

Celestial Grace Temple

What is the Tribulation?

The Tribulation, as taught by most Bible scholars, encompasses a future seven year period when God will complete his discipline of Israel and final judgment upon the unbelieving citizens of the world.

Those who accept a Pre-Tribulation Rapture theory believe that Christians who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will escape the Tribulation.

In the futurist view of Christian eschatology, the Tribulation is a relatively short period of time where everyone will experience worldwide hardships, disasters, famine, war, pain, and suffering, which will wipe out more than 75% of all life on the earth before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ takes place.

Some (Pre-Tribulationists) believe that those who choose to follow God, will be Raptured before the tribulation, and thus escape it.

According to Dispensationalists who hold the futurist view, the Tribulation is thought to occur before the Second Coming of Jesus and during the End Times. Another version holds that it will last seven years in all, being the last of Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks.

This viewpoint was first made popular by John Nelson Darby in the 19th century and was recently popularized by Hal Lindsey in *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

It is theorized that each week represents seven years, with the timetable beginning from Artaxerxes' order to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (the Second Temple).

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After seven plus 62 weeks, the prophecy says that the messiah will be "cut off", which is taken to correspond to the death of Christ. This is seen as creating a break of indeterminate length in the timeline, with one week remaining to be fulfilled.

This seven-year week may be further divided into two periods of 3.5 years each, from the two 3.5-year periods in Daniel's prophecy where the last seven years are divided into two 3.5-year periods, (Daniel 9:27).

The time period for these beliefs is also based on other passages: in the book of Daniel, "time, times, and half a time", interpreted as "a year, two years, and half a year," and the Book of Revelation, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" and "forty and two months" (the prophetic month averaging 30 days, hence $1260/30 = 42$ months or 3.5 years).

The 1290 days of Daniel 12:11, (rather than the 1260 days of Revelation 11:3), is thought to be the result of either a simple intercalary leap month adjustment, or due to further calculations related to the prophecy, or due to an intermediate stage of time that is to prepare the world for the beginning of the millennial reign.

Among futurists there are differing views about what will happen to Christians during the Tribulation:

Pretribulationists believe that all Christians (dead and alive) will be taken bodily up to Heaven (called the Rapture) before the Tribulation begins.

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According to this belief, every true Christian that has ever existed throughout the course of the entire Christian era will be instantaneously transformed into a perfect resurrected body, and will thus escape the trials of the Tribulation.

Those who become Christians after the rapture will live through (or perish during) the Tribulation. After the Tribulation, Christ will return to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

Prewrath Tribulationists believe the Rapture will occur during the tribulation, halfway through or after, but before the seven bowls of the wrath of God.

Midtribulationists believe that the Rapture will occur halfway through the Tribulation, but before the worst part of it occurs. The seven-year period is divided into halves—the "beginning of sorrows" and the "great tribulation".

Posttribulationists believe that Christians will not be taken up into Heaven, but will be received or gathered by Christ into the Kingdom of God on earth at the end of the Tribulation. "Immediately after the tribulation ... then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man [Jesus] ... and he shall gather his elect" (Matthew 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–27).

Posttribulationists argue that the seventh trumpet mentioned in Revelation is also the last trumpet mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:52, and that there is a strong correlation between the events mentioned in Isaiah 27:13, Matthew 24:29-31, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16;

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Thus creating a strong parallel, proving that the rapture occurs after the tribulation. Therefore, Posttribulationists see the rapture happening during the seventh trumpet, which would only mean that the rapture can never happen before the tribulation—according to this view.

Significantly, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 states "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (the first resurrection) and Revelation 20:4-5 (after chapters 6-19 and after Satan is bound) says, "They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection!" The idea of a post-tribulation rapture can also be read into 2 Peter 3:10-13 where Christ's return is equated with the "elements being melted" and "the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up." [improper synthesis?]

In pretribulationism and midtribulationism, the Rapture and the Second Coming (or Greek, par[ousia]) of Christ are separate events, while in post-tribulationism the two events are identical or simultaneous. Another feature of the pre- and mid-tribulation beliefs is the idea that after the Rapture, Christ will return for a third time (when also counting the first coming) to set up his kingdom on the earth. [citation needed]

Some, including many Roman Catholic theologians, [citation needed] do not believe in a "time of trouble" period as usually described by tribulationists, but rather that there will be a near utopian period led by the Antichrist.

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The Waldensians claim to be the woman in the wilderness church as written in Daniel and Revelations who have fulfilled the 1260 year prophecy of the great tribulation, the Catholic Inquisition lasting 500 years having started in the 13th century, the final end of the 1260 year persecution.

Many other groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, do not believe in Rapture at any point. According to Jehovah's Witnesses, the Great Tribulation is soon to arrive.

This period will see the destruction of Babylon the Great, the Great Harlot, as spoken of in Revelation. After Babylon the Great has been removed, they say, the world powers shall move against God's chosen people for a short while.

This will then usher in the ending of this "world" (not the earth, but the destruction of all those who do not wish to follow God) according to their understanding of Proverbs 2:21-22. The Great Tribulation ends with the battle of Armageddon.

Some Bible commentators have reasoned that it was the tribulation that came upon Jerusalem in 70 C.E., though they also realized that the events described thereafter evidently would take place at a time that, from a human standpoint, was then distant.

They reasoned that the expression "immediately after" conveyed God's perspective of the time involved or that the certainty of what was to occur was being expressed by language that placed the events immediately before the reader.

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Within the ninth chapter of the [Book of Revelation](#), the Tribulation is described as follows:

1. And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss.
2. And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.
3. And out of the smoke came forth locusts to the earth, and to them power was given, as the scorpions of the earth have power.
4. And it was said to them that they should not harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree, but men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.
5. And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.
6. And in those days men will seek death and shall by no means find it; and they will long to die, and death flees from them.
7. And the locusts were like horses prepared for war, and on their heads there were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were like faces of men.
8. And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.
9. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses rushing into war.
10. And they have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to harm men for five months.

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11. They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon; and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.
12. The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are yet coming after these things.
13. And the sixth angel trumpeted, and I heard a voice out of the four horns of the golden altar which is before God
14. Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.
15. And the four angels were released, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year that they might kill the third part of men.
16. And the number of the armies of horsemen was two hundred million; I heard their number.
17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision and those sitting on them, having breastplates of a fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.
18. By these three plagues the third part of the men were killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone proceeding out of their mouths.
19. For the power of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they harm men.
20. And the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues, still did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship the demons and the idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;
21. And they did not repent of their murders or of their sorceries or of their fornication or of their thefts.

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As you can discern from reading this synopsis, there are varying views and interpretations regarding biblical tribulation. Which interpretation is correct or what will actually occur is unknown and can only be speculated.

I believe that each person that studies biblical scripture will come to their own conclusion and belief regarding the future events of the tribulation.

May the grace of God be upon you always -- Amen

Pastor Andy Anderson

Celestial Grace Ministry