

Lesson 7

The Great Tribulation

Introduction

In this section of our study of eschatology, we will consider the events that will take place in the future known as the Great Tribulation. This is a period of time that fits between the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ. In some ways it could be compared to the final half mile of a long race. It is the last few minutes of the race that is the most exciting. Human history is a long race that began thousands of years ago in the Garden of Eden and ushered in the sinfulness of mankind. The Great Tribulation represents the final seven years of man's horrific rule over the earth. This period of time is filled with exciting events, and it will take a good amount of time to unpack all the major events and personalities associated with the Great Tribulation. This will not be an exhaustive study of this period of time, but it will give us a good overview to help us understand God's purposes and plans for the final years of sinful humanity's reign over the earth.

Some of the events we will take into consideration will be the unrest, violence, and wickedness which will occur, especially during the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation. The intensity of God's judgments during this time will be especially impactful for the unsaved. Also, Israel will suffer under great persecution and Gentile believers will face martyrdom. There will be a rise of a new federation that comes out of the old Roman Empire. There will be a world war that trumps all previous wars as the kings of the earth try to erase the Israelites from human history.

The personalities that will come forward during this time reads like a cast of characters in an epic movie. You have the 144,000 Jews who are God's witnesses in the beginning of the Tribulation. In the second half of the Tribulation, we are introduced to two witnesses who will be killed and three days later resurrected. Satan, the antichrist, the false prophet and demons will all be highly active during this time. And the closing of this period of time will be marked by the greatest personality of all, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ who will bring an end to the world's chaos and establish His reign over the earth.

As you can see, the final days are going to be very exciting. I will attempt to be your tour guide as we make our way through what the Bible has to say about this fantastic time in human history known as the Great Tribulation.

1. God's purpose for the Great Tribulation

- a. To announce the gospel of the _____ (Matt. 24:14).
- b. To bring Israel to _____ and _____ for their Messiah-Jesus (Deut. 4:27-30; Hosea 5:14-6:3; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:1-4).
- c. To convince Israel of their need for a _____ to produce a national regeneration (Dan. 12:5-7; Jer. 31:31-34; Eze.20:34-38; 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Zec. 12:9-13:2; Isa. 59:20-21).
- d. To create a desire for _____ to return to the land of Israel (Zec.8:7-8; Eze. 36:24; 37:21).
- e. To end The Times of the _____ and their domination of the Jewish people (Isa. 24:21-23; 59:16-20; Matt. 24:29-31; Rom. 11:25).
- f. To exercise the _____ of God's judgment upon wicked, unbelieving men and nations for their sinfulness (Isa. 13:9-11; 24:19-23; 26:21; Zeph. 1:1-14-18; Rev. 6:15-17).
- g. To serve as a _____ to the Messiah's kingdom (Eze. 20:33-38; 37:23; Zec. 13:2, 14:9; Matt. 25:31-46).

2. The duration and extent of the Great Tribulation

- a. The Tribulation will begin when the Church is raptured; it will last seven years and come to an end when the Lord Jesus returns to set up His messianic kingdom. We should note that the Bible does not give an exact date that the Tribulation begins; therefore we cannot say that it starts the exact moment the church is raptured. But, the Bible does tell us of two important events that signify the Great Tribulation is under way. One is on earth and the other is in heaven:
 - i. The signing of a _____ between the leader of the confederacy of European states and Israel (Dan. 9:27).

- ii. The breaking of the first _____ by Jesus Christ in heaven (Rev. 6:1).
- b. What makes this period of time the Great Tribulation is how the _____ world, all of humanity, will be involved.
- c. It is the Great Tribulation because it will be known as God's direct _____ and a time as the world has never seen (Rev.6:15-17; Matt. 24:21).

3. Biblical names that refer to the Great Tribulation

- a. The _____ Day or The Day of the _____ (Isa. 2:12; 13:6,9). The word "day" can refer to one day or to the entire time frame of the Tribulation. We might better understand this if we consider how we might say that someone had their day in court. The day could refer to one day in court or the whole court case. Thus, The LORD's Day can refer to the day Jesus returns or the whole Tribulation period. The context of the passage where the title is used will help to determine the meaning.
- b. The Day of _____ or Trouble (Deut.4:30; Zeph. 1:15). The Prophet Zephaniah uses many different descriptive words to emphasize the distress during the Tribulation.
- c. The Time of Jacob's _____ or Distress (Jer. 30:7). This title helps us see how the Great Tribulation has an important bearing on Israel.
- d. The Time of _____ Labor and Birth Pains (Isa. 21:3; 26:17-18; Jer. 4:31). The correlation here is with a woman who goes into labor with early signs of contractions. The longer the labor goes on the more frequent and severe the pain of the contractions are until the baby is born.
- e. The Day of _____ (Deut. 32:35; Obadiah 12-14). Like the prophet Zephaniah, Obadiah uses a series of descriptive words to describe the days of the Great Tribulation.
- f. The Day of _____ (Isa. 26:20; Dan. 11:36). This title describes the anger and wrath of God that will be poured out on the world in the Tribulation.

