

The King Is Coming - 4

Introduction: We began this series some time ago and are on lesson 4. We are looking at this subject concerning the second coming of the Lord. In this series, we have been answering a series of questions.

The first question we asked was, “**Are we foolish to look for the Second Coming of the Lord?**” The answer from the Bible is **no**. The Bible tells us in **Romans 13:11-12** “*11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, **the day is at hand:** let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*”

The second question we answered was, “**Will the lost and the saved stand in the same judgment?**” The answer to this question is no as well. The two primary judgments we considered were **the judgment of the lost** and **the judgment of the saved**. The judgment of the lost is called **the Great White Throne Judgment** because of the purity and awesome description of the throne in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Then we saw the Judgment Seat of Christ. (This is sometimes called the **Bema** [βῆμα] Seat judgment because of the Greek word used in **Romans 14:10** and also **II Corinthians 5:10**) This judgment is described in **I Corinthians 3** as being concerned with **quality** primarily.

Then thirdly, we asked the question, “**Will the Church go through the tribulation?**” The answer to this question also is no. That brings us to this lesson, **What happens in the Great Tribulation?**

Let us first consider this verse found in **Matthew 24**.

Matthew 24:21-22 “*21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.*”

I. What Happens In The Great Tribulation?

A. Things that will not happen.

1. The world **will not** come to an end.

The end of this world does not occur until after **the Great White Throne Judgment**.

Revelation 21:1 *“1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”*

2. The **unsaved dead will not be raised** when Christ comes for His own. (The Rapture).

Revelation 20:13 speaks to the resurrection of the lost, *“13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”*

3. The church will not go through the tribulation.

B. Things that will happen.

1. The church **will be** caught up just before the tribulation.

2. The Holy Spirit will let.

3. The tribulation will begin when the saints are taken out.

II Thessalonians 2:7-8 states, *“7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:”*

II. The World Faces Dark and Fearful Days

Dr. Chappell, in his book entitled *Understanding The Times*, stated this concerning the Tribulation, “I write these pages with a heavy heart, for we will see in the Scripture that in the future mankind grows irrevocably intolerant and defiant of God, in total and outright rejection— even cursing his name to his very face. This extreme and ultimate rejection of the living God will result in the pouring out of a series of cataclysmic judgments that no sane person would choose to endure.”

The tribulation period was spoken about specifically in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah revealed the purpose.

Jeremiah 30:7-9 *“7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even **the time of Jacob’s trouble**; But he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, That I will break his yoke from off thy neck, And will burst thy bonds, And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.”*

It is referred to here as the time of Jacob’s trouble. During the tribulation, the nation of Israel and her land will be the center stage for all that goes on. When the church is removed, as Paul spoke about in Romans 9-11, the Lord will deal with His people Israel.

Daniel received the plan.

The seventy weeks prophecy is seventy-seven's, which covers a period of **490 years**. (**Daniel 9:24-27**) 483 of these years have transpired, and the Messiah was "cut off." The remaining seven years are yet to happen. This is the tribulation.

Zechariah reported the product.

Zechariah 13:9 "9 *And I will bring the third part through the fire, And **will refine them as silver is refined, And will try them as gold is tried:** They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: And they shall say, The Lord is my God."*

Israel will turn to God. God's people, the nation of Israel, will receive all the promises God has made to them. With the Old Testament prophets, we have **the purpose, the plan, and the product** of the Tribulation as it relates to Israel. But what are the specific events during the Tribulation? Revelation **chapters 4-19** reveal the events of this tribulation period.

The **first shocking event** we have already discussed **is the removal of the church**. This in itself will cause **great devastation**.

Secondly, there is the rise of the antichrist. The antichrist will impress the world. He will rule. This, at first, will appear to the deceived as a blessing but, in the end, will be a terrible judgment for this world.

The Antichrist is called by many names. He is a few:

The Beast (**Daniel 7:11, Revelation 13:1**)

Man of Sin (**II Thessalonians 2:3**)

Son of Perdition (**II Thessalonians 2:3**)

That Wicked (**II Thessalonians 2:8**)

Antichrist (**I John 2:18**)

Little horn (**Daniel 7:8**)

The Abomination of Desolation (**Matthew 24:15**)

Thirdly, **there will be the revelation of Christ's witnesses**. It seems that those who have made a **deliberate and final choice to reject the Lord Jesus Christ will believe a lie**.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12 tells us, "10 *And with all deceivableness 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.*"*

However, there will be many that trust in Christ during the tribulation.

Revelation 14:3-5 speaks of the 144,000 witnesses *“3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song **but the hundred and forty and four thousand**, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for **they are virgins**. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*

In addition to these witnesses, God will have two witnesses. **Revelation 11:3** *“3 And I will give power unto **my two witnesses**, and **they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth.”*

They will have power given to them by God.

