

Session 3 The Negative Trends, People, and Events

I. REVIEW: THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The Day of the Lord refers to the unique events (positive and negative) that will escalate in the final 3½ years before Jesus returns. This biblical theme is mentioned nearly 100 times.

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

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

- B. *It will be a great Day* for those who call on Jesus' name. They will experience the greatest outpouring of the Spirit in history, leading to Jesus' return to earth (Joel 2:28-32).

- C. *It will be a terrible Day* for those who persist in rebellion against God (Rev. 6-20). Jesus' end-time judgments will shake all that can be shaken on earth (Hag. 2:6-8; Heb. 12:26).

II. THE DAY OF THE LORD— A TERRIBLE DAY: NEGATIVE TRENDS

- A. *The Great Tribulation* will be the most difficult and the most important 3½ years in history.

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

1. There will be two severe waves of death—the first will claim one-fourth of earth's population (Rev. 6:8), the second an additional one-third (Rev. 9:15)—totaling 50% of the earth's population. Isaiah prophesied that "few" would be left on earth (Isa. 24:6).

⁸*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)*

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

¹*Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty...⁶*The curse has devoured the earth... the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:1-6)**

2. Pressure in the Great Tribulation will come from various sources: from the *wrath of God* poured out in "full strength" on the Antichrist (Rev. 14:10), from the *rage of Satan* persecuting God's people through the Antichrist's reign of terror (Rev. 12:12), and from the *actions of evil people* whose sinful deeds will reach their "fullness" (Dan. 8:23).

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

¹²*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)*

²³*In the latter time...when the transgressors have reached their fullness... (Dan. 8:23)*

- B. God's judgments are sent *to remove everything that hinders love*—they never contradict love.
- C. **Optimum environment:** God will establish the optimum environment for His people to walk in love and purity. What Satan means for evil, God will use for good to train His people. *God uses the least severe means to bring the greatest number of people to the deepest level of love.*

²⁸*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God... (Rom. 8:28)*

- D. God's redemptive purpose in allowing the Great Tribulation is to create the context to *purify* His people (Dan 11:35; 12:10) and to bring in a *great harvest* from all nations, including the *salvation of Israel* in the context of persecution and the manifestation of God's power.

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)

III. THE DAY OF THE LORD: NEGATIVE PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- A. ***The Antichrist*** (Rev. 13:1-10) will wage war against Jesus and His people. He will be the most powerful evil leader in history. Due to his ten-nation confederation, he will have the largest army in history. He will use demonic miracles to deceive, political processes to kill those who resist him, and economic oppression to control nations (2 Thes. 2:9; Rev. 13:14-17).
- B. ***The False Prophet*** (Rev. 13:11-18) will be the leader of a worldwide religious network devoted to causing all the people on the earth to worship Satan and the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4, 8). He will give demonically-empowered speeches that will be confirmed by miracles (Rev. 13:12-14) and will implement an economic system using the *image of the Beast* and the *mark of the Beast*.
- C. ***The 10-nation confederation*** will be a political, military, and economic alliance of ten nations that provides the Antichrist with the greatest power base of any man in history (Rev. 17:12-17).
- D. ***The healing of the Antichrist's head wound*** will be the great catalytic event that thrusts the Antichrist into worldwide prominence (Rev. 13:3, 12, 14). He and one of his nations will seemingly be killed, then healed before all, causing them to be overwhelmed with awe and to worship him (Rev. 13:4).
³***I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. (Rev. 13:3)***
- E. ***The image of the Beast*** will be a statue (idol) of the Antichrist that is demonically empowered so that it will seem to think, talk, breathe, and make laws (Rev. 13:14-16). This image will be in the Jerusalem temple. I assume it will be connected to a global network of images where people in the nations will worship the Antichrist. The importance of this image is seen by the fact that John emphasized it ten times (Rev. 13:14, 15 [3x]; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).
- F. ***The mark of the Beast*** (the Antichrist) will be a mark on people's right hand or forehead. It will be used to identify those who worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13:16-17) and will be required in order to have access to the global economic system. Those who refuse this will not be able to buy or sell. They will be viewed as criminals of the state who are guilty of the death penalty.

