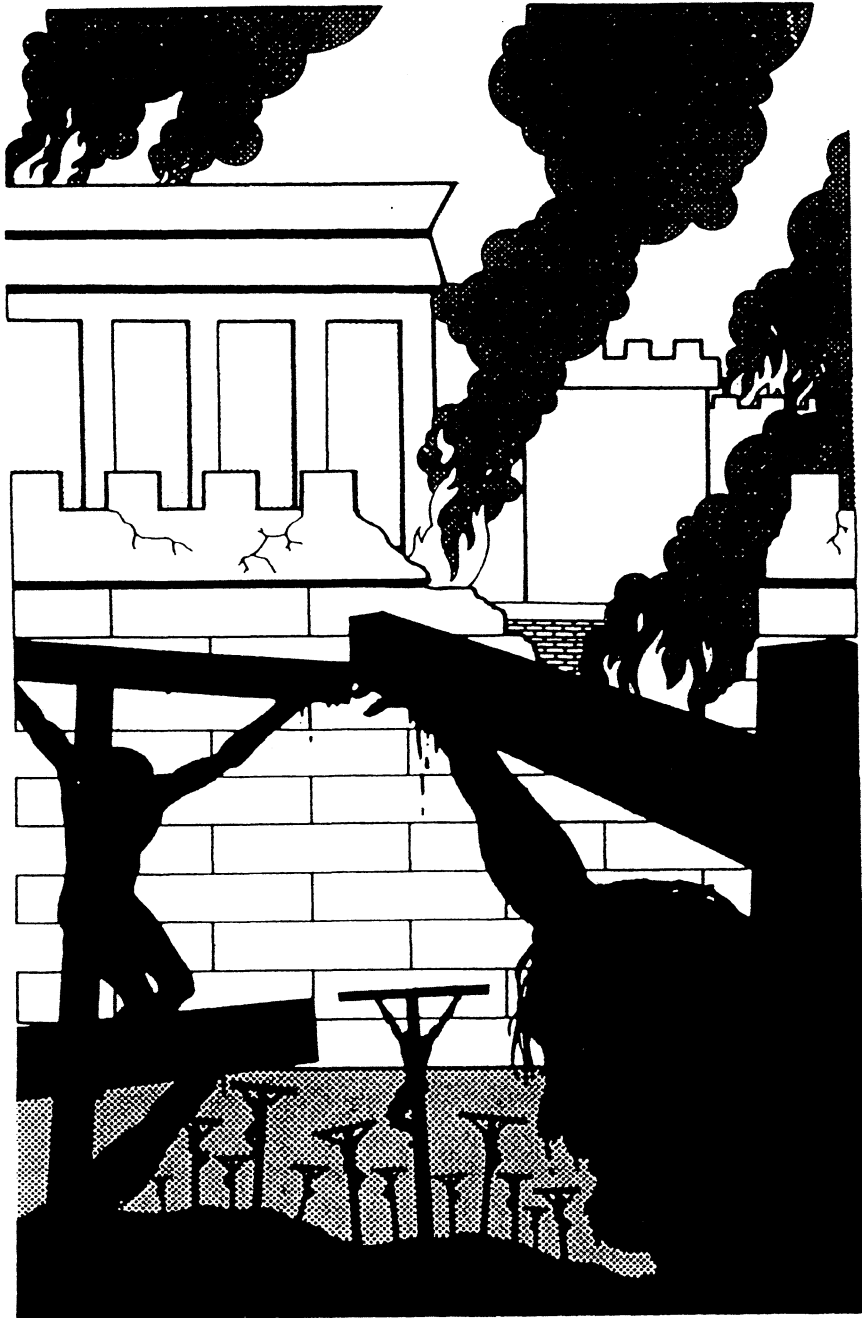


An Outline Study of the Tribulation



"FOR THEN SHALL BE GREAT TRIBULATION"

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INTRODUCTION

The Jews have always had a special place in the sovereign program of God. Ever since the time of Abraham, the Father of the Jews, until the close of the first century A. D., there have been revelations of God's dealings with His people. Many prophecies were fulfilled accurately in ages past. Other prophecies, however, still point to the future and indicate what is to happen to the Jewish people in days to come. One of these predictions--the backbone of prophecy--is found in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel. Here is a time-table of seventy weeks given, which encompasses the course of the Jewish nation from Daniel's time up to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Sixty-nine weeks of that seventy-week period have already been fulfilled. There remains yet one week, commonly known as the seventieth week of Daniel or the Tribulation. This prophetic week of seven years shall be considered in the form of an outline study. Though a more detailed study of any one aspect of this period might be desirable, the writer wishes to make this paper of practical use for his future ministry. Furthermore, a study of some aspect of this prophetic revelation becomes only then intelligible, when it is seen in its general context and perspective.

