

The Great Tribulation (part 2)

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[0 : 00] We're looking at that passage, that portion of the passage in the Olivet Discourse, Matthew chapter 24,!

That is specifically concerning the Tribulation, and to be even more specific, the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation, which as I said last time, and we'll see again tonight, encompasses a period of time, exactly three and a half years, the last three and a half years, or the last half of the seven-year Tribulation.

So we're looking at the Great Tribulation, and we're looking at several things that Jesus says about that. And the first one we looked at last week, and that is the trigger, what I call the trigger for it. What will precipitate this taking place, this Great Tribulation? And it is, as Jesus said, the abomination of desolation, or the abomination that causes desolation.

All right, so we talked about that last week, and then I introduced the second point, and we didn't really get into it. And that is the timing, the timing of this. So that is what you need to fill in there on your notes, the timing.

[1 : 36] This is Roman numeral number two in the outline. The timing. Now, I've mentioned this also a number of times, and that is that there, of course, and I'm sure you know, that there are a number of views concerning the timing of the abomination of desolation.

Few scholars, except those who would deny the Bible completely, deny either all a part of it. But putting those aside, few serious scholars of the Bible would deny that there will be this event, or that there is this event, the abomination of desolation.

The disagreement, of course, falls on just when it happens, or has happened. And that kind of clues you into some of the views.

And the first one is that the abomination of desolation refers merely to God's judgment upon Israel in 70 AD, which occurred, you know, some 30 some odd years after Jesus died and was raised and ascended back to the Father.

And you know in 70 AD, the Romans completely destroyed not only the temple, but all of the city of Jerusalem. And so there are those who point to that event and say, this is the event that Jesus is predicting in this passage in Matthew chapter 24.

[3 : 13] And so what is the abomination that causes desolation? Well, it's not something perpetrated by an antichrist, but rather it is simply Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

Now, that's the abomination that brings about desolation. And the desolation is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. So that's one view, all right?

Might be yours, I don't know. That's okay, if that's your view. The second view, though, is really problematic.

And it is that the abomination of desolation refers to Antiochus Epiphanes. Remember, we talked a lot about that guy when we were studying through Daniel.

In fact, I think you probably gathered that I enjoy saying that name. There's something about that name. Antiochus Epiphanes III, actually. And it just kind of rolls off the tongue.

[4 : 13] Have you learned how to say that name? Anyway, so the abomination of desolation, according to this view, refers to the timing, this guy, Antiochus Epiphanes, in 175 BC, before Christ.

All right, so the abomination of desolation occurred then, a long time ago. Recorded for us, of course, in Daniel, the prophecy of Daniel in chapter 11.

All right, some hold that view. Which is, you know, a huge problem, right? I mean, let's just think of this logically. Because almost 200 years later, Jesus spoke of it as a future event.

So how could it be that past event? You know, something, and indeed, Antiochus Epiphanes did desecrate the temple. I mean, there's no doubt about that. The problem is, that's not what Jesus is

talking about.

Jesus is talking about something that's going to happen. He's not talking about something that has happened. What Antiochus Epiphanes did was simply a kind of foreshadowing of what the Antichrist will one day do.

[5 : 29] In fact, Antiochus Epiphanes is kind of a type, is kind of, very clearly, a type of the Antichrist. That is to come, will come, hasn't come for us yet today.

All right, so those are two views. And then the third one, and there are other versions and variations of it, and don't need to get into all of that. But the third view, and it is my view, and that is that the abomination of desolation refers to the actions of the Antichrist.

The Antichrist, with a capital A, because it's a title. The Antichrist, halfway through the seven-year tribulation. That lasts three and a half years, or right at the middle of the tribulation.

The beginning of, inauguration of the great tribulation. And as Jesus stated, this was spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Daniel the prophet, which is a reference to Daniel chapter 9, verses 25 to 27, or what we call Daniel's 70 weeks.

Daniel's 70 weeks. And you've seen this graphic before, but I want to lay it out before us again. In Daniel chapter 9, 25 to 27, Daniel's 70 weeks.

