

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

(Rev 7:14)

The final seven years of this age will give Israel and Jerusalem great prominence. Israel is already counted among the top ten most powerful nations of the world. Dan 9:27 suggests that the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for seven years and allow their temple to be rebuilt, then, in the middle of the week, he will break the treaty, set himself up in the new temple, and demand worship from everyone in the world. That will be a time of terrible suffering, worse than any dictatorship that has preceded it. It will be a time of trouble, particularly for Israel (Jer 30:7), but God will rescue them.

The Antichrist will rise to power during this time and he will do as he pleases. He'll exalt and magnify himself above every religion, speaking amazing things against God. He'll succeed until what has been determined by God is carried out. He'll glorify the god of fortresses (nuclear armaments?). He'll recognize those who honor him. Near the end, Egypt will oppose him, and Russia will attack him with tanks, soldiers, and many ships. The Antichrist will invade many countries, moving swiftly and sweeping through. He'll extend his power over many countries, and Egypt won't escape. Libya and Sudan will submit. Then reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he'll march out in great anger, intending to destroy many. He'll enter the beautiful land and come to his end between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (Dan 11:36-45).

Paul was thinking about this text when he counseled the Thessalonians, saying that the Day of the Lord will not come unless the rebellion takes place first and the man of sin, who is destined for destruction, is revealed. He'll oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god and object of worship and seat himself in the temple of God and declare himself to be God (2 Thess 2:3-4).

In Revelation, John said the beast would be allowed to speak arrogant and blasphemous things and to exercise his dictatorship for 42 months (Rev 13:5).

He will be an atheist who honors a god of fortresses and trusts alone in his munitions. He will plunge the world into a war so horrific that

it slaughters a third of the world's population (Rev 9:18). However, his empire will be unstable. After uprisings from Egypt and Russia, there will be rebellion from the east and the north which can be identified with a 200 million strong army released at the Euphrates River (Rev 9:13-16) and culminating in Armageddon at the Lord's return, when the Antichrist will come to his end. There will be continuous war during his reign, but when Jesus returns, he will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

The Great Tribulation is not only a time of war caused by the Antichrist; it will also be a time of great persecution for Christians, Jews, and anyone who refuses to worship him. Christians will have to choose whether they are going to honor Christ or the Antichrist. There can be no compromise. Jesus assured his disciples that God would give justice to his elect quickly, but he then asked them whether, when he comes, he would find faith on earth (Lk 18:8).

The Great Tribulation will finish with the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath (Rev 16). This is directed towards unbelievers, but the sea and rivers will be polluted, and there will be global warming and darkness to the extent that the sun is darkened, and the moon becomes red. On top of that, there will be the greatest earthquake known to man that will cause utter desolation and destruction throughout the earth.