



LOOKING AHEAD

What the Bible tells us about the future
(eschatology)

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PART 2: THE TRIBULATION

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be." (Matt. 24:21 ESV)

A. What is the Tribulation?

The tribulation is a future seven-year period when God will finish His discipline of Israel and finalize his judgment of the unbelieving world. It will take place just before the return of Jesus (Matt. 24:3) and will be like no other time since the world began. And it will never be so great again (Matt. 24:21).

B. Its necessity

- The Tribulation is necessary because sin and wickedness must be judged (Matt. 25:41; Jude 1:14-15; God's theodicy).
- The Tribulation is necessary to prepare the way, especially for Israel, for the return of Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:26-27; 14:11; Phil. 2:9-11).

C. Its uniqueness

- It will be a period of God's great wrath/judgments (Rev. 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1; 19).
- It will be worldwide (Rev. 3:10).
- It will be different in the way people react during it (e.g., Rev. 9:20; 11:10; 16:16)

D. Its other names in the Bible

- "The Day of the Lord" (Isa. 2:12; 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14; 1 Thess. 5:2).
- "Trouble" or "tribulation" (Deut. 4:30; Zeph. 1:1).
- "Great Tribulation" refers to the most intense second half of the 7-year period (Matt. 24:21).
- "Time or day of trouble" (Dan. 12:1; Zeph. 1:15).
- "Time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Probably also referring to the last half of the Tribulation.

E. Its characters

- Satan. His name means "adversary" or "one who opposes." Depicted as the dragon in Revelation 12—13. He will use his power to do false signs and wonders by

the hands of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9-10) and the False Prophet (Rev. 13:13-14) and demons (Rev. 16:13-14).

- The Antichrist (Rev. 13; Dan. 7, 8, 11). "Anti" means against. The Antichrist works to oppose everything related to Jesus Christ. Depicted as the "beast out the sea" (Rev. 13). He will be blasphemous, speaking profanely against God (Rev. 13:5-6). He will claim to be God (Dan. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:4). He will be arrogant and self-willed (Dan. 7:25).
- The False Prophet (Rev. 13 and 19). Depicted as the "beast out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11-18; 19:20). He will have great power and will mimic the Holy Spirit, even performing great "miracles." He will be an apostate preacher who promotes the worship of the Antichrist.
- The 144,000 (Rev. 7 and 14). These are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, so there is no dispute that the "144,000" refers to a group of Israelis (Jews) during the Tribulation.
- The two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12). They will prophesy and perform miracles for 1,260 days during the Tribulation.
- A "great multitude from every nation" (Rev. 7:9-17; see also Rev. 17:6). This multitude is beyond number, unlike the 144,000 which is a specific number, indicating that it is another group of people. The multitude is defined in verse 14 and as those who have come out of the Tribulation now wearing the white robes which were given to them during the fifth seal judgment (See Rev. 6:9-11). They are individuals who accepted Christ during the Tribulation Period and who were martyred, most likely because of their refusal to worship the Antichrist.
- The nation of Israel, depicted as the woman in Revelation 12:1-5 will be pursued viciously by the Antichrist during the last half of the Tribulation period.

F. Its primary events

- It's beginning: a seven-year peace contract (Dan. 9:27): It's beginning when the "ruler" (Antichrist) establishes a seven-year covenant/contract but violates it halfway through this period.
- Its mid-point: the abomination of desolation/Temple (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15). The False prophet will set up an image of the Antichrist and force people to worship it (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:12-15).
- Its culmination: the second coming of Jesus and the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:15-16, 19-21).