[6 : 49] Starting with verse 25, we have Daniel's prophecy saying, Know therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment, that would be the commandment or decree issued by King Artaxerxes, 445 B.C.

So he's talking about that event, the decree to rebuild, to restore, and to build Jerusalem. And that's referred to in Ezra, chapter 1, verse 3, but also Nehemiah, chapter 2, verses 1 through 8.

That would be at 445 B.C. So you mark the time of Daniel's prophecy, these 70 weeks. So you mark the time at 445 B.C.

And so the commandment, decree to restore and rebuild the temple unto, so what's the other end of this segment of Daniel's 70 weeks?

It's unto the Messiah, the Prince. And we know who that is. That's Jesus. And it is a reference to Matthew 21, verses 1 through 5, which details for us Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

[8 : 13] And so we can kind of mark that event. We are familiar with that event as we've studied the Gospels. And to kind of inaugurate Jesus' Passion Week, his final week on earth, he comes into Jerusalem.

And it is his triumphal entry. So there are the two parameters. Unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and 62 weeks and three score and two weeks.

Now what is all that? A kind of mumbo-jumbo. Well, it simply is a reference to 69 weeks or 69 seven-year periods of time or 483 years.

483 years. And the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublesome time. So this is Daniel's prophecy, his 70 weeks.

And so he's just kind of given us some markers, some historical markers for the 69 sevens or seven-year periods.

[9 : 34] And then he goes on, And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off. Reference to his crucifixion.

He shall be crucified, be cut off, but not for himself. That is, you know, for his people, his chosen people. And the people of the prince, and this is a reference to the Romans, who is to come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

And that's a reference to what will happen in 70 A.D. 70 A.D. when Titus, the Roman general, will come in and destroy all of Jerusalem and pretty much not leave one stone left upon another.

So it's the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Now, what happens after that? Well, there's no prophetic word about the 70th week.

So we come up to the end of the 69th week, and then there's silence, or there is what we could call a gap between the 69th week and the 70th week.

[10 : 56] And this is, in my judgment, the church age. See, the Old Testament doesn't prophesy concerning the church age.

There are indications of it. I mean, there's some implications of it. But primarily in the Old Testament, the church is a mystery. It's a mystery.

So there is a gap then. After the 69th week, a gap of indeterminate time. We're in that gap. It's been going on now for a little over 2,000 years.

But God is going to get back to His program. All right? There will be a 70th week. In verse 27 of Daniel's prophecy, it takes up the 70th week.

Or the 70th of seven. Or the last seven years. Or the tribulation. All right? The tribulation period. And so verse 27, then He, that's Antichrist, referenced to Antichrist, shall confirm the covenant with many, that's the Jews, for one week.

[12:04] All right? So He'll make a covenant with them. A covenant of peace. And they're going to be all excited. This will be a great peacemaker at the beginning of the tribulation period. So He's going to make a covenant with them.

This marks the beginning of that seven-year period. And yet, in the midst of the week, or in the middle of the week, that's three and a half years, He shall, that shouldn't be capitalized, by the way, He should not be a capital H, He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

So He's made a covenant with the Jewish people, presumably for seven years. But halfway through, He breaks His promise, breaks His covenant.

And a part of that covenant was that they could continue the sacrifice in a rebuilt temple there in Jerusalem. And continue the sacrifice, the oblation, the offerings, all of those things prescribed by the Mosaic law, Old Testament law.

And so they're happy. You know, we can continue to worship the Lord in this way, albeit it's the old covenant way.

[13:19] About halfway through, He's going to break that promise, break that covenant. And for the overspreading of abominations, He shall make it desolate.

Desolate, that is make the temple a desecration. And what's He going to do? He's going to set up His own throne there in the temple.

Just like Jesus predicted in Matthew 24. He's going to establish His throne there, break the covenant, demand that all worship Him, according to 2 Thessalonians 2, verses 3 and 4.

And even until the consummation, and that determined, or decreed by God for Israel, shall be poured upon the desolate, or the desolator, this is the judgment of Antichrist.

So this kind of describes the last half of that tribulation period over that last three and a half years.