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF THE TRIBULATION

The tribulation may be defined as a specific and definite period of judgment which will occur in the final phases of Israel's earthly history and will affect not only Israel but all existing Gentile nations, as well as apostate Christianity.¹

The Terminology of the Tribulation

General meaning.--The word "tribulation" is derived from the Latin "tribulum" which means threshing-sledge. This term is used in the Bible both in a general and a specific sense.² In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul teaches that one of the benefits of justification is that the believer can glory in tribulation, for he knows that it is conducive to patience. The idea here is that of any trial or affliction.

Specific meaning.--Much Scripture could be cited to support the specific usage. Matthew and Luke, in their respective records of the eschatological discourse of the Lord,

¹William F. Foster, Class Notes in Systematic Theology, "Eschatology," p. 8.

²Charles Feinberg, Premillennialism or Amillennialism? (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1936), p. 125.

reveal a time of tribulation at a definite point in the history of the world and particularly that of Israel.¹

Jeremiah speaks of the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). We note three things of this period. First of all, it is to be future from Jeremiah's time. Also, the trouble is to be unprecedented in nature, and finally, Israel shall experience salvation during this time.

Another term used in the Old Testament of the tribulation is the word "indignation" (Isa. 34:2). This term is the characteristic Old Testament term, as "wrath" is in the New Testament. Both are technical terms referring to the expression of God's wrath upon all the unregenerate world. This judgment is to be universal.

Christ employs the term "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) in describing this period of time, with a more specific reference to the last forty-two months. This period cannot begin until the abomination of desolation is revealed and will be terminated with the second advent of Christ.

The "great day of wrath" of Rev. 6:17 and 16:19 refers to the same period of time but indicates the active expression of God's anger against the unregenerate.²

¹Lorraine Boettner, The Millennium (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958), p. 256.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), IV, 360-361.

The Purpose of the Tribulation

A time of purification for Israel.--God has an abiding purpose for the nation of Israel, but this purpose cannot be accomplished until the Israelites turn to their Messiah (Dan. 9:24). God has always blessed obedience and cursed disobedience, and this principle shall continue (Deut. 28:1-2, 15). Because Israel has rejected her Messiah she will be punished for the purpose of purging (Jer. 30:7-9).

A time of separation for the apostates of Israel.--The time of separation is clearly forecast by the prophets Isaiah (10:21-22) and Zechariah (13:8-9). Zechariah writes:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. 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.

This passage clearly indicates that only a remnant of Israel shall return and about two-thirds of the nation will be cut off.

A time of judgment for the Gentiles.--During the tribulation the Gentiles of the world will be judged (Rev. 6:15-17; Isa. 24:1-11). All the judgments predicted for this time--the seals (Rev. 16:1-17), the trumpets (Rev. 8 and 9),

¹ Quotations from the English Bible are from the King James Version.

and the vials (Rev. 16:1-21)--will be poured out upon the Gentiles as well, for they have also rejected Christ. God's judgment will fall upon all who blaspheme the name of God and fail to give Him the glory.

THE DURATION OF THE TRIBULATION

It cannot be definitely proven that the time of Jacob's trouble, the period which is designated as the tribulation throughout this paper, starts immediately subsequent to the rapture. There may be an intervening time of preparation, during which the man of sin increases in power and might. He finally will be revealed for what he is when he makes a covenant with many of the Jewish people. This signals the start of the tribulation. According to Daniel 9:24-17, this period will be approximately seven years in duration. Matthew writes (24:27) that this time will be shortened a little, or perhaps pass by more quickly for the elect's sake. Daniel's prophecy of the sixty-nine weeks ended when Christ died and the last week is still future. Each week, as has already been confirmed by history, is seven years in duration. Daniel 9:27 confirms the fact that the tribulation is yet to come:

And [the prince that shall come] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The division of the period.--Daniel also indicates in the quote just given, that the tribulation is divided into two equal parts. The latter half of this time is the "great tribulation" and is also called "time, times, and a half" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7), "forty and two months" (Rev. 13:4-7), and "a thousand two hundred and three score days" (Rev. 12:6). It is therefore evident that the tribulation is approximately seven years in duration and is divided into two equal parts.¹

The conclusion of the period.--The last three and a half years are marked by judgments of unprecedented severity. Matthew writes that "then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (24:21) and then adds that "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (24:29-30). Christ's return with power and great glory will mark the end of this period.