- g. The Lord's _____ and _____ work (Isa. 28:21). This is referring to God's chastisement of Israel through His righteous justice (v.17), and it will be terrifying (v.19) in those days.
- h. The Lord's Day of _____ (Isa. 34:8; 35:4), 61:2; 63:4).
- i. The Day of _____ and Thick _____ (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15).
- j. The Day of the Lord's Burning _____ (Zeph. 2:2-3). The word "anger" in Hebrew means God is so angry that His nostrils are flaring as He pours out His wrath.
- k. The Day of _____ of Almighty God (Joel 1:15).

4. The ministries of God during the Great Tribulation

- a. The ministry of the 144,000 Jews.
 - i. They will be God's _____ evangelists during the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:4-8).
 - ii. They are described as " _____ " and "the first fruits unto God," referring to the fact that they are the first to be saved during the Tribulation (Rev. 14:4; cf Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15).
 - iii. They will be _____ in character (Rev. 14:4) and virgins.
 - iv. These Jews will lead a worldwide _____ as witness of Jesus (Rev. 12:17).
 - v. Their message will be the _____ of the Kingdom (Matt. 24:14). Their gospel message will be the same as it has been in every age, faith in the promised Messiah but with an emphasis on preparing one's self for the soon coming Kingdom of Christ.
 - vi. It appears their evangelistic efforts will be _____ by many people during the Tribulation, if you consider the closeness of context between Rev.

7:1-8 and 7:9-17. Most of these people will be martyred in the second half of the Tribulation (Rev. 6:10-11; 12:10-11; 13:7, 15; 20:4).

vii. They will be the first to be _____ at the hands of the Beast out of the sea (Rev. 12:17; 13:7; 14:1-3).

b. The ministry of the two witnesses.

i. In the second half of the Tribulation, the _____ will seek to destroy any ministry of the gospel, but God will not be without a witness on the earth even during the darkest times of the Great Tribulation.

ii. The _____ of the two witnesses is presented in Scripture as “olive trees” and “lamp stands” (Rev. 11:3-4). In Zechariah 4:1-6, these two metaphors represent the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The olive tree provides the oil for the lamps to burn, and the source of the power is stated in v.14, “...*standing by the Lord of the whole earth.*” The Holy Spirit is the person of the trinity that is most often associated with the exercise of God’s power.

iii. They will be _____ beings as they will die (Rev. 11:7).

iv. They are never _____ by name. Some have speculated that they could be Enoch and Elijah due to the fact that they never died but were raptured (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11).

v. Their purpose is to be God’s _____ and _____ (Rev. 11:3). They will never stop testifying of God’s existence and man’s responsibility to honor Him. Much like Moses did with Pharaoh.

vi. At the time of their ministry, the Beast will seek to remove all _____ of God’s existence on earth (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5-6).

vii. As God’s prophets, the voice of these men will be _____ God’s voice speaking to the world as the Beast will outlaw the Bible (Dan. 7:25).

- viii. They will possess unique _____ by the Holy Spirit to preserve their lives from personal attack (Rev. 11:5). They are also given power to control the natural world (Rev. 11:6).
- ix. Their ministry will be received by the world as those who “_____” them (Rev. 11:10).
- x. When they have completed the work God has set out for them, they will be _____ by the Beast (Rev. 11:7).
- xi. Their _____ will be left in the street for the world to see (Rev. 11:8) and a worldwide festival will start to celebrate their death (Rev. 11:9-10). After three-and-a-half days, their bodies will be resuscitated and raptured (Rev. 11:11-12).
- xii. Their departure from earth will _____ a great earthquake and close the second of three “woes” (Rev. 8:13) found in the book of Revelation (9:12; 11:14; 12:12). The word “woe,” in the Greek language means horror or dreadful.
- xiii. The _____ of their ministry will last for three-and-a-half years (Rev. 11:3) and will take place during the apex of Satanic power and authority on the earth (Rev. 13:5).