

The Tribulation and the Seven Vial Judgments (Revelation 16:1-21)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. The Return to Israel and the Great Tribulation (Jeremiah 30:1-9)
2. No One Knows the Time (Mark 13:24-37)
3. The Church Will Not Go Through the Tribulation (I Thessalonians 1:1-10)
4. The Antichrist Will Be Revealed (II Thessalonians 2:1-12)
5. Preparing for the Vial Judgments (Revelation 15:1-8)
6. The Seven Vial Judgments (Revelation 16:1-21)

Question: When did the Jews start returning to Israel? What did Jesus tell His disciples concerning the end times? Why did He not give them a specific date for when the events would occur?

B. Everything is about Israel.

1. God's Plan for Israel has always been clear.
 - a. They have been God's chosen people from the beginning (see Deuteronomy 7:6-8).
 - b. God has used their rejection of Jesus to benefit Gentiles (Romans 11:11, 25).
 - c. God has never turned away from Israel (Romans 11:26).
 - d. He has always planned to return them to their promised land (Jeremiah 30:3).
 - e. Jesus will quickly and easily defeat the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2:8).
 - f. The Great Tribulation will turn the Jews to God, and Israel will see Jesus as their Messiah (Revelation 19:11-16).
2. Jeremiah 30:3 says, "For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and ***I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.***"
3. The Jews started returning to Israel when they became a state in 1948.
4. But the church is the Bride of Christ, and we have a big part in God's Plan, too.

C. *If the Bible is correct.*

1. Palestine will not destroy Israel.
2. The United States will not bring peace to the Middle East.

D. In Matthew 24:1-51 and Mark 13:1-37, Jesus told His disciples and other followers to always be ready.

1. In Matthew 24:32-33, He gave them the parable of the fig tree.
2. In Matthew 24:37-39, He compared His coming to the days of Noah.
3. In Matthew 24:45-51, He spoke about the wise and unwise servants.
4. In Mark 13:34-37, He cautioned His followers to watch.

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5. Paul and Peter described the Day of the Lord as the coming of a thief in the night (I Thessalonians 5:2 and II Peter 3:10).
- E. Jesus did not know when He would return.
 1. Mark 13:32 says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, ***neither the Son, but the Father.***"
 2. Matthew 24:36 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."
 3. ***kenosis*** - According to Philippians 2:7, Jesus voluntarily gave up the free use of His comparative attributes (omniscience, omnipotent, omnipresent).
 4. Philippians 2:7 says, "But ***made himself of no reputation***, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"

Question: What words in Jeremiah 30:1-9, Daniel 9:27, and I Thessalonians 5:1-10 suggest that the church will not go through the Great Tribulation?

II. The Bible teaches that the Tribulation is for the Jews and those that have rejected the Lord.

- A. The Tribulation will be a time when God clearly deals with the Jews.
 1. Jeremiah 30:7 says, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: ***it is even the time of Jacob's trouble***; but he shall be saved out of it."
 2. Daniel 9:27 says, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week ***he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease***, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."
- B. The Tribulation is not for the church.
 1. I Thessalonians 5:9 says, "For ***God hath not appointed us to wrath***, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"
 2. Wrath (***orge***) - anger exhibited in punishment, hence used for punishment itself, of punishments inflicted by magistrates.
 - a. Matthew 3:7 says, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee ***from the wrath to come?***"
 - b. Luke 21:23 says, "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, ***in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land***, and wrath upon this people."
 - c. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; ***but the wrath of God abideth on him.***"
 - d. Romans 5:9 says, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, ***we shall be saved from wrath*** through him."

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- e. I Thessalonians 1:10 says, "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, *which delivered us from the wrath to come.*"

Question: How did Paul describe the Antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:1-12? How do his words compare to Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19?

III. The Antichrist and Satan

- A. Paul wrote about the Antichrist in II Thessalonians 2:1-12.
1. He will be the man of sin (verse 3).
 2. He will be the son of perdition (verse 3), (*apoleia*) which means utter destruction.
 3. He opposes God (verse 4).
 4. He exalts Himself above God (verse 4).
 5. Referred to as that Wicked (verse 8). Wicked (*anomas*) - departing from the law, a violator of the law, lawless, wicked.
 6. He will come in power (verse 9).
 7. He will be full of lying wonders (verse 9).
- B. In Isaiah 14:12-17, Isaiah wrote about Satan.
1. He tries to weaken the nations (verse 12).
 2. He wants to exalt himself about God (verse 13).
 3. He wants to be like the most High (verse 14).
 4. He makes the earth tremble (verse 16).
 5. He shakes kingdoms (verse 16).
 6. He destroys cities (verse 17).
- C. In Ezekiel 28:11-19, Ezekiel wrote about Satan.
1. He is perfect in beauty (verse 12).
 2. He was in the Garden of Eden (verse 13).
 3. He is like every perfect stone (verse 13).
 4. He was created by God and is inferior to Him (verse 13).
 5. He was perfect in his ways (verse 15).
 6. He causes violence (verse 16).
 7. He was lifted up because of his beauty (verse 17)

Question: What happened when the seven vial judgments were poured out?

