

PROPHECY OVERVIEW
"Part III: God, The Believer And The Coming Great Tribulation"
(Daniel 9:1-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Without trying to sound like an alarmist, here are **some** of the events that the **Bible** predicts will occur in the **future** Tribulation:

- (1) There will be another cold war similar to the one between the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II, Rev. 6:1-2.
- (2) There will be open *world* war, Rev. 6:3-4. In fact, according to Ezekiel 38-39, Russian will invade Israel, possibly using limited nuclear arsenals in the process leading to delayed burials of contaminated corpses by special military teams! (Ez. 39:13-16 NIV)
- (3) World food shortages will occur so that it will take a day's wage for one to purchase a loaf of cheap barley bread, Rev. 6:5-6.
- (4) Twenty-five per cent of the world's population will die by a combination of war, hunger and disease, Rev. 6:7-8.
- (5) Millions of people worldwide will be martyred predominately by being beheaded for their faith in Christ, Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4b.
- (6) The sun will lose its light, becoming black as sackcloth of hair and the moon will look blood red, Rev. 6:12.
- (7) Many asteroids will hit the earth, and the sea's islands and mountains will be moved out of place, Rev. 6:13-14.
- (8) Things will get so terrifying that leaders and commoners all over the earth will hide themselves in dens and caves, begging mountains to fall on them and kill them to escape God's wrath, Rev. 6:15-16.
- (9) Like in a ghastly Halloween movie, demons will plague people constantly, driving them full of pain so that they seek to kill themselves, but will be unable to achieve suicide, Rev. 9:3-11.
- (10) Finally, a huge hail storm will blanket the globe, dropping hailstones weighing 100 lb. apiece, killing many, joined by an earthquake that causes all the buildings of all of the world's cities to collapse, Rev. 16:18-21.

Well, in view of the fact that the BIBLE predicts these dreadful events will occur in a coming Tribulation era, and we believe the BIBLE to be true, what should we DO about it?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I dread that Scripture says God plans a world 'tribulation' period! What will it be like, why, and what must I do about it?!"

I. Scripture foretells a worldwide Seven-Year Tribulation Period:

- A. From what the angel, Gabriel said (Dan. 9:20), **Israel** will obtain her Messianic Kingdom **70 "weeks"** after the edict to build Jerusalem (9:24-26 KJV), and that **final "week"** will involve **tribulation**, 9:27.
- B. Jerusalem was been rebuilt centuries past, but as yet there has been no Messianic Kingdom. Thus, we clarify what Daniel 9's **"weeks"** mean to come up with a workable prophetic timeline for that "Tribulation":
 1. Gabriel's revelation came on the heels of Daniel's having read in Jeremiah 25:11 of **Israel's** predicted **70-year** Captivity, Dan. 9:2.
 2. That Jer. 25 prophecy fulfilled Moses' prediction that **Israel** would go into captivity for **neglecting her land** Sabbaths, Lev. 26:33-35.
 3. Well, the **land** Sabbaths came **every 7th year** (Lev. 25:1-7), and since **Israel** failed to keep **all 70 land Sabbaths** in its **490 years** of being in the land, God caused the land to catch up on its missed **rests** by keeping **Israel** in captivity for **70 years**, 2 Chron. 36:21!
 4. So, as Daniel thought on Israel's **land Sabbath sins**, it follows that Gabriel's predicted 70 "weeks" given **to Daniel** must have pictured **another set of 490 YEARS** that God planned for **Israel's history!**
 5. If we understand Gabriel's "weeks" to refer to "weeks" of **years**, his Dan. 9 timeline **precisely** fits **Israel's PAST history** as follows:
 - a. Gabriel predicted that from the edict to rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25) until Messiah came (9:26) would be 7+62, or 69 "weeks".
 - b. Since that edict came March 5, 444 B.C., were we to mark off 69 "weeks" of **Jewish years** (of 360 days/yr), it would bring us 483 **Jewish years** later, or to the **day** Jesus presented Himself to Israel in His Triumphant Entry -- March 30, A. D. 33! (Harold Hoehner, Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, p. 139)
 - c. Since **AFTER Israel's 69th "week" but BEFORE her 70th** one, Israel sees Messiah cut off, Jerusalem destroyed and goes through desolations, an **indefinite** time **period** of trials for **Israel** exists **BETWEEN** "week" 69 and 70, Dan. 9:26. We take this to be the Church era, the times of the Gentiles in Rom. 11:26.

