

For centuries people have had a fascination with what the Bible describes as The End Times. You can go on the internet and type in: THE END TIMES and you will get a plethora of information, for

instance...on how people think THE END TIMES will unfold. People have tried to predict when the end will come. But Scripture is clear, no one knows when Christ will return except God Himself. Seeking to predict when the end will come is as futile as flapping your arms and hoping to fly. Yet, the Bible does give us clues as to what will occur before the end and one of the main people in the unfolding of this information is the prophet, Daniel.

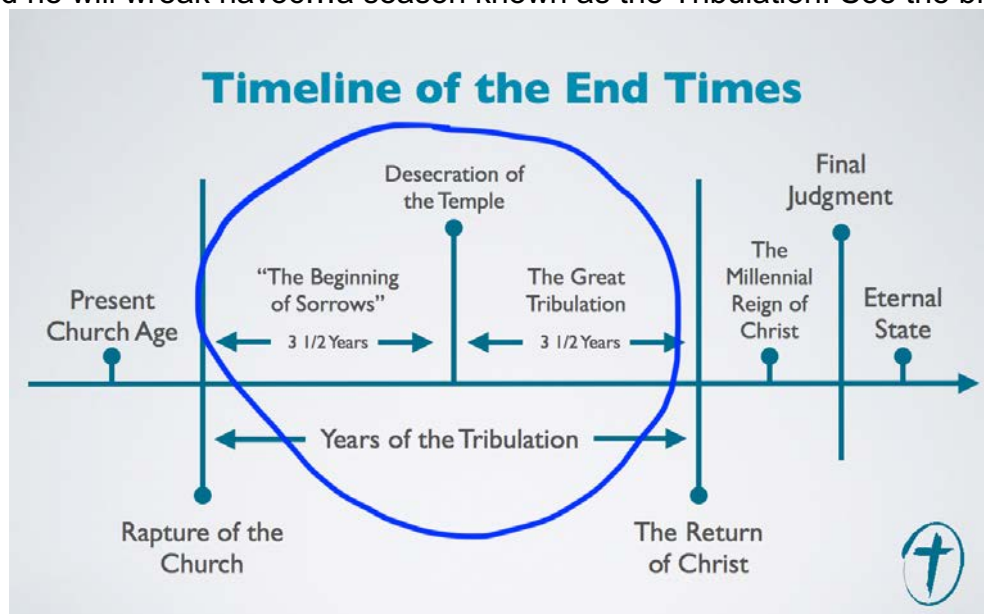
Daniel, a young man...who as a teenager when he was taken from his homeland, Israel and hauled off as a Hebrew slave to Babylon where he would ultimately serve in the administration of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel also had three dear friends...who would be thrown into a fiery furnace. Daniel who eventually confronted Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, who saw the handwriting on the wall and was killed and overthrown the very night he saw that pronouncement of his demise by the Mede, Darius...the king who would eventually throw Daniel into the lion's den, but would pace all night hoping that he lived. Why? Because Darius cared about Daniel... And so did Cyrus, the final King that Daniel would serve under...Cyrus the Persian...the one who greatly valued Daniel's counsel, and allowed the people of God to return home to Israel.

What an amazing story of God's provision and God's hand of mercy and faithfulness on Daniel...and the same is true of us... We can look at the life of Daniel and all that happened to Him and we too, can be assured that the Lord will provide for us via His hand of mercy and faithfulness. But this doesn't mean that we won't go through hard times. God allowed His own people to be refined and purified through hard times. That's what we saw last week in Daniel 11:35.

**Daniel 11:35**

**35 and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.**

And church family, it's that "time of the end..." that "awaiting of the appointed time," that leads us to once again focus on the End Times and how it will all unfold. Remember, we saw last week that a storm is coming...remember the barometer with the stuck needle pointing to "Hurricane." Yes, worse than a hurricane is coming to this earth...the rise of the greatest rebel ever known to man is coming: Antichrist...and he will wreak havoc...a season known as the Tribulation. See the blue circle...



This is a seven-year period of time that's centered around the rising to power of a man who will initially seem like an amazing man of peace and be seen as a "deliverer" to the world. But ultimately, he'll turn on the nation of Israel and the world and be the most vile, wicked and evil tyrant the world

has ever known. This morning, we're going to continue to see this season of time unfold, as we march toward the end, as we come to: "The Coming Great Tribulation."

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### **Daniel 12:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. <sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;<sup>[a]</sup> and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

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Now as we pick up in Daniel 12, (the last chapter of this amazing book), let me remind you of what we're seeing. Daniel 12 is the culmination of three chapters that has given us details about the visions Daniel had been having about the End Times. The understanding of this vision had been given to Daniel by an angel, whom I believe is Gabriel... But he had help. You'll remember, Gabriel was detained for three weeks by a high-ranking demon...the Prince of Persia and so, Michael, an archangel was dispatched from heaven to help fight off the demon so Gabriel could get to Daniel with the interpretations of the visions.

And oh my...what interpretations they were... We've learned of the rise and fall of kings and empires of wars, conflict, assassinations, seductions, lies... (Sounds like news headlines of today.) Well, the heart of Gabriel's message was directed toward the nation of Israel. After all, as we've discussed, Daniel is a Hebrew from the nation of Israel, and thus, this interpretation is centered around Israel.

