

A Concentrated Article On  
***The Seven Year Tribulation Period***

Compiled/Formatted By Tom Stephens

1) And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2) And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, [and] over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3) And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous [are] thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true [are] thy ways, thou King of saints. 4) Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for [thou] only [art] holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. 5) And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6) And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7) And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. 8) And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. (Revelation 15:1-8).

**THE WRATH OF GOD—Revelation 15**

This brief section of eight verses in the middle of the book of Revelation opens and closes with the wrath of God. It depicts the scene in heaven of God's sending out His angels of judgment to perform His last act of bringing people to Himself. He uses mercy, love, circumstances, the Holy Spirit, and many other divine tools to bring us to Himself. Ordinarily, the unsaved are not judged on this earth, which explains why people can break the laws of God and seemingly get away with it. The judgment they receive on this earth is merely the judgment of their deeds—whatsoever they sow, they reap—but people do not receive God's judgment until the Day of Judgment, with but one exception. During the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation, God will bring great judgment and calamity on humankind.

**FILLING UP GOD'S WRATH**

Verse 1 says of the seven last plagues, "because with them God's wrath is completed." Verses 5-8 describe the judgment of God being fulfilled. Verse 1 makes it clear that this will be the last judgment before the millennial kingdom. A literal translation of verse 1a is: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, the last ones." When this judgment is finished, the Tribulation will be concluded and the Millennium begun.

**GOD'S PURPOSE IN THIS GREAT TRIBULATION**

Not to understand that this impending period of Great Tribulation is of divine purpose and intent is to fail to understand significant truths relative to these coming events. Although we will probably not know the full extent of God's purpose for the Tribulation until we look down from heaven and see these events transpire, I would like to suggest the following four purposes as being discernible from the Scriptures:

- To introduce a worldwide revival when, under the preaching of the 144,000 servants of God, a multitude will be gathered that no one can number (Rev. 7:9)
- To destroy the wicked followers of Antichrist who are committed to his own way, lest they pollute those saved during the tribulation and corrupt them from the truth of the gospel, thus damning their souls
- To break the stubborn will of the nation of Israel, who will confess her national sin of rejecting the Messiah and plead for His return while there is yet time
- To shake the earth and all things in it so that one's normal sense of security will be so disordered that one will be more prone to look to God. Crises usually cause people to look to God. The Tribulation will be a time when God creates a climate of crisis, a climate conducive for human beings to call on Him while He is near.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Revelation Unveiled.** By Tim LaHaye; Pages 248-249; Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; ©1999.

"For then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matthew 24:21)

Beginning with Matthew 24:15, Jesus speaks about special signs that will occur during great tribulation, signs to indicate the end of the age is very near (Matthew 24:15-28). These signs will lead up to and signal the return of Christ to earth after the tribulation (24:29-31; cf. Rev. 19:11-20:4).

The major sign is "the abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15), a specific observable event which tells the faithful living during the tribulation that Christ's coming to earth at the end of the age will occur very shortly. This visible sign-event refers primarily to the future desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the antichrist (Dan, 9:27; see article on THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST). The antichrist or "man of sin" will set up an image of himself in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God (2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:14-15). The following are important facts concerning this pivotal event.

1) The "abomination of desolation" will mark the beginning of the final stage of the tribulation, which culminates in the return of Christ to earth and His judgment upon the ungodly at Armageddon (Matt. 24:21,29-30; see Dan. 9:27; Rev. 19:11-21).

2) By noting the time of this event ("when ye therefore shall see," Matt. 24:15), tribulation saints can know with a high degree of certainty when the tribulation will end and Christ will come to reign on earth (Mat. 24:33). The time span between this event and the end is given four times in Scripture as three and one half years or 1260 days (Dan. 9:25-27; Rev. 11:1-2; 12:6; 13:5-7).

(3) Because of the strong expectancy on the part of the tribulation saints for Christ's coming (Mat 24:33), the faithful must be aware that any report that Christ has returned is false (24:23-27). The "coming of the Son of man" after the tribulation will be observable and known to all who are in the world (24:27-30).

Another sign to occur during the great tribulation, and even before, will be false prophets who, as ministers of Satan, will do "great signs and wonders" (Mat. 24:24). (1) Jesus admonishes all believers to be especially alert for these professed Christian prophets, teachers, and preachers who are false, yet perform miracles, healings, signs wonders, and who appear to have great success in their ministries. At the same time, they will distort and reject the truth found in God's Word (Matt. 7:22; Gal. 1:9; see article on THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST).

(2) Elsewhere Scripture admonishes believers to test the spirit energizing all teachers, leaders, and preachers (1 John 4:1). God allows deception accompanied with miracles in order to test believers as to their love for Him and loyalty to the truth of Holy Scripture (Deut. 13:3). This will not be easy, for Jesus states in Mat 24:24 that, during the last days religious deceit will be so widespread it will be difficult even for "the very elect" (committed Christians) to discern truth from error (1Tim. 4:16; Jas. 1:21).

(3) Those among God's people, who do not love the truth will be deceived. They may be given no further opportunity to believe the truth of the gospel after the coming of antichrist (2 Thes. 2:11—"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."). Finally, the "great tribulation" will be a specific period of terrible suffering and tribulation for all the people in the world. Observe:

(1) It will be worldwide (Rev. 3:10).

(2) It will be the worst time of affliction and distress ever to occur in the history of humanity (Dan.12:1; Matt. 24:21).

(3) It will be a terrible time of suffering for the Jews (Jer. 30:5-7).

