

The Olivet Discourse – The Great Tribulation

End Times

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Daniel 9:27 tells us of a future 7-year period, divided into two 3-1/2 year periods. The event that divides this time period, which we call the Seventieth Week of Daniel, is described as follows by the angel Gabriel: "...but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate..." This event Jesus calls the "abomination of desolation" in Matthew 24. Of that time, Jesus tells His disciples: Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. (Matthew 24:15-21)

The apostle Paul refers to this same event in his second letter to the Thessalonians. He writes: Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (2 Thess. 2:1-4)

This time of Great Tribulation, mentioned numerous times in the Scriptures, is referred to as an unparalleled time of distress and affliction – worse than any previous time in world history. The Antichrist, having consolidated his world power, having signed a Middle East peace treaty, will now reveal his true evil character and declare himself to be God and demand the world's worship. The books of Daniel and Revelation tell us that those who do not follow his agenda, those who do not receive his mark, will be persecuted and killed during the Great Tribulation. This 3-1/2 year period of tribulation is referred to in the Bible as "time, times and half a time", "1260 days", and "42 months." All of these references refer to the second half of Daniel's Seventieth Week. There are several events that happen at or near the midpoint of Daniel's Seventieth Week. Here is a listing of the events with the corresponding Scriptures:

1. The Restrainer is removed

2 Thess 2:6-8 – And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed...

Dan 12:1 – Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

For a detailed explanation of the archangel Michael as the restrainer, see the following article by Marv Rosenthal: <http://www.zionsfire.org/daniel.html>

2. War in Heaven and the expulsion of Satan

Rev 12:7-12 – And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”

3. Abomination of Desolation

Dan 9:27 – And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate

Matt 24:15, 21 – Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

4. Beginning of the Great Tribulation

Rev 13:3-7 – And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?” There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

5. Woman (faithful Israel) is hidden in wilderness

Rev. 12:1, 6, 14 – A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars... Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days... But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent

6. The Two Witnesses begin their ministry in Jerusalem

Rev 11:3 – And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

7. The Apostasy

Matt 24:9-10 – Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

2 Thess 2:3-4 – Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

As we all know, there have been times of tribulation for believers throughout history. And even today, in some parts of the world, believers are persecuted, ostracized and killed. But a time is coming when this persecution will increase in intensity and reach global proportions, including the United States. When this happens, will we be ready? Have we committed ourselves wholly to God so that we can say with the apostle Paul, “I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God”? Will we be able to “consider it all joy” when we encounter trials? Do we do that now?

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm (Eph. 6:13). May God examine our hearts and by His spirit prepare us for that evil day.

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