

The Tribulation

Topical

● WHAT IS THE TRIBULATION?

- The Tribulation = a seven-year period of unparalleled judgment, wrath and fury from God, poured out on the earth.

Names for the Tribulation

- “The great Tribulation” (Revelation 7:14)
- “The hour of judgment” (Revelation 14:7)
- “The great day of their wrath” (Revelation 6:17)
- “The wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10)
- The Purpose of the Tribulation
 - The Tribulation will bring belief to a remnant of Jews. (Zechariah 13:8-9; Isaiah 64:1, 5-6, 8-9)
 - Gentile nations will be punished. (Isaiah 24:1-6)
 - God will use the Tribulation to save many unbelievers. (Revelation 7)

● THE TIMING OF THE TRIBULATION

- The only place in the entire Bible where the timing of the Tribulation is specifically given—Daniel, chapter 9
- “Sevens” = a period of seven years

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city 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.”²⁵ “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.”²⁶ “After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler 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.²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he 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.” Daniel 9:24-27 (NIV)

“The prophecy as a whole is presented in verse 24. The first sixty-nine sevens is described in verse 25. The events between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven are detailed in verse 26. The final period of the seventieth seventh is described in verse 27.” (Daniel by John Walvoord Moody Press, 1971)

- Daniel 9:24 - The Overview
 - “Transgression will be finished” = Israel’s course of apostasy and sin will be completed
 - “Atonement will happen” = the cross of Jesus Christ
 - “To bring in Everlasting Righteousness,” = the Second Coming of Christ
- Daniel 9:25 - The First 69 Sets of Sevens
 - March 5, 444 BC - King Artaxerxes granted a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
 - Scholars calculate that exactly 483 years elapsed from the decree until Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem where He was acclaimed Messiah.
- Daniel 9:26 - After the 69 Sets of Sevens, but before the 70th (The Gap)
 - “Cutting off of the Messiah” = the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 - A ruler will come and destroy Jerusalem.
 - War will continue until the end.
- Daniel 9:27 - The 70th Set of Sevens: the Seven-Year Period of Tribulation
 - The kingdom of the Antichrist will comprise the territory once held by the ancient Roman empire, in particular a western confederacy made up of a unified Europe.

“He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.’²⁴The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.²⁵He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. Daniel 7:23-25 (NIV)

- That last seven years—the 70th set of sevens—will begin when Israel makes a covenant with the Antichrist.
- 3 1/2 years into the Tribulation, the Antichrist will perpetrate “an abomination that causes desolation.” (See Revelation 13)

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NIV)

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Matthew 24:15-16 (NIV)

● THE EVENTS OF THE TRIBULATION

- “From the opening of the first seal when the first earthly event in this seven-year period takes place, and up to the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, is the detailed history of earth events after the Church as been removed to Heaven and while Satan is making his last bold bid for earth control.” (Revelation by Donald Barnhouse, Zondervan, 1971)
- *The 7 Seal Judgments, 7 Trumpet Judgments and 7 Bowl Judgments are three successive and intensifying “waves” of judgment.*

The First Half of the Tribulation

■ Seal #1

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!”²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. Revelation 6:1-2 (NIV)

The white horse symbolizes worldwide peace. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11).

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you.⁵For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. Matthew 24:4-5 (NIV)

■ Seal #2

When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. Revelation 6:3-4 (NIV)

This passage says that the horseman took peace from the earth.

This rider is red, the color of fire and blood and depicts war.

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.⁷Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. Matthew 24:6-7a (NIV)

■ Seal #3

When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a day’s wages, and three quarts of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!” Revelation 6:5-6 (NIV)

This rider is black which is associated with famine.

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. Matthew 24:7 (NIV)

- Seal #4

When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"⁸ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. Revelation 6:7-8 (NIV)

This rider is pale which portrays the color of death.

- Seal #5

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. Revelation 6:9 (NIV)

This tells us that people are going to respond to God's truth during the Tribulation, and that Christians will be persecuted and die for their faith.

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

- **OUR RESPONSE**

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)