

SESSION 2: *Negative Trends, People and Events in the End Times*

I. DAY OF THE LORD: THE 2 EXTREMES RELATED TO JESUS' RETURN

For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)

I will send you Elijah...before...the great and dreadful day of the LORD. (Mal. 4:5)

- A. The great Day of the Lord refers to the unusual events (positive and negative) that will escalate in *the final three years* before Jesus returns.

It is "His Day" because Jesus acts in the earthly arena in great power for His people and against His enemies. He openly shows Himself as the warrior King who aggressively confronts sin.

The two-fold nature of this time will be seen in blessing for the redeemed and judgment for those who refuse Him.

- B. It will be a very terrible Day to the *rebellious* who will witness the most severe outpouring of God's judgments ever seen (Rev. 6-20).

Jesus' judgments will shake all that can be shaken on earth (Hag. 2:6-8; Heb. 12:26).

The nations of the earth will experience military invasions by the Antichrist's worldwide evil empire (Rev. 13) as God's judgments are poured out.

II. THE VERY TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD: THE GREAT TRIBULATION

There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved (physically preserved); but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Matt. 24:15, 21-22)

- A. The Terrible Day refers to the most *difficult* time in history referred to as the Great Tribulation. It describes the negative aspects of the final 3½ years before Jesus returns.
- B. In the Great Tribulation, pressure will come from four sources.
- First, by the *wrath of God* on the rebellious
 - o Seven Seals
 - o Seven Trumpets
 - o Seven Bowls of wrath
 - Second, by the *rage* of Satan who will persecute the saints through the Antichrist's reign of terror;
 - Third, by the *actions* of evil people against one another
 - Fourth, by *convulsions* in nature (earthquakes, storms, etc.)
- C. There will be two severe waves of *death*.

The first wave will claim one-fourth of earth's population.

The second wave will kill an additional one-third of the earth.

This will total 50% of the population (or 4 billion based on a possible population of 8 billion people).

Behold, a pale horse. The name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. Power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. (Rev. 6:8)

The four angels...were released to kill one-third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)

III. VERY TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD: FOUR NEGATIVE TRENDS

- A. The fullness of *God's judgment* (Rev. 14:7; 15:7) includes 21 specific events against unbelievers (seven seals in Rev. 6; seven trumpets in Rev. 8:9; seven bowls of wrath in Rev. 16).

The wrath of God which is poured out full strength... (Rev. 14:10)

- B. The fullness of *Satan's rage* will be vented on earth (Rev. 12:12; Dan. 7:21, 25; Rev. 13).

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time. (Rev. 12:12)

- C. The fullness of *man's sin* will be seen (Rev. 9:21; 14:18; 17:5; 18:5; Dan. 8:23; 12:10).

They did not repent of their murders...sorceries...sexual immorality or thefts. (Rev. 9:21)

1. *Murder*: as the primary sin on earth
(Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-14; 9:21; 13:7, 10; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 9:2;
2 Tim. 3:3 (brutal); Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10;
Mark 13:12:13)
2. *Sorceries*: occult and demon worship will fill the earth

(Rev. 13:3-4, 8, 12-15; 14:11; 16:13-14; 18:23; Matt. 24:5, 11,
12, 24; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3-4)
3. *Immorality*: demon energized perversion

(Rev. 9:20-21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:3; 19:2)
4. *Theft*: legislation and persecution motivated by theft
(i.e., the Nazi's anti-Semitism)

- D. The fullness of *Creation's convulsions* (groans) will be seen because the land is affected by man's sin (earthquakes, upheavals in the sea, atmosphere, agriculture, sky, heavens, etc.)

Creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans... (Rom. 8:21-22)

- E. God's purpose in allowing the Great Tribulation:
- To purify His people through affliction (Dan. 11:35; 12:10)
 - To aid in the great ingathering of souls (including the salvation of Israel)
 - To vindicate the saints
 - To expose false believers within the Church
 - To demonstrate God's power in protecting His people (Rom. 9:17)

- To express God's justice in punishing sin (2 Thess. 1:6-10; Is. 26:21)
- To purge the earth from sin (Is. 24:4-6; Zech. 13:2) before the Millennial Kingdom.

