

## The Coming Tribulation

### *2 Thessalonians 2:1-12*

#### Introduction

The tribulation is set to occur after Jesus has come back and retrieved those who believe on Him for salvation. (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9) In our sermon text, Paul explains that there are indicators that mark the coming of the tribulation as a part of the Day of the Lord. These indicators are shown to be a great opposition to God called the apostasy, the unveiling of the man of lawlessness and the removal of the restraints thus ushering in a great tribulation. The purpose of the tribulation is to 1) reveal Satan's true program and character, 2) to judge sinners for the rejection of Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation, 3) to judge those who have oppressed Israel, and 4) to bring Israel to repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ.

The people who do not believe on Christ for salvation will be left in a world ruled by the "unholy trinity": Satan, who will try to imitate God the Father (Revelation 12:9), the Anti-Christ who will try to imitate Jesus Christ (1 John 2:18), and the False Prophet, who will try to imitate the Holy Spirit. (Revelation 13:12-15; 19:20) Those three will combine to rule the world and to set up Satan's kingdom. This has always been Satan's goal. The tribulation will be divided into two halves of three and a half years each. The first half will start off as a time of peace with the rise of the Anti-Christ offering unity to the whole world. The second half, however, will be known as the "great tribulation" because it will be the time when God releases His active wrath against Satan. Active wrath is when He directly sends forth His judgments to the earth in comparison to the passive wrath present in the consequences of sin. There will then be a time when the Anti-Christ pretends to be a friend of Israel only to turn against them. It will be the program of the unholy trinity to rule the world.

While the facts of the tribulation might be a lot to take in, there are key principles that come from understanding the tribulation that every person can know and apply: 1) when you reject Christ you are opening yourself up to Satanic deception, 2) just because something is a miracle doesn't mean it is from God because Satan will perform miracles during the time of the tribulation, 3) objective truth must take precedence over personal experience and must sit in judgment of personal experiences, 4) we are to live in gratitude for our salvation because that same salvation will exempt us from the tribulation, and 5) the only way to defeat Satan is through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

#### Getting Started

1. What did you learn about the tribulation that you either didn't know or that maybe you had forgotten?
2. What signs of the times do you see that point to some of the coming occurrences in the tribulation?

#### Let's Get Personal

1. Have you rejected Christ, thereby opening yourself up to satanic deception? Do you know of anyone who is actively being influenced by the deception of Satan?
2. Have you ever witnessed a miracle? How did you know that it was a miracle from God?
3. What truths in God's Word are difficult for you to apply because your personal experiences, preferences, or past?
4. In light of the coming tribulation and the fact that if you are in Christ you will not be forced to endure it, do you have a response of gratitude? How can you demonstrate gratitude on a day- to-day basis?

#### Take the Next Step

1. Are you willing to bring your personal experiences in line with God's Word? How can you do that this week?
2. Who do you know that needs to accept Christ? Have you actively witnessed to that person about the gift of salvation that can exempt him or her from the terrible time of tribulation?
3. Want to dig deeper? Here are additional passages for your study: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Matthew 24:4-28, Jeremiah 30:6-7, Revelation 13:1-18, Zephaniah 1:14-18, Daniel 9:24-27, 1 John 2:18,22 and/or, 1 John 4:1-6.

#### Renew Your Mind

*"... See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many." Matthew 24:4-5*

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