

REVELATION – SERMON 31

WHAT IN THE WORLD WILL HAPPEN?

Revelation 6:1; Matthew 24:1-31; Daniel 9:24-27

INTRODUCTION

- There are many modern-day “prophets” who think they can predict the future of our planet
- Man has always desired to know what the future holds, and has contrived many ways to attempt to do so
 - Augury – divination by bird behaviour
 - Osteomancy – divination by bones
 - Alphetomancy – divination by bread
 - Gastromancy – divination by stomach rumbles
 - Margaritomancy – divination by pearls
 - Haruspicy/Extispicy/Hepatomancy – divination by animal entrails
 - Anthropomancy – divination by human sacrifice
 - Myomancy – divination by mouse
 - Dactylomancy – divination by rings
 - Molybdomancy – divination by molten metal
 - Scatomancy – divination by excrement
- Such divination is expressly forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)
- The Christian can rest contented in the knowledge that though the future may remain a mystery to him, “his times are in God’s hand (Psalm 31:15) and “his life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3)
- Yet God in his grace *has* revealed in astonishing detail many events that are yet to take place
- We can have full confidence in the certain fulfilment of these prophecies, as we consider the many prophecies he has fulfilled in the past
- Revelation 4-21 deals with “the things which shall be hereafter” (1:19), that is, things in the future

- We have seen previously what the future scene in heaven will be following the rapture in ch.4-5
- But Revelation 6-19 answers the question, “What on *earth* will happen?”
- While most of chapters 6-19 deal with events on earth, the scene switches back to heaven at various points (eg. 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 8:1-5; 11:15-19; 12:1-12; 15:1-8; 19:1-10)
- The period of time covered in these chapters is known as “the tribulation”
- In this study we will examine the tribulation, seeking to set forth what it is, what it entails, and what God’s purpose is in bringing it upon the world

I. THE DESCRIPTOR OF THE TRIBULATION

A. “Tribulation”

1. The Greek *thlipseos* is derived from a term meaning “to press, to oppress, to squeeze”
2. The English word is from the Latin *tribulum*, the roller used by the Romans for pressing wheat
3. Tribulation is common to every person (Job 14:1-2)
4. God sends tribulation into the believer’s life for his perfecting (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3-5)
5. The term “tribulation” is used in a technical or eschatological sense to refer to the seven year period of God’s wrath in the future, as in Matthew 24:29
6. Often the terms “the tribulation” and “the great tribulation” are used interchangeably, but many restrict “the great tribulation” to the second half of the seven years (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14)

7. It will be “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Daniel 12:1)

B. Other terms for the tribulation

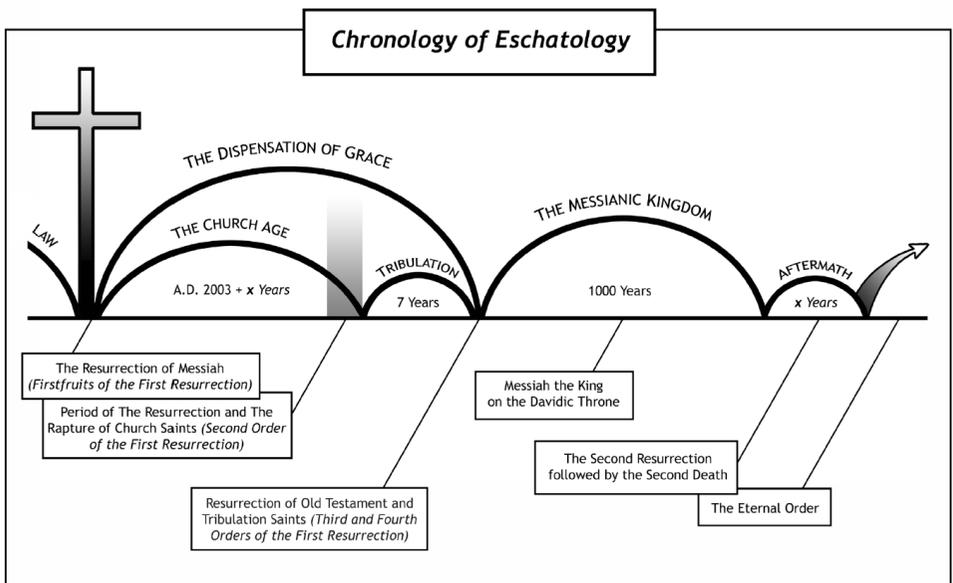
1. The day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6,9)
2. The day of the Lord's wrath (Zephaniah 1:18)
3. The great day of his wrath (Revelation 6:17)
4. The great and terrible day of the Lord (Joel 2:31)
5. The indignation of the Lord (Isaiah 26:21; 34:2)
6. The day of the Lord's vengeance (Isaiah 34:8)
7. The time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7)
8. The time of the heathen" (Ezekiel 30:3)
9. A destruction from the Almighty (Joel 1:15)
10. A day of darkness (Joel 2:1)
11. The fire of my jealousy (Zephaniah 3:8)