And some of those of understanding shall fall (be martyred), to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end... (Dan. 11:35)

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. (Dan. 12:10)

- F. God's judgments will remove all that hinders love by removing the *props* we trust in and the *temptations* we refuse to resist.
- G. The principle of judgment:

God uses the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will in training the rulers of the earth.

IV. VERY TERRIBLE DAY: NEGATIVE PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- A. The Antichrist (Rev. 13:1-10) is the final world leader who wages war against God and persecutes His people.

He will have a vast political, military, and economic alliance with a ten-nation confederation.

He will have the greatest political coalition, the largest army, the biggest worldwide religious network and the most money and power of any man in history.

He will use demonic miracles to deceive (Rev. 13:12-14), the political process to kill resisters (Rev. 13:15) and economic oppression (Rev. 13:16-17) to control the nations.

- B. The Antichrist will be the most *evil* and *cruel* man that ever lived.

It will be impossible to negotiate with him for mercy, because he will reason and behave like a wild beast.

The Antichrist is called the "Beast" 36 times in the Book of Revelation.

- C. The great catalytic event that thrusts the Antichrist into worldwide prominence will be a dramatic *head wound* and apparent healing (Rev. 13:3, 12, 14).

He will seemingly be killed and healed before all, causing them to be overwhelmed with awe so as to worship him.

- D. The *image* of the Beast (Antichrist) will be a statue (image or idol) that is demonically empowered so that it will seem to think, talk, breathe, and make laws (Rev. 13:14-16).

The main idol will be set up in the Jerusalem Temple and will be connected to a global network of idols.

The image will be a significant prophetic sign in the End Times. John emphasized this image ten times (Rev. 13:14, 15 [three times]; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

- E. The *mark* of the Beast (Antichrist) will be a public mark on people's right hand or forehead.

It will be used to regularly identify the people that promise to worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13:16-17). It will be one's personal access to the global economic system.

Those who refuse this mark will not be allowed to buy or sell the necessities of life. They will be viewed as criminals of the state who are deserving of the death penalty.

As a wedding ring is a symbol of one's marriage covenant, so this mark is the outward proof of one's covenant to worship Satan and the Antichrist.

In other words, people will not accidentally take this mark, nor will it be given to them against their will.

The significance of the mark is found in making a heart commitment to worship. Just as no one can accidentally commit their life to Jesus and receive salvation, so the mark will only be taken by those who willingly understand what they are doing.

The foundational technology for the mark of the Beast currently exists in the form of implanted microchips. Microchip technology itself is not evil, but it gives us insight into how the mark could operate. The mark will undoubtedly be much more advanced than our present technology.

- F. The *False Prophet* (Rev. 13:11-18) is the Antichrist's primary associate and is the leader of the end-time worldwide religious network that will be devoted to causing all the people on earth to worship Satan and the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4, 8).

The False Prophet's plans to accomplish this will include giving demonically empowered speeches that are confirmed by great miracles (Rev. 13:12-14), using the image of the Beast (demonically empowered image) and using the mark of the Beast (global economic system).

- G. The Antichrist's 10-nation confederation will be a political, military and economic alliance that will provide him with the greatest power base of any man in history.
- H. The Abomination of Desolation will occur when the Antichrist declares himself to be *God* by setting up his image or idol (which is the abomination) in the Jerusalem *Temple*.

(Dan. 8:13; 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:12-18).

1. It will be an abomination to God, because the Antichrist will demand to be worshipped as God and because many will fully respond to this demand.

This image will be the greatest abomination to God in history. It will be confirmed by demonic miracles.

2. The desolation will occur in two different ways.

First, the Antichrist will seek to desolate or destroy any who refuse to worship him.

Second, God will desolate or destroy in judgment all those who yield to the pressure to worship the Antichrist.

3. After the Antichrist's head wound is healed, the Abomination of Desolation will be the key piece of legislation that begins his aggressive plan to rule the whole earth as God.