God is going to pour out His judgment upon this world, and upon the desecrator, the desolator, that is the Antichrist himself, and it will end with His judgment.

[14:40] And that will bring us to the end of the tribulation period. So this is the period of time that Jesus is talking about. How do we know that? Because He said this is what Daniel spoke of. So all you have to do is go back to Daniel's prophecy, and that's what we've done here.

And this is, I believe, the prophecy that Jesus is referring to, and it's a reference to the tribulation, and specifically the last half of it.

Revelation 13 also speaks of this. I think, I don't know if I put that in your notes or not. Did I put Revelation 13 in there? Well, let me read it to you.

Verse 1, and this is about a beast coming up out of the sea, and he'll have, the Bible says, the Revelation says, a mouth speaking arrogant words.

By the way, that beast is just another designation for the Antichrist. He's the beast. So he's coming out of the sea, and he'll have a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies and authority to act for 42 months.

[15:44] How long is that? That's three and a half years. That authority was given to him. Three and a half years, that's verse 1. And then you can skip on to verse 7 in Revelation 13.

It was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him.

Everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. That's verses 7 and 8. So this is the timing.

This is a reference to the timing of this abomination of desolation, which is the trigger for the last half, what's going to take place in the last half of the tribulation.

And one other thing, before we move on, the words, whoever reads, let him understand. In some translations, it's kind of put in there in parentheses. But don't get the idea that that's not part of the scripture.

[16:48] It's in the text, the Greek text. I don't know that it should be in parentheses. But what's the meaning of it?

Well, I think it points to something very significant. Because it points or reinforces the fact that these prophecies were not given to the disciples. They were given to them, but not given to them for them to experience the fulfillment of them in their lifetime.

That was not the purpose. See, he didn't say, let the hearers. He didn't say that. Not to the hearers, which in this case would be the disciples, and by extension us as well, those of us who are living, we're living on this side of the fulfillment of these prophecies.

So it's not to the hearers, Jesus is very specific, he says, but to the readers. The readers, those who would one day, will one day, read what the disciples wrote down.

You might argue, well, that's us. We're reading what they wrote down. But specifically, those who would be alive at the time when these prophecies begin to be fulfilled.

[17:58] So he's speaking way out into the future. And you know, this was the, as I've mentioned, was the standard kind of technique for Old Testament prophets as well, prophets of God.

when they would speak of you. I'm not talking about you who are right here, right now, listening to me. But you, as looking way out into the future, the you that will be alive, the people who will be alive when these prophecies are fulfilled.

All right, so, we're looking at what Jesus foretells concerning the great tribulation. We've seen two things, the trigger and the timing. The trigger is the abomination that causes desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

The timing is when you see it, when you see the time. That's when, you know, it didn't give us a time so that we can mark it on our calendar. Okay? Now, if, you know, if we miss the rapture and the only way you'd miss the rapture is if you're not a true believer.

So, if you're an unbeliever and the rapture comes and goes, then, you can pretty much set these events on your clock and on your calendar because you can mark the time. Seven years from now or three and a half years from now this is going to happen and so forth.

[19:16] So, the timing is when you see the abomination that causes desolation spoken of by Daniel. So, Daniel 9, as we've seen, gives us the timing of this event in relation to God's prophetic timetable.

All right, now, third, the terror. The terror. Let me just go ahead and read verses 16 through 20. 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. 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.

Now, I always feel the need to remind you I take these predictions as future. even though you can look at this and say, well, this could apply to the people living in Jerusalem when the Romans came marching in and surrounded the city and besieged the city.

[20:31] You know, you could fit that in there. But that's not what Jesus is talking about. So I take these predictions as future. Jesus is not referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jesus is referring to the events that will take place in the last half of the seven year tribulation. Events, again, that will be triggered by the Antichrist when midway through the seven year of tribulation he will establish his throne in, as Jesus said, the holy place, the temple in Jerusalem. The abomination, that's the abomination that causes desolation. By the way, some have speculated maybe Titus did that. But he, but there's no evidence of that.

So, you see, Jesus is referring to somebody else who's going to one day come. Not just some conqueror who will come and destroy the city as Titus did. But someone who will stand, take his stand, set his throne and rule from the holy place which is the temple.

