***Prophecy

Life in the Tribulation

PR07-02***

Now we're going to look at life in the tribulation. We have been identifying major movements and personalities on the prophetic scene: power blocs that are going to appear; leaders that are going to appear; and, movements which will appear, but all of these have to be viewed within the context of daily life right here on earth. So it is interesting to stop and to look into the prophetic Scriptures of the Bible, and ask ourselves what it is going to be like when the church has been removed. Everybody who is a Christian has been removed off the face of this earth, and everybody left on the face of the earth is an unbeliever. What will it be like to walk down the streets? What will it be like to go home at night? What will it be like to go to work? What will it be like to go on a vacation? What will it be like to go to the store to buy things? How will your bank account be affected? What kind of movies will they have? The best will be call X-rated, and then they'll go down from there probably. What will life be like in the tribulation period?

The church is going to be taken out. We don't know when, but the Lord is going to come down from the air, and we believers are going to be caught up to meet Him. At that point there begins a period of history which the Bible predicts as lasting for seven years. This period was revealed to the prophet Daniel when he was given a timetable for Jewish history. God revealed to Daniel how long he was going to deal with Daniel's people, the Jewish people. Daniel 9:24 declares that God was going to deal with the Jews for another 490 years, and then God's dealings with Israel as a nation would be at an end. This period, we are told, began with a decree which was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 445 B.C. This king in the Media Persian Empire gave the order to go back and to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. You read about this in Nehemiah 2:5-8. From the going forth of this decree which was in the year 445 B.C. onward for 490 years, God was going to deal with the Jewish people. Then He would be complete in all that He had to do with him.

Well history fulfilled 483 years. Then we come to the termination with the death of Christ, even as Daniel predicted. Daniel said at the end of 69 weeks of years, the Messiah would be cut off. In other words, at the end of 483 years, something dramatic would happen that the Messiah would be cut off from that which was His rightful claim. Instead of coming to Israel and becoming her king and setting up the Davidic Kingdom upon this earth; and, instead of Jesus Christ moving into Jerusalem and assuming the throne of David, He would be cut off from all those things. And the prophetic clock consequently would stop ticking, and God would not be dealing with the Jewish people any longer. Instead there was interspersed, after this, a period which has now almost been 2,000 years called the church age. This is something that was never revealed in the Old Testament in which God is calling out from Jews and gentiles alike a bride for His Son Jesus Christ. He is now forming the body of Christ who will someday become His bride.

Well what happened to the final seven years? Was the prophet mistaken? Did he get wrong information? No, because God's prophecies are always fulfilled in detail. We know that someplace along the line, the Jewish people must have seven more years of specific dealing from God relative to them as a nation. Now, of course, they had to come back to the land of Palestine and become a nation before He could do that. They also had to possess the city of Jerusalem entirely before that seven years could again be fulfilled. A third thing is they had to have the site of their temple back, and they had to be able to rebuild their temple. Two of these things have already been fulfilled: the Jew is now a nation; and the Jew has all the city of Jerusalem. When the rapture (which means the catching up) takes place, when all the Christians, those in the graves and those living, are caught up to meet the Lord, then this period of seven years which was not fulfilled in the 490 years predicted for Jewish history, will begin to be fulfilled. So the prophetic clock starts ticking.

**The Tribulation Period**

Now we're told something about this seven-year period as to how it's set up. We're told that it is called, for one thing, the tribulation period. The word tribulation is used in two ways. It is used in Scripture in a technical and a non-technical sense. When it is used of the trial and the suffering of believers, as in John 16:33, it's a non-technical sense. Believers everywhere through all the ages experience tribulation. But it is used as a technical word also, as in Matthew 24:21 where it is referring to this seven-year period of Daniel's timetable. The tribulation is a specific period in history. This whole period is divided into two parts. We're told that each part has three-and-a-half years in it. Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 11:3 tell you each is divided into three-and-a-half years. Sometimes it lists it in years; sometimes in months; sometimes in days; and, sometimes in an expression like "time, times, and a half time."