The Cause of the Tribulation

Those who insist that the Church will go through the tribulation claim that the period is only one of intensified

¹Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Basis of Premillennial Faith (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), pp. 139-140.

persecution. Ladd writes the following along these lines:

The final Tribulation will be the most fearful the world has ever seen, but the difference will be quantitative and not qualitative The sufferings which will be inflicted by the Antichrist will be more fearful than anything previously experienced, yet they are not different in kind from all the tribulation and persecution of the ages.¹

The following discussion will show that there is indeed a qualitative difference between former tribulations and the tribulation immediately prior to Christ's return.

The development of human iniquity.--Evil, vice, and idolatry shall get worse and worse. Even in John's day there was the development of the spirit of lawlessness (I John 2:18). This spirit of lawlessness shall reach its climax when the restrainer is removed (II Thess. 2:7), and there will be no more deterrent of sin.

Coeval with the removal of the restrainer of lawlessness there develops a widespread mental deception, which comes upon the people as a result of the rejection of the truth (II Thess. 2:10-11). Having rejected the one of whom the truth speaks, the people will plunge into unprecedented religious apostasy and idolatry (Rev. 13:4). The direct result of this will be gross moral degeneracy (Rev. 20-21) and volitional impenitence (Rev. 9:20, 16:9), which always follow

¹George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 128-129.

the rejection of God's truth.

The intervention of satanic power.--Satan is the one who contributes most to the development of human iniquity. At the middle of the tribulation God will cast him out of heaven and his activities will be confined to earth (Rev. 12:7-9). He will be given the power to unleash the demonic forces, thus there will be the multiplication of demonic activity (Rev. 9:1-11). Simultaneously there will be the energizing of the antichristian beast, which shall have control of all the world's affairs (Rev. 13:14). Satan will then do everything in his power to persecute and kill the redeemed saints.

The outpouring of divine wrath.--The period of tribulation is a time when God's wrath is poured out upon the earth. This is not done today. The wrath of God upon a rejecting world arises out of two separate punishments of God mentioned in II Thessalonians 2:7-8 and Revelation 16. The removal of the Holy Spirit as the restraining influence upon sin and the infliction of direct punishment upon earth shall cause conditions more catastrophic than this world has ever seen. Each of the actions in the book of the Revelation originates in heaven; God is directly responsible for them.¹

¹Foster, p. 9.

The Companies of the Tribulation

One more point to be considered in this chapter is who the people are who will endure this period of intense wrath. This is a point of great controversy, especially as relates to the Church, which many believe will have a part in the tribulation. Unfortunately, because of the limits and purpose of this paper, the opposing views can only be briefly touched upon. One point is certain, those who adhere to the pretribulational rapture of the Church do not do so because of their own wishful thinking, as Ladd charges.¹ Their doctrine of the rapture is not based on their desire that they do not want to suffer the great tribulation.

The Church.--The Church is promised deliverance from the wrath of God. Romans 5:8 and other passages give ample proof the Christ Himself bore the wrath and judgment of God for those who are in Christ. The antithesis of I Thess. 5:9 proves this conclusively: "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Suffering is often the portion of Christians, but not wrath! Wrath has been reserved for unbelievers. So it may confidently be stated that the Church will be in heaven with her Savior.

Repeatedly reference has been made to the restrainer

¹Ladd, p. 164.

who will be removed before the tribulation can begin. Only someone more powerful than Satan can restrain the forces of evil and thus it is pretty clear that the restrainer is God. The God-indwelt Church is the instrument of restraint, and when the indwelling Holy Spirit is removed, all believers are withdrawn also, since they cannot be "disindwelt."¹ The tribulation starts therefore upon only the unregenerate of mankind.

