

**History of the Future:
Part 2: Tribulation
Mark 13:14-23
February 16, 2014**

Introduction

We come to the portion of the Olivet Discourse that Jesus talks about the Tribulation, or more specifically, the Great Tribulation. Mark writes,

Mark 13:19 *For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

Matthew adds the words “Great Tribulation”

Matthew 24:21 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

As we have commented before, the study of end times is often times complex and confusing. This is because we are humans and have imperfect understanding. If the disciples, who spent 3 years with Jesus, with all the knowledge of the Old Testament, failed to completely understand His message and His mission, how humbling it is for us to acknowledge that we are the same as the disciples.

Because of this confusion, many people have avoided reading, studying, and/or discussing the end times. It is sad when people have this attitude because Jesus and the writers of the NT have urged us to study the words of prophecy because it is a blessing to us.

Revelation 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

Even Mark and Matthew both urge their readers to understand what Jesus is saying (Mark **13:14**; Matthew **24:15**).

We ought not to be frightened by what happens in the end times because we know that God is in complete control of the future and His complete victory is assured.

Last week, we looked at Jesus’ warning that things are going to get worse. He and His disciples are on top of Mount of Olives, looking west to the temple. Jesus explains that the church is going to be increasingly persecuted. Deceptions will increase. Disasters both manmade and natural will continue to occur. He tells them that such things will continue as it has always been. It is not the end but the beginning. He calls them birth pangs (or sorrows in some translations). He tells them this because the disciples ask Jesus what will be the sign of His coming Kingdom. They want to know when Jesus will establish His Kingdom. He is telling them that His kingdom will not happen until many things have taken place. He explains further what must take place in the future, and He mentions the Tribulation.

What is the Tribulation or the Great Tribulation? What does the Bible have to say about those things?

I. Daniel's Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9:24-27 *Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

- Weeks
 - Actually Hebrew says “sevens”
 - 1 sevens (week) = 7 years
 - Purpose of 70 weeks?
 - To end sin
 - Bring everlasting righteousness
 - Unveiling of God’s redemptive plan through the Messiah
 - Both the cross and the Second Coming
 - 7 weeks + 62 weeks + = 69 weeks (483 years of 360 day calendar)
 - Restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem (v 25)
 - By second decree of Artaxerxes (**Nehemiah 2:1-8**)

Note: There were four decrees: Cyrus (**Ezra 1**); Darius (**Ezra 6:1-12**); Artaxerxes’ first decree (**Ezra 7:12-26**).

 - Took place month of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes’ reign
 - 49 years to rebuild Jerusalem despite all its troubles (cf **Ezra and Nehemiah**)
 - 483 years after the decree to Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (also in month of Nisan)
 - Messiah cut off--crucified
- Where is the 70th week?
 - This is the Tribulation (**v26-27**)
 - Long gap between Messiah’s crucifixion and the Tribulation
- 70th week will be split in half
 - 1st half—unrestrained indulgence of sin and increasing hardship to God’s people
 - 2nd half—most horrific of tribulation and most severe hardship for all humanity
 - 2nd half references
 - 42 months (**Rev 11:2; 13:5**)
 - 1260 days (**Rev 11:3; 12:6**)
 - Time, times and half (**Daniel 7:25; Rev 12:14**)
 - All equate 3 ½ years
 - Jesus says this is the Great Tribulation
 - Mark—Abomination of desolation marks the beginning of Great Tribulation
 - **Daniel 9:27**—Abomination of desolation is at the middle of week

II. Timeline of the 70th Week

- **Revelation 6-19**
 - Sequential, almost telescopically
 - Seven seals from beginning of Tribulation to end
 - Seven Trumpets (from the 7th Seal) from middle of Tribulation to end
 - Seven Bowls nearly at the end—rapid fire judgments
- **Seven Seals**
 - Title Deed to the Lamb (**Rev 5:1-5**)
 - God is taking the universe back from Satan who usurps His creation
 - Rider on white horse (**Rev 6:1-2**)
 - Bow only, no arrow—come in peace
 - Antichrist—establish his power
 - Make a peaceful covenant with Israel (**Daniel 9:27**)
 - Rider on red horse (**Rev 6:3-4**)
 - War
 - Rider on black horse (**Rev 6:5-6**)
 - Inflation and famine
 - Rider on pale horse (**Rev 6:7-8**)
 - Diseases
 - ¼ of total humanity will die
 - Prayers of the martyrs (**Rev 6:9-11**)
 - God is answering the cries of the martyrs
 - Great earthquake (**Rev 6:12-17**)
 - Sun becomes black, moon becomes red, stars fall to earth—mountains and islands moved
 - Beginning of the Great Day of the Lord prophesied by the OT prophets
 - This is the beginning of the Great Tribulation
 - Seven trumpets (**Rev 8:1-5**)
 - Silence in heaven for 30 minutes—releases 7 trumpets
- **Seven Trumpets**
 - God's warning on those who follow the Antichrist
 - Hail fire (**Rev 8:6-7**)
 - 1/3 of earth and trees burned up; all green grass burned up
 - Meteor strikes the seas (**Rev 8:8-9**)
 - 1/3 of sea become as blood
 - 1/3 of creatures die and ships destroyed
 - Meteor strikes the freshwaters (**Rev 8:10-11**)
 - 1/3 of freshwaters become undrinkable
 - Sun and heavenly bodies grow dark (**Rev 8:12**)
 - Time and seasons become messed up (less daylight)
 - Demons unleashed on humanity (**Rev 9:1-12**)
 - People are tormented by demons
 - People cannot die
 - Death unleashed (**Rev 9:13-21**)
 - 1/3 of world's population (that are left) are killed
 - Seven Bowls unleashed (**Rev 11:15-19; 15:1**)
 - Satan's kingdom is destroyed by Christ!
 - God is now cleaning up the mess caused by sin
- **Seven Bowls (**Rev 15-19**)**
 - Painful sores (**Rev 16:2**)

- Everything in sea dies (**Rev 16:3**)
- Rivers and lakes become blood (**Rev 16:4-7**)
- Sun increases heat (**Rev 16:8-9**)
- Darkness on the Antichrist's kingdom (**Rev 16:10-11**)
- River Euphrates dries up (**Rev 16:12-16**)
- Biggest Earthquake in history (**Rev 16:17-21**)

III. Characteristics of the 70th Week

- Worst period of time in all of history
 - Worst trouble and rebellion
 - Time of Trouble for the Jews

Jeremiah 30:4-7 *Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. 5 "For thus says the LORD: "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? 7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.*

Zechariah 13:8a *And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die*

- Period of hope
 - God saves His people

Daniel 12:1 *At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.*

Zechariah 13:8b-9 *But one-third shall be left in it: 9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'*

- Gospel is still being proclaimed
 - 144,000 Jews (**14:1-5**)
 - Two witnesses (**Rev 11**)
 - Angel flying, proclaiming the everlasting gospel (**Rev 14:6-7**)
 - So powerful is the impact that people from every tribe, nation, language are saved (**Rev 7:9-17**)