The last half has a special meaning, the second three-and-a-half years. The whole thing is called the tribulation, but this last half is called the great tribulation because it is in the last three-and-a-half years that the intensity of the wrath of God is poured out upon humanity who's been left behind on the earth after the rapture of the church. It has other names. Jeremiah 20:7 calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble" because it will be the time of the Jews' greatest suffering. Isaiah 26:20 calls it the time of indignation because it is the outpouring of the wrath of God against unrighteousness. Daniel 12:1 gives it the general term "a time of trouble." It'll be different than anything that humanity has ever experienced because it will be worldwide. Everyone will be aware that it is taking place. It will contain events of such momentous nature that people will believe that the world is coming to an end. During this seven-year period, people everywhere will expect any day for this to be the end.

In Zephaniah 1:12-18, you can read a description of the tribulation period. The prophet in this context is speaking about "the day of the Lord." This is a technical term. "The day of the Lord" begins at the beginning of the tribulation, and after the tribulation is over, God enters a 1,000-year period called the millennium when His Son is ruling upon the throne of David here on earth. It will be the earth's golden age with Jesus Christ, from Jerusalem directing and governing the whole earth. The millennium and the tribulation together form "the day of the Lord." At the end of the 1,000 years, the day of the Lord comes to an end. So there is a part of the day of the Lord which is a judgment portion, and then there is a part which is a blessing portion. Zephaniah, in his prophecy, was talking about the judgment portion, the portion of the tribulation. In that discussion, you can read, in Zephaniah 1:12-18, a description of what this portion of the day of the Lord will be like.

**Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

In the New Testament, Matthew 24:4-31 also are a description of the whole tribulation period. Versus 4-14 cover the first half; versus 15-20 mark a major event in the middle; and then, versus 21-31 are the second half, the last three-and-a-half years. There are many references to the tribulation period in the book of the Revelation. Major portions of that book describe in detail what life is going to be like in the tribulation. The church, of course, has been removed before this begins. Here at Berean Memorial Church, we describe our theological position as being pre-millennial and pre-tribulation rapture. Pre-tribulation rapture means that we believe that the church will be taken out of the world before the tribulation begins.

There are some believers who believe in what is called mid-tribulation rapture, that the Christians are going to be taken out at the midpoint of the tribulation. Then there are some believers who believe that the Christians will not be taken out until after the tribulation is over, and they are called post-tribulation rapture. So some people believe that Christians have to go through a certain period of punishment, and the tribulation is going to purge out the believers. Of course, you could see that that could only apply to the last generation of believers, and the rest of them who have lived before the tribulation don't have to face that.

However, there are two major reasons why we hold that the rapture is before the tribulation. Revelation 3:10 is one of them. It is speaking to the Philadelphia church, that church which was faithful to the Word of God. It says, "Because you have kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation (or tribulation) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Here is a period that's going to be a particular divine trial upon them who dwell in it. This is an expression for unbelievers. This period of trial is called the hour (a specific time) of temptation or tribulation. Believers of the faithful Philadelphia type are going to be preserved out of it.

Also, 1 Thessalonians 5:9 is another basis on which we hold, among others, that the rapture is before the tribulation: "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." God has not appointed us to a period of wrath but to attain salvation. Now obviously, the tribulation is a period of intense divine wrath. The blessed hope would be rather pointless if all that we had to look forward to, as Christians, was the tribulation period, a time of wrath. That's not what we look forward to. We look forward to the any-moment catching up of ourselves to meet the Lord in the air.

**The Rapture**

So let's try to think through a little bit the order of events in this period of tribulation. We begin at the beginning of the first three-and-a-half years. Here's the situation. The church is gone. Now it's going to take some readjustment of humanity to explain that event, and to acclimate itself to the fact that suddenly thousands, perhaps millions, of people--genuine believers--are suddenly gone. All up and down their neighborhoods, there are houses that are empty. Every place there's an empty house; every place there is somebody missing from the business world; and, every place there's somebody of some great importance and fame who's missing, they all have something in common. They all were Christians. Every one of them was a Christian.

Now the world is going to have to explain this. I don't know how they'll do it. Undoubtedly, there will be controlled news, and there will be people who have capacity to cast a right perspective on things in order to make it appear that this is all very normal and routine. But the world will eventually settle down, and it will get over the shock of discovering people missing. And, of course, you can imagine what the headlines are going to be that day when the rapture takes place, because there are going be fantastic accidents all over the world.

Somebody told me they saw someone driving the other day with a bumper sticker that said, "Warning: in the event of the rapture, this car is driven by a Christian." It might be a point of curiosity for someone ask, "What does that mean?" And you could open up a whole very wonderful realm of what's coming and what the Lord has to help you not to face that. But that car is going to be a hazard on the highway if it's driving, because that driver is going to be gone.