(4) The Period will be dominated by the “man of sin” (1 Thes. 2:3; i.e., antichrist; cf. Dan. 9:27; Rev. 13:12; see article THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST).

(5) The faithful of Christ’s churches are promised deliverance and “escape” from the *time* of the 7 year Tribulation term (Luke 21:36; 1 Thes. 5:8-10; Rev. 3:10).

(6) During this time among both Jews and Gentiles will be those who believe in Jesus Christ and are saved (Deut. 4:30-31; Hos. 5:15; Rev. 7:9-17; 14:6-7).

(7) It will be a time of great suffering and dreadful persecution for all who remain faithful to God (Rev. 12:17; 13:15).

(8) It will be a time of God’s wrath and judgment upon the ungodly (1 Thes. 5: 1-11; Rev. 6: 16-17).

(9) The statement of Jesus that those days will be shortened (Matt. 24:22) must not be understood to imply that there will be any reduction of the predicted three and a half years or 1,260 days. Rather, it seems to refer to the fact that the period is so awful that if it were not confined to a limited period of time, the whole human race would be destroyed.

(10) The great tribulation will end with the coming of Jesus Christ in glory with His bride (Rev. 19:7-8, 14) to bring deliverance to the remaining faithful, and judgment and destruction to the wicked (Matt.24:29-31; Luke 9:11-27; Rev. 9: 11-21).

(11) We must not confuse this coming at the end of the tribulation with Jesus’ reference to His unexpected descent from heaven in Matthew 24:42,44, keeping strongly in mind that Jesus’ coming there refers to the rapture of believers, occurring at a time earlier than that of His final return at the end of the tribulation.

(12) The major passage in scripture describing the entire seven-year tribulation period is in chapters 6-18 in the book of Revelation.

“And he shall confirm a the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Daniel 9:27)

#### **SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION—2 Thessalonians 2:11**

After the removal of the restrainer (see article on THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST) and the revealing of the man of sin, there will be *little or no* opportunity for salvation for one particular group of people.

(1) This group consists of all those inside or outside the church who, after adequately hearing the truth of God's Word, have willingly and intentionally refused to love that truth and chosen instead to take pleasure in the wickedness of the world (vv. 10,12).

“And with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11) And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

(2) God will send those individuals a strong delusion so that they may never again have an opportunity to believe the truth they refused to love (v. 12). They are forever doomed to believe "a lie" (i.e., the claims of the man of sin).

(3) God's purpose in sending the "strong delusion" is that they "might be damned" (v. 12). Therefore, for those who have heard and understood God's Word, yet did not love and receive its truth but chose instead

the pleasure of sin, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment" (Heb. 10:26-27).

(4) Salvation during the days of the tribulation will be offered only to those who never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth or to hear and understand the gospel (cf. Rev. 7:14; 11:3; 14:6-7). Those who proclaim the gospel during those days will include the 144,000 sons of Israel (Rev. 7:4), the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3), and angels (Rev. 14:6).

#### **HE SHALL CONFIRM THE COVENANT. . .**

. . . **FOR ONE WEEK.** The making of a covenant between "the prince that shall come" (Dan 9: 26) and Israel will signal the beginning of the seventieth week, the final seven years of this age. Concerning this event, the Bible teaches the following: (1) The prince who will make the covenant with Israel is the antichrist, but he will be unrevealed at the time (cf. 2 Thes. 2:3-10; 1 John 2:18). Evidently a peace treaty will be negotiated by the antichrist between Israel and its enemies concerning a land dispute (11:39).

(2) In the middle of the seven years (i.e., after three and one-half years), the prince will break his covenant with Israel, declare himself to be God, take over the temple in Jerusalem, forbid the worship of the Lord (cf. 2 Thes. 2:4), and devastate Palestine. He will reign for three and one-half years (Rev. 11:1-2; 13:4-6; see article on THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST).

(3) The prophetic significance of "the abomination of desolation" will be known only to the faithful of God (12:10-11). Jesus said that believers must take heed: concerning this pivotal sign, for it will bring the final three and one-half year countdown to His coming to earth in glory (see Mat 24:15). By taking heed, believers in the tribulation will know Christ's coming is near, even at the door (Mat. 24:33; see article on THE GREAT TRIBULATION). The coming of the Messiah (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:11-20) will occur at the end of the seven years or the second three and one-half years. Revelation confirms the time by stating twice that the antichrist (i.e., "the beast") will have power for only forty-two months (Rev. 11:1-2; 13:4-6). Daniel later states again that it will be three and one-half years ("a time, times, and an half") from the time of great distress to the end (12:7).

(4) In the three and one-half years allotted to the antichrist, Jerusalem will continue to be trodden down by the Gentiles (Rev. 11:2).

(5) The "abomination that maketh desolate" is the unmistakable sign that the great tribulation has begun (12:11; Mat. 24:15-21; cf. Deut. 4:30-31; Jer. 30:5-7; Zech. 13:8-9).

(6) The tribulation and the rule of the antichrist will end with the coming of Christ in power to judge the wicked (Mat 25:31-46), to destroy the antichrist, and to begin His millennial reign (Jer. 23:5-6; Mat 24:27,30).

**ABOMINATIONS HE SHALL MAKE IT DESOLATE.** Christ referred to Daniel's vision when he said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Mat. 24:15). Jesus' remark may refer to the future desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by the antichrist (cf. 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:14-15; see article on THE AGE OF THE ANTICHRIST).<sup>2</sup>

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