

“The Great Tribulation:” *Fact or Fiction?*

The term “great tribulation” is defined as that end time event so often spoken of before the coming of Our Lord Yahshua who will then take back this world from the grasp of Satan and usher in everlasting life. **“The great tribulation”** has been lauded to hold the fate of the saints and even the rapture of the chosen when they are called to a place of safety. Let us examine this titled event closer to ascertain its origin, its timing and who will be affected partaking of its ordeal. The study begins with the definition as given in the Old Testament with its references.

Tribulation #06862. *ru tsar* (Hebrew) from 6887; narrow (as a noun) a tight place (usually figuratively, trouble); transitive an opponent: adversary, affliction, anguish, close, distress, enemy, flint, foe, small, sorrow, strait, trouble.

Deuteronomy 4:25~31 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall **corrupt yourselves**, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. **But** if from thence thou shalt **seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him**, if thou seek him **with all thy heart and with all thy soul**. When thou art **in tribulation**, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

Judges 10:10~15 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, **We have sinned against thee**, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and **I delivered you** out of their hand. **Yet ye have forsaken me**, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you **in the time of your tribulation**. And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

1 Samuel 26:21~25 Then said Saul, **I have sinned**: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and **let him deliver me out of all tribulation**. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

The word “tribulation” occurs 3 times in the Old Testament and never references anything called “The Great Tribulation.” All references describe a time of trouble or sorrow that came upon the nation of Israel as a result of sinning against Yah’s ways. The Lord did deliver David from those troubles because David

was a man after His own heart. Yet scripture speaks of no great event called “**The Great Tribulation**” as having occurred or being prophesied to occur in the future.

Perchance we need to examine the New Testament for a definitive look at the term, “**The Great Tribulation.**” Once again let us start with the definition as given in the New Testament with its references.

Tribulation #2347 (Greek) *yliv thlipsis* from 2346; pressure literally or figuratively, afflicted(-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, trouble. The definition is quite similar to that of the Hebrew meaning; distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution; as a trying experience during a trial.

Matthew 13:19~21 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: **for when tribulation or persecution ariseth** because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Matthew 24:26~31 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after **the tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and **they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds** of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

*Note that it states that “**after** the tribulation of those **days**,” alludes to the fact that there are other days of tribulation prior to and after this one. Again observe that it’s **after** the tribulation of those days that Yahshua sent His angel to gather His elect, not during that time or before that time...but **after** the tribulation of those days. This logically concludes that whoever is being gathered together has already gone through this tribulation... having not been spared from it.*

Mark 13:21~ 27 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

*Note that the above verses state that false Christ’s came during that tribulation and that this event occurred before the heavenly signs appear. This fact reconfirms that the elect are not gathered until **after the tribulation**, after Yahshua comes in the clouds.*

John 16:31~33 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, **yea, is now come**, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation:** but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Notice that Yahshua was speaking these words “the time has now come.” This event tells us that Yahshua is declaring that from the end of His earthly ministry until His return, is a 2000 year plus time period spanning the time of the scattering in which all in the world will experience tribulations.

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much **tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 2:9~11 **Tribulation** and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.

Romans 5:3~5 And not only so, but we glory in **tribulations** also: knowing that **tribulation** worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall **tribulation**, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 12:10~13 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in **tribulation**; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

2 Corinthians 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our **tribulation**, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2 Corinthians 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our **tribulation**.

1 Thessalonians 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer **tribulation**; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

2 Thessalonians 1:6~10 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense **tribulation** to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in **tribulation**, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 2:9 I know thy works, and **tribulation**, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have **tribulation** ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

*Well, this surplus of verses still giving confirmation and evidence with no mention of “**The Great Tribulation**” in the New Testament, but let us not give up our search for perchance we need a more definitive word search focused on “great tribulation.”*

Great Tribulation:

Great: #3173. *Megas; big literally or figuratively in a very wide application, fear, exceedingly, high, large, loud, mighty, afraid, strong.*

Tribulation #2347. *yliv thlipsis (Greek) from 2346; pressure literally or figuratively, afflicted(-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, trouble. Again the definition is quite similar to that of the Hebrew meaning distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution; as a trying experience during a trial.*

Matthew 24:15~25 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For **then** shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

*Verse 15 states “when you see.” Remember, at this point Yahshua is answering the question posed by the disciples, those in His presence that He is talking with at that moment. Yahshua refers to the prophecy written in the Book of Daniel about the destruction of the city and its people, the Israelites, for rejecting the Messiah. This is the same answer given by Yahshua earlier in the temple to the people and religious leaders over statements about the fate of those that reject Him as the Messiah. These people and their city will see destruction as stated in all the parables. After their destruction with its **great tribulation**, false religion will deceive the masses and even the very elect. Compare this response with what is said about the end time event when Yahshua comes and is seen by all, not just those in Jerusalem. At the time of His return as King of Kings, there is no more time for deception to go forth and there is nowhere to flee, for the whole world is under His wrath! Thus the two events are of different times.*

Revelation 2:20~23 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Revelation 7:13~14 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of **great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

*We have exhausted the scriptures in our search of the word “tribulation” in the Old and New Testament by investigating all occurrences where it mentions “**Great Tribulation**” and its details. This study has succeeded in revealing that the **time of tribulation** is only found in Yahshua’s statement in John 16:31~33:*

John 16:31~33 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, **yea, is now come**, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation:** but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

*Yahshua states, “Behold, the hour cometh, **yea, is now come.**” This leaves us with the conclusion: From the time of Yahshua’s earthly ministry until His return sets the time period for “The Tribulation.”*

Hermeneutics is the science of scriptural interpretation. It’s the art of ascertaining through an aggregate of many scriptures an emerging definition of a given word in question as to how it is used...instead of the word defining the event.

There are two cardinal rules of Hermeneutics:

- 1. No interpretation can be sustained that contradicts the character of God.*
- 2. No interpretation can be sustained that is inconsistent with the Word of God.*

*Fitting these two principles together is our job, not His. Wisdom comes from...**applying the words**; it is like brick building – one course of bricks at a time. The foundation must be firm and straight before it can support the next course of bricks. Without the foundation of the Old Testament, the entire New Testament collapses.*

*Wisdom would be content with the trouble that one has
Rather than looking further for what we cannot handle*

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