II. THE DELINEATION OF THE TRIBULATION

A. Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27)

1. This prophecy describes a 490 year period that began with the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2) and relates particularly to the nation of Israel
2. After 69 weeks (483 years) the Messiah was “cut off”
3. There is an indefinite interval between the 69th and 70th weeks, in which fits this present dispensation of grace

- a. This is obvious, since “everlasting righteousness” was not brought in at 37 AD, the sacrifices did not cease then, nor did Christ return then
 - b. The prophecies of Daniel and other prophets contain gaps or parenthesis that do not distinguish between the past and future Roman empires (Daniel 2:40-41; 7:7; 8:8-9; 11:35-36); between the two advents of Christ (Isaiah 61:1-2), in which this present church age is a hidden mystery
4. The 70th week will begin following the rapture, and confirming of a covenant by the antichrist with Israel for that seven year period



Copyright 2003 by Ariel Ministries

B. The successive judgments of God during the tribulation are depicted as seals, trumpets and vials

1. The seals portray God's wrath *unveiled* (Revelation 6-7)

- a. Note that the 7th seal contains the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials, therefore the entirety of these judgments are contained in the seven seals of the scroll

2. Famine (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:5-6)
3. Death (Matthew 24:7-9; Revelation 6:7-8)
4. Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:12)
5. Martyrdom (Matthew 24:9-10, 16-22; Revelation 6:9-11)
6. False prophets (Matthew 24:11, 23-26; Revelation 13:11-14)
7. The sun and the moon darkened and the stars falling (Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-14)

III. THE DESIGN OF THE TRIBULATION

A. To prepare Israel for their Messiah

1. It is “the time of Jacob’s trouble” indicating it has special reference to Israel (Jeremiah 30:7)
2. Many of the prophecies regarding the tribulation have a Jewish focus (Daniel 9:24; Matthew 24:20; Revelation 12:1-2,17)
3. At this time God promises to “purge out from among you the rebels” (Ezekiel 20:33-44)
4. Their affliction will serve as a refining process (Isaiah 48:10; Ezekiel 22:18-22; Zechariah 13:9)
5. Israel will return to the Lord, receive Jesus as their Messiah, and be saved (Joel 3:16; Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25-27)

B. To reveal man’s depraved nature

1. At present, mankind’s wickedness is restrained by the Holy Spirit and the children of God (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7; Matthew 5:13-16)
2. But at the rapture, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way, and the saints will be caught up to be with the Lord, and there will be no restraint to the wickedness that will engulf humanity

3. Even while suffering under the severest judgments of the tribulation, godless humanity “repented not to give him the glory” (Revelation 9:20; 16:9; 16:11)
4. During this time, the earth will become ripe for harvest (Revelation 14:15)

C. To judge an unbelieving world

1. It will “come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10)
2. There is clearly a global scope to this judgment (Jeremiah 25:32-33; Isaiah 26:21; Revelation 6:15)
3. Various sins are highlighted as invoking God’s wrath
 - a. Believing not the truth, but having pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thessalonians 2:12)
 - b. Idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication, theft (Revelation 9:20-21)
 - c. Worshipping the beast and receiving his mark (Revelation 13:11-18)
 - d. Partaking of Babylon’s fornication (Revelation 14:8)
 - e. Blaspheming God’s name; unrepentance; refusing to give God glory (Revelation 16:9)
4. God will recompense those who trouble the Lord’s people (2 Thessalonians 1:4-6)

D. To prepare the earth for Messiah’s reign

1. His kingdom is one of righteousness, therefore sin must be dealt with in order for him to reign (Hebrews 1:8)

2. The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdom of Christ (Revelation 11:15), therefore those kingdoms must be broken and dashed in pieces (Psalms 2:8-9; Daniel 2:45)

CONCLUSION

1. For the unbeliever, things will be bad, intolerably bad, both in this world and the next.
2. But for the righteous, "it shall be well with him" (Isaiah 3:10)
3. It is utter folly and presumption for a sinner to think he can wait until after the rapture to repent
4. Death may come first (Proverbs 27:1)
5. God will send a "strong delusion" upon such people once the tribulation begins (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)
6. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2)
7. Am I prepared for the coming judgment? Have I fled to Jesus for refuge from the wrath to come?
8. What am I doing to pull others out of the fire? (Jude 23)