**The Antichrist**

So the world has settled down. The antichrist comes on the scene. He is the ruler of the western confederacy. He signs a seven-year treaty with Israel. He agrees to act as Israel's protector (Daniel 9:27). This is his first step toward establishing himself in the eyes of the tribulation world as a man of peace. Israel thus becomes firmly aligned with the Western world. And you don't have to read your news today very far to discover this is exactly where Israel is moving today. She is not moving toward the communist orbit or toward the Russian world. She is moving toward the Western world, and becoming increasingly aligned with the United States and the West. This is where she will end up in the end times.

The antichrist, the leader of the western confederacy, will make a covenant, a treaty, to be her protector for seven years. Well this settles, for the time being, the Arab-Israeli problem. The antichrist is going to have enough clout that he is going to be viewed with some respect by the other power blocs. The oriental confederacy is not going to want to start anything. The northern confederacy under Russia is going to think twice. And certainly the southern confederacy under Egypt is not going to jump the gun on anything again. They've already had a lesson or two on that, and may yet get another one. But all of a sudden, there's a cold war situation with everybody looking down their guns at the enemy, and nobody daring to make a move.

For Israel, this is a bonanza. The Scriptures describe her as now coming to a place where she is at peace. She is living in cities without walls, which is a modern situation, of course. And she is enjoying her prosperity. Vast areas of Israel 20 years ago were insect-infested swamp lands. Do you know what the Jews have done? They've gone in and drained these places off. Part of the battlefield of Armageddon, as a matter of fact, was a swamp land a few years ago. Now they've converted it into fertile crop land. They have restored the fertility in a fantastic way to the land of Palestine. All this is making her more and more the envy of her enemies who would like to move in and take over that wealthy productive part of the earth's surface.

Well, Israel will feel secure. She will proceed to rebuild her temple, and she will restore her rituals, all under the aegis of the antichrist. Then the Lord Jesus Christ, during the first three-and-a-half year period, is going to begin to release a series of judgments upon the world. Now, have you got the picture? Satan wants to be like God. He wants to create a world where everybody is in an orderly relationship to one another. Socialism is his technique. Internationalism is his rallying point. He wants to get everybody in a nice relationship with one another in a smooth running world. Then all of a sudden, out of the blue, strikes a series of judgments which are described under a series of seals that Jesus Christ breaks on a document. One seal at a time releases a judgment upon the earth.

Now we can't go into a detailed exposition of this right now. We're just going to summarize to try to carry you very quickly through the whole tribulation period, and what it would be like living in that era. You can fill in the gaps of what life would be like for you if you were there.

**The Seven Seals**

1. The first seal in Revelation 6:1-2 releases a rider on a white horse. This rider on a white horse represents a false peace under the antichrist. He has settled the Arab-Jew conflict apparently, but it is only a false peace, because the worst world war is yet to come.
2. The second seal is broken and out comes a rider on a red horse. As you read through Revelation 6:3-4, you discover that he takes peace away from the tribulation world. There is a series of conflicts that the United Nations (which will be functioning, no doubt, at the time) is constantly trying to deal with wars that break out around the world.
3. The third seal is broken and out comes a rider on a black horse. There is a figure holding a balance. The balance denotes a scale which is denoting a shortage of food. We discover something about a denarius which was a Roman coin. In the Roman world, this was a day's wages, and it would normally buy eight measures of wheat and 24 measures of barley. But in the tribulation world, a day's wages will buy one measure of wheat and three measures of barley. Why? Because inflation will have so eroded the economy and the value of the money of the people at the time. So there will be a fantastic shortage of food. There will be worldwide famine and poverty. But, interestingly enough, the Scriptures say that there will be plenty of luxury items. The oils and the wines and the luxury items will be there, and they will abound for the wealthy. This will be a source of great contention for people who are suffering under the impact of inflation, and the shrinking of their savings and of their salaries.
4. The fourth seal is broken and out comes a rider on a yellowish green horse. This one is named for us. He's called death (Revelation 6:7-8). He follows naturally upon war and famine. We're told that one-fourth of the earth's population dies as the result of the presence of this horse. Now from wars; from famines; and, from violence, such as disease and animals, we're told under this seal that animals are roaming the countryside devouring people. Why are the animals suddenly so voracious? Because they're starving probably.