6. Thus, Dan. 9:27 must predict another "week" of **7 years** when **God** works with *Israel* as a **nation**, a **7-year Tribulation Period!**
- C. This Tribulation will spread to the **WORLD** for its **rejecting Christ!**
1. Daniel's 70th prophetic week of Daniel 9:27 comes **after** Messiah is "cut off" without having set up His Messianic Kingdom, Dan. 9:26.
 2. Messiah is without a Kingdom when He first appears because **Israel rejects** Him, cf. Zech. 11:8b. Thus, God predicted He would send a false shepherd, antichrist, to rule Israel, Zech, 11:15-16.
 3. Also, when Christ's Gospel is spread to Gentiles, they **reject** Christ too, and that will bring **them** under antichrist also, 2 Thess. 2:11-12
- II. **This Tribulation Period will be a TERRIBLE time on the earth:**
- A. Throughout the entire Tribulation Period, there will be massive unrest for **individuals** predicted in Rev. 6:1-10:7. The time will be so hard that people will see death as an escape, Rev. 6:15-17; 9:6.
 - B. Also, Rev. 10:8-11 informs us that Rev. 11:1-19:21 pictures God's judgments on **institutions** during that **same** 7-year time period.
 - C. Thus, God's judgment on **wicked institutions** will **peak** with antichrist's breaking his 7-year, Tribulation Period treaty with Israel in the **middle** of the Tribulation, Dan. 9:27. God's judgment on **institutions** throughout that entire 7-year period is highlighted with antichrist's actions beginning at Rev. 10:8-11 and going to Rev. 19:21.
 - D. At the end of this era, Christ will invade the world and save man at the campaign of Armageddon, a great world war, Rev. 19:1-21. Jesus will judge the nations and set up His Messianic Kingdom, Rev. 20:1-6.
 - E. By God's grace, **throughout** the Tribulation Period, millions of people will be saved by faith on Christ only to be martyred, Rev. 7:9-17; 20:4!
- III. **Scripture then describes WHAT believers TODAY must DO about this predicted Seven-Year Tribulation Period judgment:**
- A. The believer is **not to fret** that he might go through this time: he is not guilty of rejecting Christ, so God has chosen him to **escape** the **Tribulation** that comes on men who **reject** Christ, 2 Thess. 2:10-14.
 - B. Also, according to 2 Thess. 2:6-7, antichrist cannot appear until a "Restrainer" is taken out of the way. Since antichrist is empowered by Satan, and only God is greater than he, the Restrainer is **God** the Holy Spirit Whose restraining ministry **through** Christians is removed at the rapture (Bible Know. Com., N.T., p. 719). As we learned in the last sermon, that means the **rapture** occurs **before** the Tribulation!
 - C. Thus, believers are to be comforted, settled, and living godly lives, and be a witness of Christ's Gospel to the world, 2 Thess. 2:15-17.

Lesson Application: *As God must judge a Christ-rejecting world to follow antichrist during a coming 7-year Tribulation, (1) believe in Christ as Savior from sin (Jn. 3:16) and (2) live in anticipation of the Church's Pretribulation rapture (2 Thess . 2:1-15). Then, (3) spread Christ's saving Gospel through word and work, 2:16-17!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

In another pastorate I had some years ago in Nebraska, I once noticed a very serious and sensitive relationship problem in our Church. It was so sensitive that I believed I would do the Body great harm even to confront the people involved, so I just left my concern with the Lord.

Later, I was awakened one morning around 5 a.m. by a Board member in that Church. He was knocking on the window outside our bedroom. The bedroom was upstairs, so he had climbed the roof to come over and wake me up. Something **big** was up!

Apparently, the wife of "Mr. Doe" in our Church (not his real name) had been kidnapped by a gunman as she had signaled through a coded phone call to Mr. Doe early in the night. The church leaders had been trying all night to call me about it. Our phone was downstairs, so we had not heard it ring! Since we had not answered the phone, some thought maybe a huge plot involving **our** being harmed was afoot, and that brought some of the Church Board men to our house!

I got dressed and hurried off to join the troubled Mr. Doe.

By the time I got to his home, his wife had called to report that she had escaped her captor unharmed. She'd been forced to drive for 15 hours across state lines from Nebraska into Iowa before escaping and calling her husband from a farm house. Mr. Doe promptly called the highway patrol to supply details as to his wife's location, and Mrs. Doe was later reunited with her husband! The highway patrol captured the kidnapper who was then tried and imprisoned. God used this whole event to address the problem I mentioned earlier in this illustration.

I then recognized that I had **missed** the **trauma** of the event as I had **slept** while it unfolded! In fact, I now believe it is possible that the Board member's awakening knocks on my bedroom window marked the moment of "Mrs. Doe's" escape from her captor!

That is what the Great Tribulation will be like. The WORLD that has rejected our Gospel will face terrible times for it, and God will then deal with that sin! Yet, by grace, we will be at peace in heaven with the Lord, harbored safely from its trials!

So, stay fervent in our devotion to Christ, and stay comforted in knowing we will escape the Tribulation. However, keep involved in discipling others as the world desperately NEEDS our Gospel! SOME may yet believe in Christ before the Rapture!