

Two Tribulations: of Man & God



The Tribulation period and the everyday tribulations of life are **two different subjects**, yet **God's purpose for both is similar**. The ultimate purpose of the Tribulation period is Christ **reclaiming the world from evil**—sin, the devil, the Antichrist, the self-centered, immoral one-world system, etc. Similarly, the ultimate purpose of everyday trials is **to reclaim our individual lives from evil**. Hard times **build** our character, **purify** our hearts from sinful fleshly desires and **strengthen** our faith. *Are you going through a time of personal tribulation?* Does sin grip your life—a habit, an attitude, ongoing misbehavior, an addiction, a sinful stronghold? God wants to free us and purify us. He will use pain, problems, and tribulation to pry loose the grip that sin has on our lives.

According to the prophetic scriptures, the darkest days of human history are yet to occur. This period is called **the Tribulation period**. The prophet Daniel foretold about the Tribulation, *“...Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence...”* (Dan. 12:1 NLT). Also, Jesus spoke to his disciples about the Tribulation period in the Olivet Discourse. He said: *“²¹ For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again. ²² In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones.”* (Matthew 24:21-22 NLT). The Bible reveals that no time in history equals the turmoil, destruction, and display of evil as that of the Tribulation period. **According to prophecy, the worst is yet to come!**

Bible teacher and author, Tim LaHaye, writes: **“No other event in the Bible, except perhaps the Second Coming itself, is mentioned more frequently than the Tribulation”** (*Are We Living in the End Times?* p.151).

References to the Tribulation period are scattered throughout both the **Old & New Testaments**. In the **Old Testament**, it is called: ● A time of trouble for Jacob (Jer. 30:7); ● The one 'seven' [of Daniel's Seventy Weeks (or sevens)] (Daniel 9:27); ● The time of [God's] wrath (Isaiah 26:20-21; Daniel 11:36); ● A day of vengeance, a year of [divine] retribution (Isaiah 34:8; 35:4; 61:2); ● A time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then (Daniel 12:1); ● The great day of the Lord, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry (Zephaniah 1:14-16).

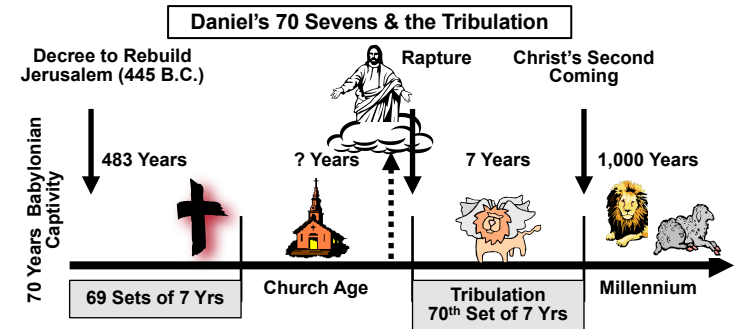
In the **New Testament**, it is called: ● The day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:2); ● Birth pains (Matthew 24:8); ● God's wrath (Revelation 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1); ● The hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth (Revelation 3:10); ● The great day of the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16-17); ● The coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 11:18); ● Great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again (Matthew 24:21, 29); ● The great tribulation (Revelation 7:14); ● The hour of his [God's] judgment (Revelation 14:7).

Main Lesson & Application

God has a constructive purpose for times of tribulation—He uses them to reclaim people from the grip of evil.

What Is the Tribulation Period?

The Tribulation period is a **seven-year period of time** characterized by unparalleled turmoil and God's judgment before the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. The seven-year length comes from Daniel's vision of the seventy sets of sevens [NLT] (Daniel 9:24-27). The Tribulation is the “one set of seven” [the 70th week] (v.27) when the Antichrist makes a covenant [a peace treaty] with Israel. The Tribulation will actually begin with the signing of the peace treaty between Israel, her neighboring countries, and the Antichrist.



Also, the book of Revelation verifies that the Tribulation is seven years when it refers to half of the Tribulation as 1260 days, or 42 months, or **“a time, times and half a time”** [three-and-one-half years] (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

What Is God's Purpose for the Tribulation Period?

1. God's **JUDGMENT** on Evil & Christ Reclaiming the World.

Many people misunderstand the nature of the Tribulation period as a time when the devil and the Antichrist are triumphant and taking control of the earth. However, the Tribulation period is not the triumph of evil but the triumph of righteousness. It is a **time of God's judgment** upon the world's evil. (See Revelation 6:16-17; 11:16-18; 14:9-10, 18-19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 17-19; 19:15).

2. God's **PURIFICATION** of Israel.

Daniel records that the Tribulation was *“...decreed for your people...”* a reference to Israel (Dan. 9:24) and *“...to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt...”* God will use the Tribulation period to purify the Israel's heart, to turn them to Christ and prepare them for the Millennial kingdom of Christ.

3. The **SALVATION** of Multitudes.

Although the Tribulation period is primarily a time of God's wrath and judgment, it **also is a time of mercy, grace, and salvation** for multitudes of people. The Tribulation catastrophes will shake people's false confidence in themselves and the world system. Evidence that multitudes will experience salvation during the Tribulation is seen in Revelation 7:9 and 14.

4. God Bringing Time to an **END**.

God has a timetable, as indicated by Daniel's vision of the **seventy sets of sevens** [NLT] (Dan. 9:24-27). As we know it, time has to come to an end, and eternity must begin. The Tribulation (and the Millennium) is God's ending of time.

God has a constructive purpose for times of tribulation - He uses them to reclaim people from the grip of evil.

Suggested Action Steps: ► Receive Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian dedicate yourself to Christ. ► Read Revelation 6, 8, 9 & 16. Make a list of the Tribulation events. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's Bible study on the End Times. ► Attend the next small group discussion on this topic.