A fourth of the world's population dies. One thing you're going to discover about the tribulation period is that death becomes a commonplace event. If you are not planning to leave in the rapture, and in the view of the rapidly moving times in which we live toward the tribulation, I would suggest that you get into the undertaker business. It will probably be the best trade you could be in. I guarantee that you'll have plenty of business. So if you're not planning to go with us, start learning to be an undertaker because there won't be enough of them. Can you imagine trying to bury a fourth of the world's population. Undoubtedly, they're going to have to resort to the kind of things that have to be resorted to on the battlefield sometimes. You call in a bulldozer, and a mass grave is dug, and the bodies are moved in and covered, because there will be no time to do much more than that.

1. The next seal is broken, the fifth seal, and this one is the cry of martyred saints who are now in heaven (Revelation 6:9-11). Obviously, these saints are now in heaven because they were once on earth, and they were martyred. This tells us that believers are being persecuted because of their testimony for the Lord. This is their common experience. How did they come to be believers? Well, they were raised up through Bibles that were left behind; through books; through tapes; and, other things that were sources of information concerning the Word of God. These people are told to wait patiently. They're calling upon God to vindicate them in their death. God says, "Wait patiently. There are some more who are yet to be martyred." You have to understand that when the tribulation begins, everybody who is a believer is gone. When the rapture takes place, at the beginning of the tribulation, everybody on earth is unsaved. Then, some come to a knowledge of the truth and become believers. If you do, you will in all likelihood face martyrdom.
2. The sixth seal declares that havoc breaks loose in nature (Revelation 6:12-17). There is one magnificent fantastic great earthquake. The sun is darkened as sackcloth (that's camel's hair). The moon takes on the appearance of shimmering and flowing with blood--solid red. There's a tremendous meteor shower from outer space that strikes the earth. The heavens, in some way, have the appearance of being rolled back. Perhaps this even suggests that the people on earth will look up and glimpse into heaven itself. They may see into the very heavens and what's going on there, and God on his throne. Every mountain and every island on the face of the earth will shudder and move. Can you imagine what it's going to be like on a camping trip in the Rocky Mountains when this takes place, or for the folks who are on the ski slope? If that won't be a ride. All of this happens during the first three-and-a-half years, possibly with some overlapping into the last three-and-a-half years.
3. (The seventh seal serves as an introduction to the seven trumpets below.)

Humanity, during the first three-and-a-half years is going to be struck with terror, Revelation 6:15-17 tells us that they seek to hide themselves from God. They know where all these things are taking place. Revelation 24:4-13 give you an identical description of these seven seals in the identical order--event-for-event--where the Lord is describing this very same situation that's coming. Humanity is going to be in terror. The antichrist is going to be trying to stabilize things within his realm of authority. Remember that he doesn't rule the world at this time. During this period of the first three-and-a-half years, he only rules the Western nations that he has put together. But he has a fantastic problem, as do the other power blocs, with these things that are striking the earth.

**The Church**

The ecumenical church during this first three-and-a-half years will rise to the zenith of its power. As a matter of fact, the antichrist is going to need this church, probably as a point of defense against communism. So he will permit the ecumenical church to dominate, him and to govern and to direct him. It will be associated with him (Revelation 17:3). This church will oppose all true believers. Everyone who witnesses to the testimony of Jesus Christ will be slaughtered (Revelation 17:6). The ecumenical church will get drunk, the Scripture says, on the blood of these martyrs. There will be a special group of witnesses who will be given divine protection (Revelation 7:3-8). So God will raise up witnesses whose lives he will protect.

How do you think you're going to explain the headlines in this era? You're going to have to have some censored reports. You're going to have to have somebody who can give some plausible explanations. Of course, there will be huge amounts of money going into disaster areas. That will be welcome. And, of course, there will be great debates in the United Nations over the whole thing. This will suggest to men that they're still in command of their own destinies. Things are moving along toward the middle of the tribulation period with these judgments of God striking fear in the hearts of men. Yet, most of them are not turning to God.