Titus didn't do that. He destroyed it. Everything. Distorted it all. And, so it is this abomination in the temple that triggers a series of birth pangs or catastrophic events on the earth which we finished up looking at last week.

[22:02] So, I want to make that very clear to kind of keep you reminded of that. Because from time to time we'll read something that may be similar to things that we know took place in history in the past.

But Jesus is talking about the future. Alright, now, the terror. Several things about this. A, in your outline, this is a prediction of horrific danger.

Imminent danger. It's coming. And this is a prediction of that. And it is primarily, I mean specifically for those who will be alive at the time these things begin to take place.

So, this is a prediction of horrific danger. Verse 16, Jesus says, then, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Jesus said, then. And, what is that a reference to? Again, the abomination that causes desolation. The abomination of the Antichrist.

[23 : 11] That's what he's talking about. That's what then refers to. The abomination of the Antichrist. When he, again, 2 Thessalonians 2, 4, will take his seat in the temple of God proclaiming himself to be God.

Alright, that's what he's referring to. This is a prediction of something that's coming. Something is going to happen. And, and so the word then specifically refers to the desolation.

Or, we might even use the word desecration. That will immediately take place after the abomination. And so, Jesus is saying to those alive at the midway point of the tribulation.

He's saying this is coming. This is coming. It's coming. Be warned. Alright, so the prediction which, you know, really is given in the form of a warning is specifically applicable, he says, to the Jews living in and around Judea.

The region of Judea. Remember, the principal city of Judea, I mean, you basically have Jerusalem or Israel divided into two parts.

[24 : 25] There's Galilee, there's Judea. And, and the principal city in the region of Judea is what city? Jerusalem.

It's not a trick question. It's Jerusalem. And, Jerusalem, of course, during the tribulation, and especially halfway through, will be the capital city of the world during the time of Antichrist's unholy rule.

Now, it's the capital city of Israel now. One day, it will be the capital city of the entire world. That will happen in the tribulation.

And, the ruler, the unholy ruler during the tribulation will be the Antichrist, whoever he may be. Now, you know, kind of fast forward after the tribulation and the second coming, Christ sets up his millennial kingdom, and where is his capital city?

Jerusalem. Jerusalem. But, during this period of time, Jerusalem is the capital city of the world.

And, and every, and Antichrist will rule from there, and everyone on earth will be affected by that.

[25 : 48] Everyone on earth will be under his tyrannical kind of dictatorship, his rule. Everyone will be affected by it. But, those Jews living in and around Jerusalem, they will be in the most immediate danger, sudden danger, when Antichrist sets up his throne, and the abomination takes place.

The Jews living in Jerusalem and in the surrounding area of Judea, they're going to be in immediate danger. And why is that, do you suppose? Well, because it will be the Jews living in Jerusalem who will oppose Antichrist.

And, of course, they will. Now, this is not what they made a covenant with. I mean, we made a covenant with this guy, he's a great peacemaker, and for three and a half years, been pretty good. But, we didn't, we didn't promise with him, we didn't make this deal with him to be, you know, to set himself up as God himself.

This would be, this would be blasphemy. Absolute blasphemy. First of all, desecration of God's holy temple. And, not only that, but blasphemy against God himself.

[27 : 13] I mean, that's what the Antichrist is doing. He's setting himself as God. That he is God. I mean, this is blasphemy to the Jews. No matter how backslidden they become.

They were pretty backslidden in Jesus' day. And, they charged Jesus of this very thing, didn't they? Of blasphemy and don't forget what they did to him. You say, well, they're going to try to do that with the Antichrist.

Well, they may try, but they'll have no success because unlike with Jesus, they will be utterly powerless against the Antichrist in that day.

And so, the Antichrist will then pour out his greatest anger and violence and his power. He's going to pour out the greater amount of it on the Jews, the Jews living in the region of Judea.

So, let's see something else about this. A, then, is this a prediction of horrific danger. B, this is an exhortation to hastily depart.