- G. ***The abomination of desolation*** occurs when the Antichrist declares himself to be God as he sets his image in the temple (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; Mt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:12-18).
1. Two elements of the abomination are the *image* and *mark* of the Beast (Rev. 13:15-18).
 2. The "abomination" speaks of a great evil that is an abomination in God's sight. It will result in "desolation," or great destruction of many people and nations. Thus, it speaks of abominations (deeds) that will lead to desolation (destruction).
 3. It will be an abomination to God because the Antichrist will demand to be worshipped as God and many will obey his demand. Confirmed by demonic miracles, this image will be the greatest abomination to God in history.
 4. The desolation will occur in two different ways. The Antichrist will seek to desolate or destroy any who refuse to worship him. Moreover, God will desolate or destroy in judgment all those who yield to the pressure to worship and obey the Antichrist.
 5. The abomination of desolation is the only political/religious event that Jesus identified to let His people know when they were in the generation of His return (Mt. 24:15). Paul and John give more details about the abomination of desolation (2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13).
- H. ***Three series of numbered judgments***: The Great Tribulation includes an unprecedented judgment referred to as the 3 numbered-judgments series: **7 seals**, **7 trumpets**, and **7 bowls** (Rev. 6-16).
1. These 3 series of judgments will destroy Harlot Babylon and the Antichrist's empire.
 2. These judgments are *literal* (actual events), *future* (not already fulfilled in history), *progressive* (increasing in severity), and *numbered* (released in a sequential order).
- I. ***Martyrdom***: There will be an unprecedented number of Christians who are martyred (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).
- ⁷***It was granted to him [the Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. (Rev. 13:7)***
- ⁹***They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all... (Mt. 24:9)***
- ¹⁰***...[I saw] the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God...¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord...until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"¹¹ ...It was said...that they should rest...until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Rev. 6:9-11)***
- ⁶***I saw the woman [Harlot Babylon], drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. (Rev. 17:6)***

J. **The Harlot Babylon** may be associated with the rebuilt city of Babylon in Iraq (50 miles south of Baghdad). There will be two global aspects of Babylon—a **religious network** (Rev. 17) and an **economic network** (Rev. 18). God's judgment on it will come in two stages.

1. The Harlot Babylon is described in terms of a worldwide **religious network** (Rev. 17). It will be *destroyed at the beginning of the Great Tribulation by the ten kings* (Rev. 17:16).
2. The Harlot Babylon is described in terms of a worldwide **economic network** (Rev. 18). It will be *destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation directly by God* (Rev. 18:8).

K. The voluntary Harlot Babylon religion will be replaced by a mandatory Antichrist religion. At first, people will be able to voluntarily join the tolerant *Harlot Babylon's religion* (Rev. 17). Later the multitudes will be forced to participate in the strict *Antichrist religion* (Rev. 13:15).

1. The Harlot religion will prepare the nations to receive the Antichrist. It will be a religion of affirmation and toleration without absolutes and will function as a *counterfeit justice movement* that will feed the poor and be involved in humanitarian projects and more.
2. Multitudes will be seduced into joining the Harlot Babylon religion, which will weaken their conscience concerning their religious heritage. Next, the Antichrist will demand that they all worship Satan and the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4, 8).

L. **Falling away:** The end-time falling away will be one of the most tragic and serious realities in human history. Paul presented it to be as obvious and significant as the appearing of the Antichrist on the world stage (2 Thes. 2:3; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

³***Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus' second coming] will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed. (2 Thes. 2:3)***

¹***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)***

- M. ***Armageddon Campaign***: Armageddon is not a battle, but a *location* in northern Israel that will function as the military staging area to mobilize the armies associated with the Antichrist. His armies will conduct numerous battles during the Great Tribulation (Dan. 11:40-45).
1. Jesus will return in context to a military conflict around Jerusalem. He will fight and win the Battle of Jerusalem which ends the Armageddon Campaign (which lasts for 3½ years).
²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem...³Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. (Zech. 14:2-3)
 2. Both God and Satan will draw men to Armageddon and Jerusalem. They have different purposes for drawing them. God will gather all the kings and their armies to Jerusalem so that He might ***destroy them in one day*** (Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 14:1-5; Rev. 19:17-21). Satan will draw the nations to Armageddon in an attempt to destroy Israel (Rev. 16:13-16).