

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

To understand the tribulation one must have an understanding of the entirety of Scripture. We are instructed in Scripture that, "No prophecy is of private interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20) Whether you interpret this verse to mean that the prophecy did not come from the mind of the prophet alone, or if you see this verse as saying that each prophecy must be in accord with other prophecies of God's word, you arrive at the same teaching. Since these prophecies came from God they have a cohesion a oneness, a unity of instruction. The importance of this instruction is that we are not free to place on any prophecy an interpretation which is not in agreement with the entirety of Scripture.

We have learned much about the tribulation from other Scriptures but none give us as much information as does the Book of Revelation. In this book we have a great amount of detailed information which is in agreement with other Scriptures and gives us a detailed picture of this time called The Great Tribulation.

It has been my purpose in these studies to provide you with a framework to guide you in your study of Bible Prophecy. We will follow the same practice as we study the prophecies of the book of Revelation. We could spend months in a detailed study of this book, but we do not have that time. I want to give you a structure to guide you in your own study.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

To understand the book of Revelation you must begin with the natural and God given divisions of the book. (Rev. 1:19)

1. The things that you have seen. Rev. 1
(The revelation of Jesus Christ)
2. The things that are. Rev. 2-3
(The Churches)
3. The things that are to take place later. Rev. 4-22
(The events of the Day of the Lord. [Tribulation, Millennium, New Heavens and New Earth])

This seems so simple, but so many have erred by trying to apply these passages to other periods of history. Revelation chapter four through chapter twenty two are events that are yet to happen. There is no way that these events can be made to apply to the Church.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

As you begin your study of "the things that are yet to be" it is important that you understand that the events in these chapters are not consecutive or chronological. The third division of Revelation is additive. By that I mean that these chapters add detail to a time frame already given. In Daniel 2, 9, 11, & 12, we saw that this period of time would be seven years, that it would be dominated by one who was against the Messiah, the anti-

Christ, that there would be a covenant with Israel broken after three and one half years, that the temple would be desecrated, that Israel would be punished, that God would punish the world, that the Messiah would return and set up his kingdom. We have all these details from other passages of God's Word and to these details our interpretation of the chapters from Revelation must agree, and they do.

Numbers play an important part in our study of the Tribulation. This time is that time when God turns to Israel once again. It is the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" the "Seventieth Week of Daniel" it is that time when God begins to deal with the world in relationship to Israel. What do I mean by this? God chose Israel as His chosen people. Through this people He would bring into the world the Messiah and through this people He would set up His Kingdom rule. These are all unconditional covenants made by God with Israel. Israel would not be obedient to God's Law, Israel would not hear God's prophet, Israel would not accept The Messiah but killed Him. Israel must be punished for her sins. The Gentile nations were not willing to accept the fact that God had chosen Israel, they would not accept the God of Israel, Jehovah God, as the one and only God. but have tried through the direction of Satan to destroy Israel and Her God. The Gentile nations must be punished and they will be. This is the cause which brings about this awful day of Great Tribulation. Since we are dealing primarily with Israel, to Israel the number three (3) was the numerical number for God, the letter four was the numerical designation for nature, together the number seven (7) [3+4] was the number of completeness or perfection. Seven plays an important part in the tribulation to demonstrate the completeness and perfection of God's punishment and judgment upon Israel and the World.

THE SEVENS OF REVELATION

1. The seven churches
2. The seven seals
3. The seven trumpets
4. The seven personages
5. The seven vials
6. The seven dooms
7. The seven new things

These seven groups of things or events take up much of the record of the tribulation period. There are however five parenthetical portions of Scripture pertaining to the tribulation. These passage overviews are summations of what God is doing. We are often consumed by the punishments and the personages and forget that the primary player in this drama is God Himself.

THE PARENTHETICALS

1. The redeemed of the tribulation (Rev. 7)
2. The little book (Rev. 10:1-11)
3. The Lamb and the 144,00 (Rev. 14:1-13)

4. The gathering of the kings (Rev. 16:13-16)

5. The four Alleluias (Rev. 19:1-6)

You can't tell the players without a score card, so they say. In order to follow the events of this period better, we do need to spend some time looking at those who participate in this event.

The seven personages

1. The woman

(Rev 12:1-2 NNAS)

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; {2} and she was with child; and she cried[^] out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

The woman is Israel.

2. The red dragon

(Rev 12:3-4 NNAS)

Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. {4} And his tail swept[^] away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

The red dragon is Satan.

3. The man child

(Rev 12:5-6 NNAS)

And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. {6} Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had[^] a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The man child is Christ

4. The archangel

(Rev 12:7-12 NNAS)

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, {8} and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. {9} And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. {10} Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. {11} "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. {12} "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time."

The archangel is Michael

5. The redeemed remnant

(Rev 12:17 NNAS)

So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Spiritual Israel

6. The beast out of the sea

(Rev 13:1-10 NNAS)

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. {2} And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. {3} *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; {4} they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" {5} There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. {6} And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven. {7} It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. {8} All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. {9} If anyone has an ear, let him hear. {10} If anyone *is destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

The beast is the Ten Kingdom Empire

7. The beast out of the earth

(Rev 13:11-18 NNAS)

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. {12} He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. {13} He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. {14} And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had[^] the wound of the sword and has come to life. {15} And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. {16} And he causes all, the

small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, {17} and *he provides* that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, *either* the name of the beast or the number of his name. {18} Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

This beast is the False Prophet