[28 : 19] Verse 16, then, let those who are in Judea flee. Flee to the mountains. And we basically east and west of Jerusalem.

Flee to the mountains. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Then, that is when this happens, flee. Get out of there. And, by the way, the Greek word, I think I put this in your notes,

translate, flee, is fugo.

Fugo is how you would pronounce the Greek word, from which we get our word fugitive. fugitive. So, they have to be fugitives. The prophet Zechariah wrote of this, in Zechariah 13, verses 8 through 9, in the whole land, declares the Lord, two-thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one-third shall be left alive.

He's talking about this same time, the abomination of desolation. Jesus saying to the Jews, get out of there, and Zechariah the prophet is telling us that two-thirds of the Jews in Judea will be destroyed, be killed.

Not every Jew, then, is going to escape Antichrist's fury, as Jesus warns them of. In fact, most will not escape it.

[29 : 51] And Zechariah goes on, and I will put this third into the fire, metaphorically, symbolically, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested.

That is, these Jews will be saved. And they will call upon my name, and I will answer them, and I will say, they are my people, and they will say, the Lord is my people.

My God, the Lord is my God. All right, so, all previous holocausts in relation to the Jews, all those will pale in comparison by what will take place almost immediately when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jewish people, places his throne in the holy place, makes himself God, demands that all worship him.

So, he ceases the sacrifice, ceases the offerings, the law that the Jews have been operating according to, he makes all that illegal, and says, instead, you must worship me.

I've set myself up as God, I am God. Blasphemy. And, and so, this is what I think Jesus means in verse 21, we'll get to it a little bit here, for then there will be great tribulations, tribulations such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

[31 : 36] So, you know, the Holocaust under Hitler was a terrible, heinous sin. But, it'll be nothing compared to what the Antichrist will do.

But not only the Jews, but Christians will also be the target of Antichrist hatred in the last three and a half years of the tribulation, the great tribulation. Revelation kind of tells us about them.

Revelation 6, 9, when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar, to the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, for the witness they had borne, they cried out with a loud voice, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

And then the flight to the mountains, Jesus says, must be with haste. And this is kind of the emphasis in the rest of this portion of the text.

verse 17, let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And that may seem a little bit odd, you know, if you've got a two-story house and you're upstairs, then you pretty much have to go downstairs to get out of the house, don't you?

[32 : 52] but not the case in this day, Palestinian houses typically had, you know, a place where you could go on the roof, a flat roof, it would be kind of like a little patio up there on top, you know, and get out of the heat of the house and get up outside and yet still be part of your house and the stairway wouldn't be on the inside, it would be on the outside.

And so they would get up there and come down from there through the stairway. So, but the emphasis here is that they, Jesus is warning them not to go back in the house, presumably to get some valued possession.

Alright? Just go! See this happen? Go, immediately. Flee to the mountains. Verse 18, and let him who is in the field and not go back to get his clothes.

Well, what, is he out there in the field naked or something? Well, actually, the word clothes, probably better translated cloak, kind of the outer garment. I mean, you take that off when you're working out in the field because you get hot and all that.

And so, you know, you kind of maybe perhaps, you know, there might be a tree to one side of the field and you hang that cloak on a low hanging limb, you know, and come back and get it later, a fence, lay it over the fence post or something.

[34 : 21] And, you know, so the idea here is that if your outer garment is in the opposite direction of where you need to be fleeing, the mountains, then leave it.

Don't go back for it. Forget it. All right, now, those are just two scenarios and certainly Jesus is not trying to describe the only two scenarios.

I mean, there would be many, many different scenarios. But his idea is to convey the idea of urgency. Urgency.

I mean, nothing is worth going back for it. Nothing is worth the risk to your life and limb. I mean, no material thing has more value than your life.

So, this is the exhortation to hastily depart. And that leads us to a third thing here, or letter C.

[35 : 22] This is an anticipation, an anticipation of heinous deeds, deeds that will be perpetrated against God's people, the Jews, primarily, though I think Christians might be included in this.

When I say Christians, I'm talking about those who are saved after the rapture, after the tribulation begins, and there will be many saved. But I think primarily this is a reference to the Jews.