The Gentiles.--For the Gentiles, the tribulation marks the close of the period called the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), which started with the Babylonian captivity, when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians. Frightful judgments will be poured out upon the Gentiles, their cities, and civilization, leading to a complete doom just prior to the return of Christ.²

The elect.--The saved or elect of the tribulation period are those Jews and Gentiles, who have probably never heard the Gospel previously, and who then shall turn to Christ for salvation. They are said to be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people," (Rev. 7:9) who because of the extreme suppression of

¹Charles Caldwell Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), pp. 111-112.

²J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 315.

religious freedom and increased persecution during the last forty-two months, will for a large part die a martyr's death.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRIBULATION

The Inauguration of the Tribulation

The revelation of the Lawless One.--Although the tribulation is only seven years in duration, it will nevertheless be a period of great and concentrated activity. The visible sign for the start of the tribulation is the revelation of the Antichrist. The Scriptures give him several designations.

His names primarily reveal something about his character. Though he is spoken of as Antichrist (I John 2:18-20), this has reference to his spirit of error rather than the person. Daniel calls him "the little horn" (Dan. 7:8), and he is seen to be the final leader of the fourth empire. Also he is foreseen as the prince (Dan. 9:16-17) and the willful king (Dan. 11:26). In the New Testament he is called the "man of sin" (II Thess. 2:3) and "the beast out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1). Posing as Christ, Antichrist will oppose Christ.¹

This individual will possess an extremely enigmatic character. Except for Jesus Christ, he will be the most

¹ Everett F. Harrison (ed.), Baker's Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 46.

remarkable person the world has ever seen. From some of the verses already referred to, it can be seen that he will be the very incarnation of religious error and moral evil. Not only will he be possessed with an extraordinary personality and genius, but he will even attempt to change prophecy and the law of God:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exhalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished. (Dan. 7:25, 11:36)

This man of sin will also have a companion to assist him in his evil work. This individual is known as the "false prophet" (Rev. 19:20, 20:10), and is called "the second beast" (Rev. 13:11-17). He will be influential in religious matters (13:11) and compels the earth to worship the first beast as God (13:12). The tribulation will evidently see the establishment of the trinity of hell, with God's place assumed by Satan, the place of Christ usurped by Antichrist, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit discharged by the false prophet.¹

The establishment of the Jewish covenant.--Daniel relates (9:22) the confirmation of a covenant which the

¹J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 335.

prince shall make with many of Israel for the seven years. This necessitates, first of all, that the Jews have returned to their land. Ezekiel foretells this regathering:

After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land . . . that is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. (38:8)

The people will think that they are dwelling safely and will have a false sense of security because of the covenant with the world ruler. The purpose of the covenant seems to be that they might be preserved from a great northern power, "the overflowing scourge" (Isa. 28:14-15), which in all likelihood is Russia. However, it is prophesied elsewhere that these precautions are in vain. The king of the North shall invade Palestine anyway. Pentecost writes concerning this:

Since the covenant is said to be broken in the middle of the week (Dan. 9:27) and the invasion from the north is seen to be the cause of the breaking of the covenant (Dan. 11:41) it may be concluded, that this invasion takes place in the middle of the week.¹

This invasion by the king of the North results in his destruction. Thereupon the beast moves into Palestine. He will break the covenant, stop the sacrifices and oblations which he had tolerated for forty-two months, and will set up an image of himself in the temple at Jerusalem (Rev. 13:14-15).

¹Ibid., pp. 354-355

This will mark the beginning of Israel's great tribulation.

The Progression of the Tribulation

His rise to power.--Having his arch-enemies destroyed, this willful king has to subdue the rebellious nations that are left, by "going forth conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2b). Likewise, the kings of Daniel's fourth kingdom must be subdued. This is done either by diplomacy or force (Rev. 17:12-13).¹

His exercise of autocracy.--This universal rule shall last for forty-two months. John relates in Revelation 13 that this ruler will demand universal worship. Not only that, but because the true Jewish believers will not worship him, he persecutes them (Rev. 12:14-17). The apostate church, which he uses for his purpose during the first part of the tribulation, shall be utterly destroyed once he has gained complete power (Rev. 17:16-17). At last his aim shall be reached: final and absolute dictatorship, for

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 (Rev. 13:16-17).

