

## I. Introduction

- A. Thank you for joining us today. Today is part four of our series. Our series is called EndGame. “It’s the end of the world as we know it, and I *feel* fine.” That’s the subtitle.
  1. In part one, we introduced the whole idea of the second coming of Christ.
  2. In part two, we talked about the frame around Bible prophecy, the covenants of God. Basically God has some IOUs to pay, some promises to fulfill, and those unfulfilled promises make up the core of Bible prophecy.
  3. Last time, in part three, we peeked into the dark side, as we looked at what the Bible says about the coming Antichrist — who has taken secular philosophy and weaponized it against God and against God’s people. This is the essence of worldliness.
    - a) Speaking of worldliness, we had a dance in our church on Friday — Night to Shine. This floor was filled with dancers, and pastor Ken Jones and Randee were standing in back, just watching the joyful mayhem, and I walked by. Ken said, “Bill, I have a feeling if the Lord returns right now, we’re going to be in a whole lot of trouble.” He was joking of course, because back in the day, dancing was the unpardonable sin, and it was the flashing neon sign of worldliness.
    - b) I looked over the happy dance floor of Night to Shine, and I said, “Ken, if Jesus comes back right now, we couldn’t possibly be in better shape.”
    - c) Because worldliness isn’t about dancing, or movies, or all those rules so many of us grew up with. Worldliness is you being seduced by a secular philosophy that offers “Good without a god” or if it allows for a god, it is not The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - d) So, last time, the Antichrist.
  4. So that brings us today. Today our topic is the Tribulation. To get right into it, the word Tribulation just means troubles. Trials. Hard times. There is going to be a period of history so bad, so violent, so deadly, that it is called The Tribulation. You might think, pretty much the whole story of human history is one tribulation after another. And you would be right. But this Tribulation makes all other tribulations look like a Sunday school picnic. That’s how bad it will be.
  5. The Bible prophecies this historical period. It does so in several places. Jesus talks about it in Matthew 24. John talks about it in Revelation 13. But Daniel also talks about the Tribulation in Daniel 9:24-27.
  6. As I have said repeatedly, even though we are combining truths from all over the Bible, we still have to find our teachings clearly taught in single passages of the Bible. You can’t just push verses together and call it good. The Prime Directive of Bible interpretation is clear: what did the original authors originally mean when they wrote that part of the Bible? What was the author’s intent? Or Authorial intent? So we have to look at sections of the Bible with that question in mind. The only alternative is to make stuff up, and fool God’s people, who actually are responsible to know better.

II. *The Tribulation*

## A. Daniel 9

1. Daniel chapter nine is one of the key teaching passages about this time period called the Tribulation.
2. Let me set it up. Daniel is one of the major prophets of the Bible. His book contains many details prophecies for the future. He wrote around 600 BC. By the time BC turned into AD, another author named John would write the book of Revelation. Much of the teaching from Daniel finds its way into Revelation. And much of the imagery from Daniel finds its way into Revelation, as we are going to see.
3. And, as we are going to also see, Daniel’s content finds its way into the teaching of Jesus. So, let’s start with Daniel.
4. *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-- in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books [Scriptures] the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:1, 2)*
  - a) This is truly awesome. Daniel is doing his Bible study, and he is reading Jeremiah. Jeremiah wrote about 100 years before Daniel. What did he see? He saw that Jeremiah prophesied that the Jerusalem would be messed up for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10).
  - b) Daniel did the math. The 70 year clock was about up. Israel would endure 70 years of captivity for violating God’s law. This began in 605 BC when Daniel was taken captive by the Babylonians. The captivity would end in 536 BC when the Persians, through Cyrus, would decree the people of Judah could go back home.

- c) Whatever else, we get from this, we get a) that Daniel is now over 80 years old, b) even in captivity he still reads his Bible, and c) the calendar factor Daniel is talking about happens to be years. Seventy years. That makes sense in a moment.
  - d) So in the next section, Daniel prays a long prayer. He uses Scripture to tell God, basically, it's time to keep his promise.
  - e) God hears, and God sends down his mighty angel, Gabriel, with a message for Daniel. So let's pick it up right there.
5. *Seventy weeks [lit. "sevens"] are determined For your people and for your holy city... (Daniel 9:24a)*
- a) Gabriel is speaking. He informs Daniel that God has a new countdown clock. This new countdown clock is set to Seventy Weeks... But, the Hebrew doesn't really say "weeks." Gabriel says Seventy Sevens.
  - b) So, doing the math, that's 490.
  - c) Gabriel says, I have a new number for you. It isn't 70. It is 70 times 7. So 490. But 490 what? That's the debate. I won't go into all the options, but along with most evangelical type scholars, I'm going with 490 years. The main reason is because Jeremiah was talking about years, and Gabriel picks up on the idea. There are others, but let's just stipulate it.
  - d) The Length is a prophecy of 490 years. That's the first idea.
  - e) Now, the Purpose.
6. *Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)*
- a) Gabriel lists six purposes that the seventy sevens are supposed to accomplish. Here they are:
    - (1) *To finish transgression — at the end of this period, sin and lawlessness will be a thing of the past.*
    - (2) *To make an end of sins — shutting the book on evil and reversing the Fall.*
    - (3) *To make reconciliation for iniquity — Jesus did this at his cross, but he will finalize it at his second coming.*
    - (4) *To bring in everlasting righteousness — turning off the pain machine and starting the New World Order that only God can bring.*
    - (5) *To seal up vision and prophecy — by finally fulfilling everything God promised and paying all the IOUs.*
    - (6) *To anoint the Most Holy — which can either mean to crown Jesus as King of kings, or to consecrate a new temple built in Jerusalem. Both are legit translations, and we'll let this one stay a mystery.*
  - b) So what is going on?
  - c) Daniel is concerned with 70 years and the end of Israel's bondage to foreign nations. But down comes Gabriel to say that God has a much bigger concern. His concern stretches 7 times 70 years. And the bondage he's interested in most is the much deeper bondage to sin. And it's much broader than Israel — God's concern is to end the scourge of sin for the whole wide world.
  - d) All of these things are pointing to the ultimate expression of the rule and reign of Jesus in the world. That is a time we call the Millennium, or the Kingdom of God.
  - e) So, from Daniel's time to that time is 490 years, but there's a twist. And we have to know there's a twist because Daniel was 2,700 years ago. Gabriel announces the twist:
7. *Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25)*
- a) This verse says when the 490 year clock begins.
  - b) Then it says that 490 year clock has some specific gaps in it. It's got three parts to it:
    - (1) Part one lasts 49 years, and that's about how long it took to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple, and re-inhabit the city.
    - (2) Part two lasts 434 years, and that takes us to the time of the Messiah the Prince (Jesus).
      - (a) We'll get to part 3 in a second.
  - c) The cool thing is we can put dates to these things.
    - (1) Part one begins in 444 BC when a Persian king commands the rebuilding of the Jewish temple and Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8). Just about 49 years later, they're done. (409 BC)
    - (2) That leads to part two. 434 years till the Messiah comes. Well, if you do the math, you get to AD 33, which is when Jesus bursts on the scene... and some experts say this is when Jesus did his Triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