Here, as you approach the middle of the tribulation period, the northern confederacy under Russia, begins to flex its muscles. And at the point just before the middle of the tribulation period, Russia and the northern confederacy decide to call the bluff, so to speak, of the antichrist. They invade Palestine; Jerusalem is destroyed; they sweep through the country; and, they dare the antichrist to do anything about it. Well, since he is under treaty of defense to the Jews, the Antichrist mobilizes. He starts moving his forces toward Palestine. Probably his headquarters has been in Rome. He starts moving toward Palestine. But before he has to come in contact with the northern confederacy military force, God supernaturally destroys the Russians and their allies. That's where Ezekiel 38 and 39 comes into the picture. When this is done, a major hindrance to the antichrist's world-wide domination has been removed; he immediately declares himself world ruler; and, nobody challenges his claim. He calls himself, without opposition, the ruler of the world.

**The Two Witnesses**

At this point he is able to do another dramatic thing that gives the world new hope. All during this three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, God has raised up two witnesses who have had a spectacular ministry. You may read about them in Revelation 11:3-13. These two witnesses are invincible during this three-and-a-half year period. That is, they cannot be killed. One person after another tries to kill them. They are sounding off about God. They are sounding off Bible doctrine. They are sounding off the gospel. They are a thorn in the side of the antichrist. But he is not able to do anything about it nor can anyone else. One of the reasons they can't get to them is that these people have the ability to strike their enemies dead with fire from their mouth. Now that's the original dragon-mouth if there ever was one. They're able to cut down their enemies just by fire from their mouth.

They will be able to prevent rain from falling upon the earth, to add to the agonies of the earth's scene. They will be able to turn water into blood. They will be able to bring plagues at will upon the earth. So they have a spectacular ministry, and they are invincible. But suddenly, the Antichrist moves against these two witnesses. And what do you think happens? He kills them both, and the world is appalled. Now they had been impressed with the antichrist before. He had knocked out three nations and the other seven said, "We'll join you," and he put together his ten-nation confederacy. With it, he has brought a certain modicum of stability in his part of the world. But now, they are really impressed with him. Who has been able to touch these two witnesses? But along comes our antichrist, and he does it.

Well, it's such a spectacular event, and he is so pleased, that he doesn't allow them to bury the two witnesses. Instead they put their bodies out in the central square in the central location in Jerusalem. For the next few days, people come by; they're walking by; they're looking at the bodies; they're bringing their little children; they're pointing out these miserable characters that their wonderful antichrist has now destroyed for them; the television cameras are zeroed in there; and, this is a world-wide spectacular thing. As a matter of fact, this is the only time in the tribulation period that you read about people rejoicing. At the death of these two witnesses, they have a three-day celebration. It's like Christmas, at whatever time of the year it happens, and they give gifts to one another. This is the only time that there is any rejoicing recorded in the tribulation.

However, at the end of three-and-a-half days, television cameramen are appalled at what they see. The bodies begin to twitch and begin to move. The eyes flick open. A hand reaches up, and the two men stand up, right there on camera. I can almost hear one of those television cameramen screaming. Well, you can imagine what it's going to be like for a TV cameraman to see these bodies stand up, after everybody's been giving presents. He's going to be broken up because you've got to give your presents back, if nothing more. And if that isn't enough, these two witnesses are really good. They have a finish. They've been in on a few Berean banquets. After they've made their dramatic stand, they float right up into the air and go to heaven. And the cameras are following them all the time. Mouths are opened all over the world. Well, that's going to make a good news story that night. This is right at the middle of the tribulation, to add another awesome spectacle. Well, the departure of the witnesses no sooner takes place than, Revelation 11:13 says, that very day, within the hour, a tremendous earthquake takes place in Jerusalem so that a tenth of the city is destroyed. 7,000 people die in that earthquake.

The antichrist is now ready, with Russia gone, to move out on his own here at the midpoint of the tribulation. So the next thing he gets rid of is that church that has been riding his back. So he destroys the ecumenical church (Revelation 17:16). He turns against the Jews, whose protector he has been. He sets his own image up in the temple and declares himself to be God. (Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:4). He appoints the false prophet over the world church, and he orders him to direct all worship to the image of the antichrist which has been set up in the Jews' temple (Revelation 13:11-18).

Satan, in heaven at this point, takes his demons, and he seeks to invade heaven. He seeks to make an open frontal assault upon the third heaven. And Michael meets him on the heavenly field of battle with the elect angels. Michael and the elect angels win. Satan and the demons are defeated and they are cast out of the heavens completely forever. They are, therefore, cast into the earth. At that point, the earth is warned that they have some grave and great tribulation ahead because Satan is now here (Revelation 12:12). He is angry. Why? Because he knows that he has three-and-a-half years left, right here in the middle of the tribulation. He has three-and-a-half years left to finish off his rebellion against God.