His experience of judgment.--God never permits sin to go unpunished, especially sin personified as in the Man

¹Foster, pp. 9-10.

of Sin. His judgment comes swiftly upon him, his kingdom, and his subjects. The fifth vial of wrath from heaven is directly poured out upon the beast (Rev. 16:10). This judgment is not only poured out upon Antichrist and his people, but also upon the whole commercial world system of this despot. Babylon the great, the symbol of the commercial world power of Antichrist, is destroyed within one hour (Rev. 18:19)! Chafer has well written of this event:

The destruction of political and commercial Babylon is the termination of the entire cosmos world system. It is evidently brought to its end by divine power and the execution of those judgments which have been determined. This great event is closely connected to the second advent of Christ and is the first such judgment in the Day of Jehovah. The stupendous character of this consummatory judgment is beyond human comprehension.¹

In close relation with this event is the destruction of the armies of Antichrist at the glorious advent of Christ. This fierce, exceedingly short battle is described in Revelation 19:11-21. Scofield observes that this battle of Armageddon is to be west of Jordan near the plain of Jezreel. In this battle the Lord will deliver the besieged Jewish remnant from the beast, the false prophet his helper, and the Gentile armies. The besieging hosts are seemingly alarmed by the signs which precede the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:29-30) and fall back to Megiddo. There their destruction begins and is

¹Chafer, IV, p. 397.

consummated in Moab and in the plains of Idumea.¹ This event fulfills precisely Daniel 2:34-35:

. . . and brake them to pieces and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Immediately subsequent to this last battle, Antichrist and his prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). This is their eternal judgment and doom, which they have so justly deserved. Satan himself, who empowers these two men to do wonders and signs to deceive the people, will then be bound by chains in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). Then begins the Millennium, that literal, earthly reign of Christ which the prophets have foretold and the Jews have longed for. But before the nation of Israel can enter into their earthly blessings and inheritance, it is necessary for them to be saved. As will be shown in the next chapter, this comes about during the great tribulation.

¹C. I. Scofield (ed.), Scotfield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), pp. 1348-1349.

CHAPTER III

THE SALVATION IN THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In relation to the conversion of Israel.--The Old Testament has much to say in relation to the salvation of Israel, and many proof-texts could be cited to indicate that the Holy Spirit has a vital ministry in the salvation of Israel during the tribulation. Suffice it to quote Joel 2:28:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

This "pouring out" of the Spirit refers to the second advent and especially to the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit. In faith Israel shall look upon Christ whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10), as the Spirit of grace comes upon them. Joel indicates that the Spirit will be poured out upon all people, thus His ministry is not confined to Israel. "He will be present and active in the world; He will indwell and empower His people; He will use believers in witnessing."¹ However, "his work of restraining by means of indwelling believers as the temple of God will not carry over into the

¹Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 109.

tribulation."¹

In relation to the restoration of Israel.--Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37: 1-14) speaks symbolically of the ministry of the Spirit in relation to the restoration of Israel. Though this passage does not directly prove the resurrection from the dead, it does so indirectly for it takes for granted the future fact as one recognized by believing Jews. The symbol of physical resurrection may also be used to indicate the conversion of the Israelites.² Other passages speak of the restoration of Israel in greater detail, though not directly referring to the Spirit's ministry:

At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord. (Zeph. 3:20)

The Basis of Salvation

Salvation in the tribulation will be entirely upon the faith principle. Just as the Old Testament saints were redeemed by faith (Heb. 11), so shall those saints of the future be saved by faith. John writes of the saints as having patience and faith (Rev. 13:10) and as being those who keep the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12).

¹Ibid.

²Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, A Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1871), pp. 610-611.

Salvation in the tribulation will not only be by faith but it will also be based upon the blood of Christ, as in all other ages. Writing of the tribulation martyrs, John notes that they overcame the accuser by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:11). They "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). Looking back on the finished work of Christ, they are cleansed from all sin.

This future salvation will be made available through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, as predicted by Christ in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The Proclamation of Salvation

Though the basis and content of salvation will be the same as it is during this age, with the added factor of the approaching kingdom, the way the message is to be proclaimed is unique. The gospel will be sounded forth by the two witnesses, the Jewish remnant, and the angelic herald.