Revelation 11:6 states, *“6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”*

This awful period of judgment is hard to fathom. As we think about these events, I want you to realize that anything we have experienced in human history will pale compared to what God describes for us in the Book of Revelation. Dr. Paul Chappell categorizes these judgments into three broad categories.

Life-Ending Judgments

After a false sense of peace, there will be terrible wars. According to Revelation 6, the white, red, black, and pale horses speak to terrible havoc resulting from war. Many who have read about past world wars have learned of their terrible results. They include famine, disease, and tightly controlled food and supplies. These are inevitably followed by death.

Charles Ryrie said this is His commentary on the subject, *“The black horse forebodes death, and the pair of balances bespeaks a careful rationing of food. Normally, a penny (a Roman denarius, a day’s wage in Palestine in Jesus’ day **Matthew 20:2**) would buy eight measures of wheat or twenty-of barley. Under these famine conditions, the same wage will buy only one measure of wheat or three of barley.”*

Disease and plague follow war because of dead bodies, contaminated water supplies, and infections.

Revelation 6:8 *“8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them **over the fourth part of the earth**, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”*

There are 8 Billion People in the world. If 1/4th of the world's population is taken by war, famine, pestilence, and beasts, that is 2 Billion (1/4th of the world's population). Not only will there be life-ending judgments, but secondly, we have:

Environmentally Devastating Judgments

The disasters that we experience today are just precursors to the events described in the book of Revelation.

The already frail economy and frail supply system will be devastated even further.

In **Revelation 8:7**, we are told that fire will **consume 1/3 of the earth's trees and plants**. **Revelation 8:7** *"7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."* According to Revelation 8:8-9, a giant meteor seems to be pictured as a mountain burning with fire that cast into the sea.

"8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

In **verses 8-11 of Revelation chapter 8**, the Bible **speaks of contaminated water**, *"10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."*

Then there is the loss of light. The sun we look at every day is taken for granted, just like our lives. People look at the sun and assume it will always shine and never dim. But the Bible states in

Revelation 8:12 *"12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."*

Dr. Chappell stated this, "When the sun's power is diminished by one-third, not only will it rob the Earth of her light, but it will concurrently diminish her heat as well."

In a day when many want to speak of "global warming" or the politically correct "climate change," the world has yet to see 1/3 of the sun's light taken away.

Retaliatory Judgments

In Revelation chapter 16, there are vials described as being poured out. These vials are referred to in **Revelation 16:1** as the “...vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” As we think about this awful period of time, we can imagine that those who go through this time and survive will be waking up day by day thinking, “This can’t get any worse.” In **Revelation chapter nine** there are described for us **locusts from the bottomless pit**.

Revelation 9:3-6 “3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

In **verse 2 of Revelation 16**, we find another judgment. Here the Bible says that agonizing sores will develop on those who take the mark of the beast. **Revelation 13:16-17** states, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

For those who side with the Antichrist and His demonic prophet, the judgment will be agonizing sores.

In **verses 3-6 of chapter 16**, once again, the waters are targeted, and we are told they will be turned into blood. Then if all that were not enough, the Bible described scorching heat and darkness coupled with pain.

Revelation 16:8-11 “8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 **And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.** 10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

As all of these things take place it is hard to imagine what purpose this will serve. Let me give you a few things to think about as we finish up:

1. It is the final space for men to repent.

Every phase of the tribulation allows men to turn to God. We have these events recorded

for us. God uses witnesses during the Tribulation to preach the Gospel. Unfortunately, an overwhelming testimony is that many will not. **Revelation 9:20** “... **yet repented not** of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.” **Revelation 16:9** “... **they repented not to give him glory.**” **Revelation 16:11** “11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, **and repented not of their deeds.**”

Remember Nicodemus' question in **John 3:9** “9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?”

We may be saying the same thing; How can these things be? But the truth is still the truth whether we can grapple with the magnitude of it or not.

2. God's justice requires judgment.

Abraham's question is answered in these events. Genesis 18:25 “...*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” And the answer is yes. There is no room for our subjective reasoning. The Great Judge of all the earth will do righteously. He will judge according to perfection at all times and in all situations.

“God cannot allow the unrepentant sin of man to go unchecked for eternity. His justice requires judgment, and yet in His grace, He has both provided as sin payment through the blood of Christ for all who trust Him, and He has withheld judgments for millennia, giving more opportunities to trust Christ.”

3. God's reproof of Israel and Her restoration.

As we noted by the Old Testament prophets, Israel is still God's people. And as prophesied, they will turn to Him.

4. Gentile people will have a final opportunity.

“We believe with all our hearts that the Tribulation judgments of God serve a dual purpose: to punish hardened sinners and to move others to repentance and faith. The Tribulation will be God's ultimate illustration of the truth found in **Romans 11:22** “22 *Behold therefore **the goodness and severity of God**: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*”

In light of all these things, as we consider the church's mission, we should ask this question. Seeing these things, what manner of person ought ye to be? (Echoing the words of Peter in **II Peter 3:11**)