- (a) There are some squabbles about how long a year is, and those are fine. I'm just giving very rough figures here.
- d) So part one is complete, and part two is complete, but not part three.
8. *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:26)*
- a) Three things are going to happen:
- (1) First, the Messiah is going to be cut off. That is a prediction of the crucifixion of Christ. The Jews never expected this, but they should have. They should have known their Messiah was going to be cut off.
  - (2) Second, the people of the Prince who is to come... that is the Antichrist. His people will destroy the city. We know that this happened. Titus Vespasian, with four Roman legions, came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. This happened in AD 70.
  - (3) Third thing that happens is wars and desolations. It will be war after war... which is a very close description of human history ever since Christ.
- b) But, we still have a 70th week. We still have 7 years unaccounted for: here they come:
9. *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)*
- a) The Antichrist will make a treaty with Israel. It will be a seven year treaty. He will break it halfway through and do something awful called the abomination, and the desolation, and this takes us to the consummation which is the end of the age.
- b) Let the plates keep spinning... don't give up.
- B. Matthew 24
1. In Matthew 24 the disciples ask Jesus about the end of the age. Here's what he says:
- a) *"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. (Matthew 24:15-20)*
- (1) So Jesus is reading his Bible too, just like Daniel read Jeremiah, Jesus reads Daniel. And he talks about this same Abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel.
  - (2) Nobody knows what that means, but the idea is something horrific to Jews and to all people who believe in the true God. Something obscenely horrible happens in the temple of the Jews which has been rebuilt. The Antichrist does that.
  - (3) When that happens, whatever it is, good luck. It's going to be horrible. Run to the hills, that's the idea here.
- b) *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. (Matthew 24:21-26)*
- (1) This is why it's called the Tribulation, and why the second half is called the Great Tribulation.
  - (2) False religion will be everywhere, and pretty much everybody will be sucked in. Jesus says, please don't be fooled. And look at this:
- c) *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:27-31)*

- (1) There's a lot here. What are we talking about? Daniel's 70th week. A seven year period called the Tribulation. Daniel, Jesus, John, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Paul, all talk about this under various titles.
- (2) But the big takeaway here is that after the tribulation comes the Second Coming of Christ. He will come with power and glory. He will shake the heavens. Celestial phenomena will be off the charts. He will shake the earth. It will be a spectacle for all the world to see.
- (3) This is the tribulation. But let's turn to one more spot because it gets worse:

## C. Revelation 13

1. *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. (Revelation 13:1, 2)*
  - a) This is the rise of the Antichrist, which happens in the Tribulation. Remember last time, I said that the devil is on a leash, and evil is on a leash? In the Tribulation, the leash gets let go. This is the devil doing his best, and then doing his worst, to kick God in the teeth. He has no chance.
2. *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Revelation 13:11-15)*
  - a) This is another character called the False Prophet.
    - (1) The Antichrist — the Beast — represents world government.
    - (2) The False Prophet represents world religion.
  - b) And both of them represent the devil. The dragon gives them their power (v. 2).
3. *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred and sixty-six. (Revelation 13:16-18)*
  - a) Welcome to the Mark of the Beast. Who knows what this is? I have heard a thousand suggestions. All I know is this: it is a permanent selling your soul to the devil, and there's no turning back.
  - b) Nobody knows what the 666 stands for. Something digital. Something else... who knows? Give the numbers letters and add them up? Nobody knows.
  - c) The tribulation ends with a great battle, called the Battle of Armageddon, which we will talk about next time.
  - d) But let's wrap it up.

## III. Conclusion

- A. There is much more we can say about this coming tribulation. It will be earth's worst violence. It is Daniel's 70th week. It is called the Time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7). It is the culmination of the age of the Jews. But there is one bright spot.
- B. In Revelation 7, John sees a vision. In that vision, he sees 144,000 Jewish people. There are 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. They are all believers in Jesus. And they are now in heaven. John asks who they are.
- C. Basically, when the Tribulation happens, Jews will turn to Jesus in large numbers. This is because these 144,000 Jews turn out to be evangelists, and Jews for Jesus. They will be martyred, but there will be a mighty end times revival, and millions will be saved. Even though the tribulation will be a horrible time, people can still be saved. And especially Jews will be saved, which is a wonderful thing to think of.