IV. The Seven Vial Judgments

- A. Dr. Alan F. Johnson wrote that the seven vial judgments are the third woe and result from the seventh trumpet judgment (Revelation 9:12).
- B. The trumpet and vial judgments are similar, but not the same, and similar to the Egyptian judgments.

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1. The first four involve nature (earth, sea, rivers, and sky).
 2. The vial judgments inflict human suffering on those that had the mark of the beast.
 3. The vial judgments are total and complete.
 4. Dr. Robert Wall wrote that the judgments were meant to bring repentance, but they failed to do so.
 - a. When Job suffered, he glorified the Lord.
 - b. When the lost suffer, they either repent or they curse the Lord.
 5. Dr. Johnson does not think that the judgments are literal.
- C. Two words for wrath.
1. Wrath (***orge***) in I Thessalonians 5:9 and I Thessalonians 1:10 - anger exhibited in punishment, hence used for punishment itself, of punishments inflicted by magistrates.
 - a. Revelation 6:16-17 says, "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ***For the great day of his wrath is come***; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - b. Revelation 11:18 says, "And the nations were angry, and ***thy wrath is come***, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."
 - c. Revelation 16:19 says, "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, ***to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath***."
 2. Wrath (***thumos***) in Revelation 16:1 - anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again.
 - a. Revelation 12:12 says, "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitors of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, ***having great wrath***, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
 - b. Revelation 14:8 says, "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations ***drink of the wine of the wrath*** of her fornication."
 - c. Revelation 15:7 says, "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials ***full of the wrath of God***, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - d. Revelation 16:1 says, "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the ***vials of the wrath of God upon the earth***."
- D. The seven vial judgments (Revelation 16:2-21).

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1. The first vial will cause noisome and grievous sores (verse 2). The great Voice out of the temple is the Lord (Revelation 7:15).
 - a. Upon those that have the mark of the beast.
 - b. Noisome (***kakos***) - troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, or baneful.
 - c. Grievous (***poneros***) - bringing toils, annoyances, perils, or causing pain and trouble.
2. The second vial will cause all of the seas to become blood (verse 3). All sea life will die.
3. The third vial will cause the rivers and fountains to become blood (verse 4). The people will be given blood to drink.
4. The fourth vial will cause the sun to scorch people (verse 8). But the people still did not repent.
5. The fifth vial will cause darkness and intense pain (verse 10). The people still did not repent.
6. The sixth vial will cause the Euphrates River to dry up (verse 12).
 - a. The way of the kings of the east was prepared.
 - b. The Satanic trinity is revealed (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet).
 - c. Preparation is being made for the final great battle with the Lord (Armageddon).
7. The seventh vial will declare the judgments are done, followed by voices, thunders, lightning, and an earthquake (verse 17).
 - a. Done (***ginomai***) - the events are complete.
 - b. Dr. Johnson wrote that this conclusion indicates the end of the anti-God forces throughout the world.

Question: What is the duty of the church during these last days?

V. The Work of the Church in the Last Days

A. The church is an organization.

1. ***The church is an assembly of professing believers.***
2. ***The unique presence of Jesus Christ dwells in a church.***
3. ***A church is under the discipline of the Word of God.***
4. ***A church is organized to carry out the Great Commission.***
5. ***A church administers the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper).***
6. ***A church reflects the spiritual gifts described in I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.***

B. The church is an organism.

1. It is the body of Christ, but it is also a reference to the local church.

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2. ***The church lives, and its inhabitants are meant to assemble themselves together.*** The inhabitants of the church also have a time when they are not assembled together.
 3. The word "ecclesia" in Acts 9:31 is plural and refers to multiple assemblies.
 4. Acts 9:31 says, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."
- C. The church should worship the Lord.
1. John 14:26 says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, ***he shall teach you all things***, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 2. John 15:26 says, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ***he shall testify of me:***"
 3. John 16:13 says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, ***he will guide you into all truth:*** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
- D. The church should carry out the Great Commission, and the Holy Spirit helps us.
1. One of a Christian's goals should be to do what the Holy Spirit wants him or her to do.
 2. Another should be to say what the Holy Spirit wants him or her to say.
 3. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore ***glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.***"
 4. Luke 19:13 says, "And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, ***Occupy till I come.***"

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Next week's lesson: "The Return of the King of Kings" (Revelation 21:1-27)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Ezekiel 37:1-14
Tuesday:	Matthew 24:1-51 and John 1:1-5
Wednesday:	Revelation 1:1-20 and Revelation 3:14-22
Thursday:	Revelation 21:1-27
Friday:	Revelation 22:12-21

Study questions:

1. What was the symbolic meaning of the valley of dry bones?
2. What two events concerned the disciples in Matthew 24:1-51? What did Jesus tell them?
3. Why did Jesus appear to the Apostle John on the isle of Patmos? What were John's instructions in Revelation 1:19?
4. What did John tell the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22?
5. What kind of places will the new heaven and the new earth be?
6. Who will be in the new heaven and the new earth?
7. What is significant about the name, Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End? How does that relate to Exodus 3:14, "I AM THAT I AM"?
8. What is significant about Genesis 3:24, Revelation 22:2, and Revelation 22:14?