountains and displacing every island
- j. This is followed by a great hail storm with 50 kg hail stones

Revelation chapter 17

- a. This describes the judgement of the great harlot – Mystery Babylon the Great, seemingly a religious system that has martyred countless Christians

Revelation chapter 18

- a. This describes the judgement & destruction of the city of Babylon, which seemingly is a commercial and financial centre of the world

Revelation chapter 19

- a. A great multitude in heaven praise God for the destruction of Babylon, and for avenging on her the blood of the saints she has killed

b. Then, the chapter leads into the 2nd Coming of Christ