This act of abomination will occur in the middle of the last seven years before Jesus returns.

4. The Abomination of Desolation is referred to seven times in Scripture, five times by Daniel (Dan. 8:13; 9:26, 27; 11:31; 12:11) and two times by Jesus (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). Paul taught about the Abomination of Desolation (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

V. **THE THREE NUMBERED JUDGEMENT SERIES (SEVEN SEALS, SEVEN TRUMPETS, SEVEN BOWLS)**

- A. Great Tribulation consists of God's *judgment* as seen in the seven seals, seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath as described in Rev. 6-19.

They constitute the core judgment activities of the Great Tribulation period that lasts for 3½ years ending with the Battle of Jerusalem and the Second Coming of Jesus (Rev. 19:11-21).

- B. There is an *intensification* of God's judgments.

They become more severe as they unfold i.e., the seven seals events are surpassed in severity by the seven trumpets; then again by the seven bowls of wrath (one-fourth of the human race dies in the seals then one-third dies in the trumpets).

There will be different responses to God's judgments. Many will respond in fear (6:15-17) leading them to curse God (16:21) without repenting (9:20-21) as others glorify God for His power and salvation (Rev. 7:9; 11:13; 14:6).

- C. The three judgment series is focused on the Antichrist's worldwide empire as He purges the earth.

- They are *literal* (actual events not to be explained away symbolically or historically)
- They are *future* (their greatest fulfillment is future)
- They are *progressive* (they increase in intensity)
- They are *numbered* (released in a sequential order as they follow one after the other in sequence that we might know their order as they unfold on earth).

VI. THE KEY NEGATIVE JUDGMENT EVENTS AGAINST EVIL PEOPLE

- A. THE SEVEN SEALS (Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1)

1. First Seal (White Horse): Antichrist's political aggression (Rev. 6:1-2)
2. Second Seal (Red Horse): bloodshed and world war (Rev. 6:3-4)

3. Third Seal (Black Horse): famine and economic crisis (Rev. 6:5-6)
4. Fourth Seal (Pale Horse): disease and death to one-fourth of the earth (Rev. 6:7-8)
5. Fifth Seal (Prayer Movement): spiritual atmosphere – releasing God's judgment (Rev. 6:9-11)
6. Sixth Seal (Cosmic Disturbances): natural atmosphere – cosmic crisis (Rev. 6:12-17)
7. Seventh Seal (Silence in Heaven): heaven atmosphere – release of seven Trumpets (Rev. 8-9)

B. SEVEN TRUMPETS (Rev. 8:2-9:21; 11:14-19)

1. First Trumpet (Food Supply): Burning one-third of the earth's vegetation (Rev. 8:7)
2. Second Trumpet (Food Supply): Destroying one-third of the earth's seas (Rev. 8:8-9)
3. Third Trumpet (Water Supply): Poisoning one-third of the earth's fresh water (Rev. 8:10-11)
4. Fourth Trumpet (Light, Energy): Darkening one-third of the earth's light (Rev. 8:12-13)
5. Fifth Trumpet: (Torment): Release of demonic locust plague (Rev. 9:1-12)
6. Sixth Trumpet (Death): Demons that kill one-third of the earth's population (Rev. 9:13-21)
7. Seventh Trumpet (Defeat): begins Jesus' Second Coming procession (Rev. 11:15-19)

- C. SEVEN BOWLS OF GOD'S WRATH (Rev. 15-16) i.e., plagues in Egypt (Ex. 7-12).
1. First Bowl (Sores): painful sores on worshipers of the Antichrist (Rev. 16:1-2)
 2. Second Bowl (Food Supply): sea turns to blood and kills all in the sea (Rev. 16:3)
 3. Third Bowl (Water Supply): all the fresh water turns to blood (Rev. 16:4-7)
 4. Fourth Bowl (Torment): scorching heat and fire from the sun (Rev. 16:8-9)
 5. Fifth Bowl (Destruction): darkness on the Antichrist's global empire (Rev. 16:10-11)
 6. Sixth Bowl (Global Guilt): demons lure the nations to Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16)
 7. Seventh Bowl (Annihilation): worst earthquake, 100 pound hail stones (Rev. 16:17-21).