Verse 19 says, and by the way, these things that he's kind of describing or implying here are more terrible than mere words could even describe for us.

So, verse 19, but woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days. Now, on the one hand, generally speaking, these would be, of course, people whose haste would be hindered by their physical condition.

I mean, you know, either in the latter stages of pregnancy, it would be pretty tough to get out of town real quick. You know, if you're, you know, you're in the latter stages. I've never been pregnant, but ladies, I think you probably would testify the fact it would be pretty tough to be running out of town and climbing mountains, jumping over fences and climbing mountains, getting away if you are, you know, you're very, very, very pregnant.

[36 : 52] Or, it, of course, refers to those who have nursing babies. So, woe to you if that's your condition when this happens. So, generally speaking, it certainly includes the idea that it's very difficult for you to flee.

But, more specifically speaking, and we can gather this from historical records, even biblical records, that these would be people likely to receive some pretty horrific persecution, and heinous deeds of torture, because it can't get away fast.

And so, if they're pregnant or nursing a child, then they're very susceptible to some pretty gruesome things that could happen to them. Have happened in history, in history past.

In fact, Hosea makes a reference in Hosea 13, 16. He may clue us in to some of the atrocities of that day. They shall fall by the sword. Their little ones shall be dashed in pieces, little ones meaning infants, their pregnant women ripped open.

And that's this gruesome is terrible. And so, Jesus may be referring to some heinous things that would be done to those who can't get away fast, and those who are pregnant, carrying little infants.

[38 : 17] humans. And, you know, we could say that based on scripture, this is pretty much Satan's modus operandi. You know, I mean, remember what Satan, as he inspired Pharaoh, what he inspired Pharaoh to do to God's people in Egypt.

The death of the firstborn. And, remember also, Satan inspired Herod, what Satan inspired Herod to do to all the male babies born in and around Bethlehem after Jesus was born.

So, this just fits with the character of Satan. Verse 20, and pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath, and I guess trying to flee during the harshness of winter, I get that.

I mean, winter is not a good time to be traveling necessarily, you know, even if you're on foot like they were. But, what about the Sabbath here? Well, since it was unlawful to travel on the Sabbath, and it was according to Mosaic Law.

Now, the Pharisees kind of had some of that worked out, you know, they would set up little booths, you know, strategic places, so, because the, you know, the law was, or what the law had become more of a tradition on the Sabbath was you could only take so many steps, you know.

[39 : 38] Then you'd have to, you'd have to stop and go into a house. Well, they'd make a little house, and so, you know, they'd be counting the steps.

They needed to do something on the Sabbath, but they can't break the Sabbath laws, or they might be stoned. And so, they're counting how many steps they can take by law, and it just happens to work out to where they've got a little booth set up or something, so they rest there, and then they can take so many more steps, and they have maybe some of these strategically, or maybe a friend is kind of on the way, and then go into that house.

They had it all worked out. But you certainly could not think about fleeing to the mountains on the Sabbath. That would be breaking God's Sabbath laws, well, actually, the Sabbath traditions, not so much the Sabbath laws themselves.

And so, what would that mean? Well, since it was unlawful that they might even be stoned for profaning the Sabbath. And so, Jesus said, pray it doesn't happen on the Sabbath. Pray it doesn't happen in the winter time. Woe to you if you ladies are pregnant and are nursing an infant. And all of it is to convey the idea of urgency, of imminent danger.

[41 : 01] You know, get out of there, fast as you can. Alright, so, the trigger, the timing, the terror, and I just got to go one more.

The tribulation. I guess that's the name of that terror. The tribulation. Or, more accurately, the great tribulation. Verse 21, for then there will be great tribulation.

Then. I mean, when all this begins, halfway through the tribulation, Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews, sets his throne up in the holy place, in the temple, sets himself up as God, to be worshipped as God, then there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, 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. Alright? Again, nothing in the history of the Jewish nation can come anywhere near comparing with those final three and a half years of the tribulation, and nor anything that will happen to them prior to the great tribulation.