The antichrist gives new hope to the tribulation world for peace and stability. He has made himself the world ruler. He's gotten rid of the ecumenical church. He has set up a unified international religion. He is part now of the evil unholy trinity of Satan, the false prophet, and himself. He leads an attack with a vengeance upon the saints (Revelation 12:17), and he openly blasphemes God (Revelation 13:5-7). The false prophet awes the world with his miracles. He gives the illusion of life to the image (Revelation 13:13-15). And the world comes under an international economic control. Everyone is required to have the mark of the antichrist, either on his forehead or in his right hand. Otherwise, you can't buy anything and you can't do any business (Revelation 13:16-17). All of these laws are passed one after another. All of these stipulations are made and put into effect. The Antichrist tries to stabilize the world after what's happened thus far.

**The Great Tribulation**

The antichrist has gotten rid of the church. He's in supreme command. He has raised the hopes of humanity once more. The last three-and-a-half year begins which the Bible calls the great tribulation. At this point of history, the Bible then describes a new series of judgments that God lets loose upon the earth. Two series of sevens. One is called the seven trumpets. The second, and the last, is called the seven bowls. The seven trumpets are strung out over this last three-and-a-half years. The seven bowl judgments fall within the last weeks, or perhaps even days, of the tribulation period. They are of the nature that they are totally destructive to animal and human life. Therefore, the bowl judgments could only be right down there at the very end. People couldn't survive very long after these strikes.

So let's look at the seven trumpets. The antichrist thinks he's got things under control. Then God lets loose the trumpets.

**The Seven Trumpets**

1. At the sound of the first trumpet, God strikes the earth with hail, fire, and blood so that a third of the vegetation on earth is burned up (Revelation 8:7).
2. The second trumpet: A tremendous volcano erupts into the sea, and a third of the sea becomes blood (Revelation 8:8-9). And please don't make the mistake of thinking these are symbols. It actually becomes blood.
3. Number three: The third trumpet sounds. A star falls from heaven upon the freshwater areas of the world, and a third of them are poisoned. So anybody who drinks from them dies instantly (Revelation 8:10-11). You can imagine what misery that is. Everywhere you go, you're on edge. "Can I drink this water, or can't I?" Everywhere you go to drink, you have to verify whether you can drink this water or not.
4. The fourth trumpet is blown, and a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars is darkened. I don't know if this means that the day is going to become a 16-hour day, but it's going to disrupt the day cycles (Revelation 8:12-13). A third of these heavenly bodies will be darkened.
5. The next trumpet blows, and we are told that locusts come from the shaft of the abyss, which seems to be connected to Hades, and, therefore, these locusts seem to be demon dominated. They swarm to torment humanity (Revelation 9:1-12). They inflict wounds like the sting of a scorpion, but they don't kill. For five months, these locusts swarm all over the earth striking anybody who's got an exposed place on his body when he comes outdoors. They're not going to attack any vegetation, like locusts normally do. They're only going to attack those who have the mark of the antichrist on them. People will be unable to escape them, and the agony and the pain will be so great that some people will decide they want to kill themselves. However, they will discover that they can't. I don't know how this will be. I can't explain this, but nobody will be able to commit suicide for this period of five months. They will not be able to escape the agonies of these locusts. They are under demon control.
6. At the next trumpet, there is an army of 200 million which destroys a third of the world's population (Revelation 9:13-21). Now you have the indication that the antichrist's control in this period is beginning to crumble. He's beginning to get resistance and rebellion. You remember that in the fourth seal, one-fourth of the world's population was killed. Under this trumpet, trumpet number six, a third of the world's population is destroyed. So that adds up to about half. Half the people of the world have been destroyed. That means over 3 billion people have been killed as you get into the second half of the tribulation period. Death is going to be fantastic. It's going to be everywhere. Everybody is going to wake up, and they are not going to know whether this is their last day. It's going to abound. Every place they go there's going to be nothing but death, death, and more death.
7. The seventh trumpet announces the end of the tribulation as being near (Revelation 11:15-19). Out of the seven trumpets come seven bowls of God's wrath being poured out. Now you will see from these how it has to be right down here at the end because it is totally destructive of life.

