

## **The Doctrine of the Tribulation (Revelation 6-18)**

**The Definition of the Tribulation:** The word “tribulation” (*thilipsis*) is a general term used to describe any kind of testing, affliction or distress. It frequently refers to the church and her trials in this world (e.g., Acts 11:19; Rom 5:3; Rev 1:9). But the word “tribulation” also refers to a future time of trouble that will come upon the entire world (Matt 24:9, 21, 29; Mark 13:19, 24; Rev 7:14). This Tribulation will be unprecedented in its affliction, and will culminate with the personal return of Jesus Christ to earth (Rev 19:11-21).

**The Time of the Tribulation:** The Tribulation occurs after the removal of the church (1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-9) and is followed by the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ (Rev 20:1-4). It is during this period (i.e., the Millennium) that Christ defeats His enemies and establishes His right to rule on earth (Rev 4-5; 11:15-18).

**The Length of the Tribulation:** Daniel 9:24-27 teaches us that the Tribulation (Daniel’s 70th week) consists of seven years. This is further verified by the time periods of Revelation, which divide the Tribulation into two periods of three and one-half years (Rev 11:2-3; 13:5; 12:6; Dan 7:25; Rev 12:14).

### **The Purposes of the Tribulation:**

1. To discipline Israel for her stubborn rejection of Christ and bring the nation to faith in Christ (Zech 12:10; Matt 23:37-39). This prepares her for restoration and regathering for the Millennium (Jer 30:1-17; Ezek 20:33-38).
2. To judge the Gentile nations for their wickedness and rejection of Jesus Christ (Zeph 1:15, 17, 18; Joel 3:12-14; Rev 6:16-17). The Tribulation will also be used to bring many Gentiles to faith in Christ (Matt 24:14; Rev 7:9; 13:10).
3. To reveal the true character and agenda of Satan. The Tribulation will permit Satan’s program to come to its logical conclusion resulting in God’s judgment. It will demonstrate that Satan is the cause of war, murder, and deception, and that he deserves God’s judgment (Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:12-19; Matt 25:41; Rev 12:7-12; 20:1-3).
4. To demonstrate that God is holy (Rev 4:8; 6:10), righteous (Rev 15:3-4), just (Rom 3:26; 1 Pet 3:18), patient (2 Pet 3:9), and still on the throne (Rev 4:1:1-11).

### **The Names of the Tribulation:**

1. The indignation (Isa 26:20; 34:2)
2. A day of (God’s) vengeance (Isa 34:8; 63:1-6)
3. Jacob’s trouble or distress (Jer 30:7)
4. Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (Dan 9:24-27)
5. A time of trouble or distress (Dan 12:1)
6. The end time (Dan 12:9)
7. The day of the Lord (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 1 Thess 5:2)
8. Tribulation and the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:9, 21, 29; Mark 13:19, 24; Rev 7:14)
9. The hour of testing...to test those who dwell on the earth (Rev 3:10)
10. The great day of their (i.e., the Father and the Lamb) wrath (Rev 6:17)
11. Hour of His judgment (Rev 14:7)

**The Nature of the Tribulation:**

1. It is a time of unprecedented trouble (Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:14-18; Matt 24:21).
2. It is a time of God’s wrath or indignation and the vindication of God’s holiness (Zeph 1:15, 18; Rev 6:17; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 14:7, 10; 19:2). God’s wrath against man’s sin and rebellion will be withheld no longer.
3. It is a day of utter darkness, gloom and extreme cloudiness (Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:15).
4. It is a day of destruction and global catastrophes (Joel 1:15; 2:3; 1 Thess 5:3; Rev 6-19).
5. It is a day of extreme lawlessness, sin and demonic activity (Rev 9:20-21; 2 Thess 2:12).
6. It is a day of extreme deception and delusion (2 Thess 2:9-12; Rev 9:1f; 13:2-3, 11-18; Dan 8:24f). This deception is caused by a number of factors: (a) the removal of the Spirit indwelt church with its restraining influence (2 Thess 2:6-8), (b) the increase of demonic activity (2 Thess 2:8-10), and (c) the blinding judgment of God (2 Thess 2:11-12).
7. It is a time of death (Rev 6:3-11; 9:15, 18; 11:13). Large portions of the populations of the earth will be wiped out suddenly, both human and animal.
8. It is a time of utter negative volition, cold indifference, and rebellion against God even though the world will know it is under the wrath of God (Rev 6:14-17; 9:20; 11:10, 18).
9. It is a time of internationalism religiously (Rev 17), politically (Rev 13, 17), economically (Rev 18), and militarily (Joel 3:2, 9-14; Rev 17).
10. It is a time of extreme Anti-Semitism (Rev 12; Matt 24:9, 13f).
11. It is a time of unprecedented apostasy and blasphemy against God (Rev 11:1f; 13:1f; 2 Thess 2:3f).
12. It is a time of the martyrdom of believers, both Jew and Gentile (Rev 6:9; 7:14f).
13. It is a time of global and universal war, human and angelic (Rev 6: 2-4; 16:14; 19:14f; Joel 3:2, 9f; Rev 12:7).
14. But it is also a time of unprecedented evangelism (Rev 7:9; Matt 24:14). Note: The following 14 points are from my friend, Hampton Keathley III, now in the presence of Jesus (2 Cor 5:6-8).

**The Chronology of the Tribulation:** The following charts provide a simplified glance at the Tribulation judgments in Revelation.

<b>The Parallels Between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6</b>		
<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Revelation 6</b>
False Christs	24:4-5	6:1-2
Warfare	24:6-8	6:3-4
Famine	24:7	6:5-6
Death	24:7-10	6:7-8
Witnessing	24:14	6:9-11
Cosmic changes	24:29	6:12-17

<b>The Seals (Revelation 6:1-8:6)</b>	
1. Antichrist (6:2)	5. Martyrdom (6:9-11)
2. War (6:4)	6. Global Destruction (6:12-17)
3. Famine (6:6)	7. The trumpet judgments begin (8:1)
4. Death (6:8)	

<b>The Trumpets (Revelation 8:7-9:21)</b>	
1. A third of the world’s vegetation destroyed (8:7)	5. Terrible locusts (9:1)
2. A third of the world’s sea judged (8:8)	6. A third of mankind killed (9:13)
3. A third of the world’s fresh water poisoned (8:10)	7. The bowl judgments begin (16:1)
4. A third of the heavens darkened (8:12)	

<b>The Bowls (Revelation 16:1-17)</b>	
1. Ugly sores (16:2)	5. Darkness and pain (16:10)
2. Sea turned to blood (16:3)	6. Demonic hordes (16:12)
3. Fresh water turned to blood (16:4)	7. Greatest earthquake and widespread destruction (16:17)
4. Unbearable heat (16:8)	

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