None of those things could even be comparable. Now, this period of time is detailed in Revelation chapters 6 through 16. We're not going to study that here tonight, but there you have the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments, and as prophesied numerous times, the duration of this final phase of the tribulation will be three and one-half years.

[42 : 54] I keep saying that, but where does it say that in scripture? Well, we've already seen a few of them, but here are pretty much all of them. Daniel 7 25, He, that's the Antichrist, shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law, and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

Time, times, and half a time. One year, two years, half a year, three and a half years. Daniel 12 7, and I heard the man clothed in linen, that I believe is pre-incarnate Jesus.

I heard him who was above the waters of the stream, he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time.

There you have it again, three and a half years. That when the shattering of the power of the holy people, that's the Jews, comes to an end, all these things would be finished. So that brings us to the end of the tribulation, and what happens at the end of the tribulation?

Jesus returns, and he establishes his kingdom for a thousand years. Revelation 12, 14, but the woman, probably a reference to the Jews fleeing the Antichrist, reference to what Jesus was talking about in chapter 24, 24.

[44 : 23] But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, and most scholars, well, not all, I wouldn't say most, but some, I think the right ones refer, say this is a reference to Michael, Michael the archangel.

So, you know, they're fleeing, by the way, fleeing to the mountains, God is enabling them to save a certain number, and Michael will be involved in that.

So that she might fly from the serpent, that's, you know, generally refers to Satan, but by proxy it's Antichrist, into the wilderness, flee into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for time and times and half a time.

So there you have it again. So the abomination of desolation take place, Jesus has already warned the people living, the Jews living in that region in that day, and he's warned them and they have a copy of that and they've been reading that and so they see this happens as they flee to the mountains, God enables them to make it, and so for three and a half years they will be there in the mountains.

And in Revelation 11, 2 and also 13, 5, this period of time is described as lasting for 42 months, that's what is translated in scripture, 42 months or three and a half years.

[45 : 50] So the great tribulation, a time of unparalleled persecution of the Jews. Jeremiah 3, 7, alas, for that day is great so that none is like it, and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

He shall be saved, a remnant will be saved out of it. Now by the grace of God, grace and mercy of God, the time Jesus says will be limited to a specific length of time.

Verse 22, and unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved. Now, understand that the word shortened there does not suggest that God is going to change his mind.

He really wanted it to last longer, and it would have lasted longer, but God, you know, at some point got to think, well, this is enough, you know, it's enough, so I just shorten it from my original plan.

Don't get the idea that that's the case here. Not at all. The word actually means abruptly end, suddenly end, and so not shortened because the length has already been decided, decided in eternity past, right, and prophesied, as we saw a number of times.

[47 : 09] So, this is God's plan, so he's not going to get to the time and then shorten it. It's going to be in three and a half years, just according to his plan. The idea is that it will come to an abrupt end, just as planned, right on schedule.

But it is also pointing to the mercy of God. It's a testament to the mercy of God because by his mercy and grace, God, in eternity past, he foreordained, predetermined, that those days, those days, three and a half years, will cease just short of the total destruction of the planet and more importantly, the total annihilation of its population.

God has determined that it will come to an end and he's made the timing so that it will come to short of absolute destruction.

mercy of God. And God will not, of course, not allow the complete destruction of his elect. Who are they?

A lot of debate about that word elect here. And, you know, from those who say it just strictly speaks of the Jews, they are the elect, or those on the other side say this is strict reference to the saved, Christians, elect before the foundation of the world.

[48 : 39] Actually, it's, in a sense, both people. Both people. But it's specifically a reference to God's chosen people, chosen for salvation, made up of Jews and Gentiles.

Jews and Gentiles. And by the way, it's the first time the word appears in the New Testament, right here in Matthew 24. You thought, well, I thought it probably appeared before that, but no.

Matthew 24, the first time you find this word elect in the New Testament. So these are the redeemed Jews and Gentiles. Alright, we've gone way over.

Next time we'll see one more thing under this, under the Great Tribulation. It's not the last time we'll be talking about the Great Tribulation, but in this section of Matthew 24.

Next time we'll look at the tempters, the tempters, and we'll take that up next time. Take care. Thank you.