**The Seven Bowls**

1. The first bowl is poured out, and men come up with running festering sores upon those who are the followers of the antichrist and the false prophet.
2. Bowl number two is poured out upon the sea, and the sea is turned to blood. There isn't a single salt water area that isn't solid blood. Can you imagine what that's going to do to the marine life? Seventy two percent of the earth's surface is salt water areas. How destructive will this be to the salt water areas with this the stench of death? Think of the people living by the seashore. Any folks who have cottages along the ocean will be in for trouble.
3. And you can't breathe a sigh of relief because your cottage is on Lake Dallas or Lake Grapevine, because when a third bowl is poured out, it hits the freshwater areas, and they turn to blood. Now what are people going to drink? There's no salt water to desalinate. There's no fresh water to drink. How many days is this going to last? We don't know. We know that blood is mostly water, and that's exactly what they're going to do. They'll go just so far, and then they're going to go crazy with thirst, and they're going to drink the blood. They're going to dip in and drink the blood of freshwater areas. They'll have freshwater blood and salt water blood. And incidentally God says that this is just retribution that they should drink the blood because they have shed the blood of the saints (Revelation 16:4-7).
4. The fourth bowl will be poured out, and the sun scorches men. Suddenly the sun becomes intensely hot (Revelation 16:8).
5. The fifth bowl is poured out and the inhabitants of the beast's kingdom (the antichrist's kingdom) suffer intense pain. His capital is under darkness. This is very befitting. Here he was going to bring peace and stability to the world, and remember that he is empowered by Satan. When Satan tried to do this to the earth after his first rebellion in heaven, the earth ended up under darkness. How fitting that his man should bring the world the same thing--under total darkness.
6. The sixth bowl is poured out, and an oriental army of 200 million men comes sweeping across the Euphrates River, which has now been dried up. They sweep across into Palestine toward the battle of Armageddon that they participate in.
7. Then the seventh bowl declares a general display of divine wrath (Revelation 16:17-21). An earthquake divides Jerusalem in half, and cities fall. Islands and mountains are moved. They disappear. Hailstones fall from the sky weighing 100 pounds apiece, and civilization is in a shambles.

Now here you have it, Satan. You were going to be like God, and you were going to produce a magnificent civilization without God. They couldn't live very long under those conditions. That's why these things have to happen within the last couple of weeks or last few days of the tribulation period. As the nations of the world are crazed by the agonies that they have gone through, yet they blaspheme God. Yet, they shake their fists at Heaven because they know where this is coming from. And they gather together to expel His people and to destroy the Jewish people completely by moving against the antichrist in his headquarters in Jerusalem. The nations of the world, as a result of that, gather for the battle of Armageddon, the campaign of Armageddon, the climactic battle on that field.

**The Second Advent**

Then, as we have already seen, Jesus Christ returns and stops the battle. They turn to fight Him first. He destroys them with the Word of His mouth, and this is the end of the tribulation period. Then things are cleaned up, and the millennium, which we will yet look at, begins.

So this brief outline is the progression through the tribulation period. You can see that this will not be a very pleasant time in the earth's history. If the earth thinks it has experienced trial, it doesn't know what trial is. The worst is yet to come. This is going to be a fantastic time.

Now you may be in it. If you are not a believer, that's exactly what will happen to you. Or you can accept what Jesus Christ has provided in removing the hindrance between you and God. You can accept Him as your Savior. You can believe that He has removed the wall that has separated you. And once you have done that you enter permanently into Christ. It's a position that you never leave. If you are still living when the rapture takes place, you go in that group. If you are still living but not in the rapture, if you are not caught up to meet the Lord in the air, there's only one alternative. And that is you'll be left here on the earth. We are close. We are probably very close, and this is the time to thank God and remember the things that you're going to escape. Think what it would be like to live in the period of God's wrath and indignation.

Some people like to say, "God is a God of love. He's not going to condemn me. I do the best I can. That should be equal to satisfying Him." They are going to discover that He is a God of very great wrath. Just read through these Scriptures. Just read through the book of the Revelation. Most of that book is telling you what's going to happen on this earth, and what life will be like. And it's God's wrath being expressed. You may have Him as your judge. You may have Him as your Savior. It's your freewill to decide which way you go.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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