VII. NEGATIVE EVENTS: JUDGMENTS ON THOSE WHO REBEL AGAINST GOD

- A. Jesus' *victory* at the Battle of Jerusalem to end the Armageddon Campaign (which continues for 3½ years) is a military conflict that destroys the Antichrist, the False Prophet and their armies (Rev. 16:16; 19:11-21; Joel 3:2-15; Zech. 14:1-5; Zeph. 3:8).
- B. God's judgment on the Great Harlot *Babylon* (Rev. 17-18) is a judgment on a worldwide demonic economic and religious network based in the city of Babylon because it will seduce many to do evil and to persecute the saints.

The city of Babylon to be located on the Euphrates River in Iraq (50 miles south of Baghdad) will be restored (Is. 13-14; Jer. 50-51; Rev. 17-18).

- C. God will judge this city in two stages.

First, this worldwide religious system of toleration and syncretism will fall in middle of the seven-year period, at the hands of 10 kings who will burn it (Rev. 17:16). They will replace it with the Antichrist's strict religious system and re-establish it as one of the Antichrist's headquarters.

Second, it will fall when Jesus returns (Rev. 18).

- D. The *martyrdom* of Christians comes as the Antichrist makes war with them.

(Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10; Rev. 6:9-11; 9:21; 11:7; 13:7, 15; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2).

- E. Many believers will *fall away* from the faith (the apostasy).

(2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; Matt. 24:12.)

Let no one deceive you...for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin (Antichrist) is revealed... (2 Thess. 2:3)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... (1 Tim. 4:1)

- F. The Great White Throne is the final punishment of Satan and unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15).

VIII. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE END TIMES

- A. Israel became a nation (1948) and took control of the city of Jerusalem (1967).
- B. There will be an emergence of a regional *political* leader (Antichrist) in the Middle East or Europe who has unusual diplomacy and who initially works with a three-nation coalition.
- C. The formation of the *European Union* joins in the alliance of the ten-nation confederation in the Middle East.

A three-nation coalition will be its original base, but will quickly be uprooted (Dan. 7:8, 20, 24). The ten-nation confederation will form the basis of a worldwide government.

- D. The Antichrist will make a Middle East *peace treaty* with Israel and other nations that ushers in a worldwide counterfeit peace and safety (Dan. 9:27; 1 Thess. 5:3).

Israel's covenant with the Antichrist will seem to them to usher in the promised millennial blessings.

- E. The Lord and Satan will work to gather the armies of all the nations of the earth to attack *Jerusalem*.

(Zech. 12:1-10; 14:1-2; Joel 3:2, 12; Zeph. 3:8; Rev. 16:12-16).

- F. The temple in Jerusalem (referred to as the Tribulation temple) will be *built* and then *desecrated* by the Antichrist.

It shall be the context for the ministry of the Two Witnesses.

(Dan. 9:27; 11:36-45; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2).

- G. A one-world religion will emerge that kills Christians who resist it (Rev. 13, 17-18).

The rise of false christs and prophets will help establish alliances between all the false religions which include the occult, New Age, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and liberal "Christianity" with a commitment to moral tolerance that paves the way for a one-world religion.

- H. There is an increase of travel and knowledge (scientific, communication, technology).

Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro (travel), and knowledge (scientific, technology) shall increase. (Dan. 12:4).

Session 2 Study Guide Questions

- How does studying the judgments of God make me feel about His heart? What can I do to have greater understanding of how God's judgments are motivated by love?
- What pain and pressures are in my life now that I can use this perspective to examine my purpose on the earth? How can I compare this to God's purposes for the Tribulation?
- How is Israel the signpost for the End Times? What role will it play in the politics of the day?
- Do I think our society is ready to fall for the deception of a one-world religion? What can I do to prepare myself to withstand such deception?