The two witnesses.--First, there are two witnesses mentioned, endowed with supernatural powers, to be able to destroy their enemies, who will bear witness for forty-two months (Rev. 11:3-5). Despite the fact that their identity has been the subject of much discussion, it is commonly believed

that they will be Moses and Elijah. This view is based on the statement that they "have power over waters to turn them to blood" and "power to shut heaven that it rain not" (Rev. 11:5). Upon completion of their testimony they shall be martyred. But "after three days and a half" (Rev. 11:11) they will be resurrected--much to the consternation of their enemies. And then they will ascend bodily into heaven.¹

The Jewish remnant.--Blindness in part is decreed upon Israel until the Church is completed, then the Jewish remnant, as a national entity shall be saved (Rom. 11:25-27). This remnant shall bear a testimony and Isaiah 24:14-15 plainly indicates that the witness is proclaimed both in the East and in the West. Because of this testimony which the remnant bears during the tribulation, Satan attempts to destroy it and its witness (Rev. 12:17).

The remnant is comprised of two distinct groups of people, a chosen group of 144,000 Jews and those Israelites which will be saved because of their testimony. Of this sealed group of Jews, mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8, Seiss has written:

These 144,000, then, are Israelites, living in the period of judgment, who are only then brought to be confessors and praisers of God, whilst the most of their kindred continue in unbelief and rebellion. Viewing the Son, as their fathers never would view Him, they acknowledge

¹William F. Foster, Class Notes in Systematic Theology, "Eschatology," p. 8.

Him as their Messiah and Judge. As Jews, they thus constitute a distinct company to themselves, and are blessed. As the result of their conversion they are also very active in practical righteousness.¹

The angelic herald.--God uses one more means to induce men to receive His message. He shall send an angel who will, finally, declare the everlasting gospel "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Only the love of God could go to such extremes in seeking to redeem lost and sinful mankind. What will the result be? Will many listen to these special messengers of God, repent, and be saved?

The Consequences of the Proclamation

The consequences to Israel.--Because of the intense persecution during the latter part of the tribulation, many of the saved Jews will be martyred. John writes of these martyred saints in Revelation 6:9-10:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

It can be safely assumed that included in this group of martyrs will be many Jews and that through the witness of Moses and Elijah, the 144,000, and the angelic herald, many of God's chosen people will find salvation, as the Old

¹J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 163.

Testament had anticipated. The blindness which in part has befallen Israel (Rom. 11:26-27) will then be taken away, so that there will be a turning to God and a recognition of Christ as their true Messiah.

Both Isaiah and Christ are clear that there will not only be a martyred remnant for Israel, but also a living remnant. Multitudes of Israelites who have turned to God will be preserved from persecution and when Christ shall appear in His glory, He will send His angels and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:31). Then, as His people, a nation of priests, they shall worship the Lord in the holy city of Jerusalem:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa. 27:13).

The consequences to the Gentiles.--Notwithstanding the fact of the common belief that only a few people will be saved during the tribulation, the Bible indicates otherwise. It has been demonstrated that a great elect Jewish remnant will be saved. But Gentiles too shall find redemption. John saw in a vision a multitude without number standing before the throne of God (Rev. 7:9). It seems that these are the martyred multitudes because "these are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white

in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

It is evident that there will also be living Gentiles when Christ returns. When during the Olivet Discourse Christ spoke of the judgment of the nations which is to take place immediately after His return, He referred to the sheep and goat nations, comprised of the Gentiles (Matt. 25:32-33). The sheep nations are those redeemed Gentiles who have lived throughout the period of the tribulation. The goats are the ungodly Gentiles.¹ This then is the result of the universal proclamation of the gospel: Many Jews and Gentiles will be redeemed. A great multitude of both groups will meet martyrdom, but there is predicted a remnant which, without suffering death, shall enter that reign of Christ when He will rule with righteousness and equity over the nations.

¹John F. Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 287-289.

CONCLUSION

The great tribulation is a time of judgment, to be sure. But it will also be a time of salvation. God has not cast aside His people, but, while the Church is in heaven with her Redeemer, God shall try and purge His people on earth. One-third of the nation shall escape His wrath and by the Spirit's operation through affliction turn to the Lord. It is the remnant which shall form the nucleus on earth of the Israelite nation, which will stand at the head of the Millennial nations of the world. Israel shall then be an honor to all nations of the world. God's faithful promises, made long ago to Abraham, shall then find their complete fulfillment. But momentous events and movements must take place before this consummation. It has been the purpose of this outline study to give an over-all perspective of the seventieth week of Daniel, its origin, cause, events, and movements. This then is the tribulation: a time of purging, of hope, and of salvation for Israel.

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