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Again church family, let me be clear: the **End Time Events** of this world are going to be centered on one nation...not America, not China, not Russia...ISRAEL! Human history rises and falls with Israel...God's chosen people...the nation through whom the Lord Jesus came. Now...this doesn't mean Israel gets a pass on everything they do...nor am I saying they are perfect...they're not. Yet, Scripture is clear in Genesis 12...those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed. **And so, we come to the final chapter of this blessed book** and we see Israel, front and center...and we see their angel...Michael. Look at verse 1, again. Let's break it down.

### **Daniel 12:1**

<sup>1</sup> "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

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Now, someone may ask, "What does AT THAT TIME mean?" As I said before, I believe we're seeing the time of the Tribulation Period. And someone may ask: "By what authority do you say that." Well, I would say we can return to the words of Jesus from **Matthew chapter 24, turn with me there**. This is known as the Olivet Discourse, (and in my mind and many scholars' minds), Matthew 24 is all about the Tribulation period.

### **Matthew 24:15-22**

<sup>15</sup> "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, <sup>18</sup> and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. <sup>19</sup> And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>20</sup> Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. <sup>22</sup> And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

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You say, "Cut short." Why? Because it's such a time of trouble. That's what we read in verse 1.

**Daniel 12:1b**

**And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.**

That time is known as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" as the prophet Jeremiah called it in Jeremiah 30:7. This is the Tribulation and it's a time of great tumult...go back to the chart...See the red circle:



Now, I'm convinced the Rapture of the church is going to take place which leads to the Antichrist having a platform to rise to power in the **70<sup>th</sup> week**, and come on the scene and bring peace in this time of great tumult and chaos after so many people just disappear. He will bring calmness and initially all will be well and he'll even look like a champion for Israel. Why? Because, he will make a covenant with them and orchestrate a peace treaty with Israel **and the world** and they'll rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.

Yet church, halfway through that Tribulation Period, (that season of Jacob's/Israel's trouble), the Antichrist will show his true colors. He'll turn on Israel and the world. Remember from Daniel 9:27:

**Daniel 9:27**

**27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week,<sup>Ⓜ</sup> and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."**

Revelation chapters 6-19 describe the Great Tribulation. A time of tremendous judgment on this earth...the judgments of God...by way of 7 seal judgments, 7 trumpet judgments and 7 bowl judgments. All of this will be part of God's plan to judge those who have taken the Mark of the Beast, (the mark of the Antichrist on their right wrist or forehead). But these judgments will also purify and prepare the nation of Israel for the coming of Jesus. Therefore, for those living in the Tribulation Period...this season of time...particularly for the nation of Israel, all can seem lost...hopeless! But Israel has a helper...his name is Michael.

**Daniel 12:1**

**1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people.**

Michael...the great prince...the angel in charge of Israel will come to help Israel. Michael is perhaps the most powerful of all the angels, and he has been given the responsibility of defending the people of God. I think of Jude, (the half-brother of Jesus), in 1:9...Michael is so powerful that he actually fights Satan for the body of Moses.

**Jude 1:9**

**9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you."**

Yes, eventually, in the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, Satan will be allowed to release all of the forces of hell against the people of God and the nation of Israel. He will seek to obliterate that nation. He's always wanted to do that. He's always wanted to wipe out the people of God so there could

never be a Messiah. He tried to have Jesus killed as a toddler with Herod's order to kill all the boys under 2 years of age in Bethlehem. He tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness temptation to give up His position by bowing down to him. But Jesus refused and ultimately angels came to minister to Him. Yes, during the Tribulation...during all of this turmoil and upheaval, God has a plan. People will actually be saved during the Tribulation.

### **Daniel 12:1c**

**But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.**

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Yes, people will be saved during the Tribulation...both Jews and Gentiles...but the focus will be on the nation of Israel. So, how are people saved? Well, according to Revelation chapter 11, God sets apart two witnesses. Men who can do miracles. But they're eventually killed by the Antichrist and left dead in the streets of Jerusalem for three days. But God will raise them from the dead and carry them back to heaven, and many will be saved because of their witness.

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But there's more...in addition to them, we find in Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 there will be 144,000 Jews who are sealed and protected by God as witnesses for the Gospel of Jesus Christ during this period of time, 12,000 from every tribe. And I believe it's the ministry of the two witnesses and the 144,000 that reaches many of the Jewish people. Many will be saved...and there will be a "preserved remnant," as some call them. Church, the Tribulation will be a great sifting for the nation of Israel, and for the Gentiles who are saved...but many will be killed during that time. Beheaded.

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### **Daniel 12:2**

**<sup>2</sup>And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

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What does that mean? It means there will be a resurrection. And there's two facets to it: There's a positive and a negative. The positive: there will be those resurrected, (brought back to life), at the end of the Tribulation period who were martyred and killed for not taking the Mark of the Beast and following the Antichrist. The negative is there will be shame and everlasting contempt for those who take the Mark of the Beast and were killed by the many natural disasters that plagued the earth because the judgments of God that were poured out on the earth during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation period.

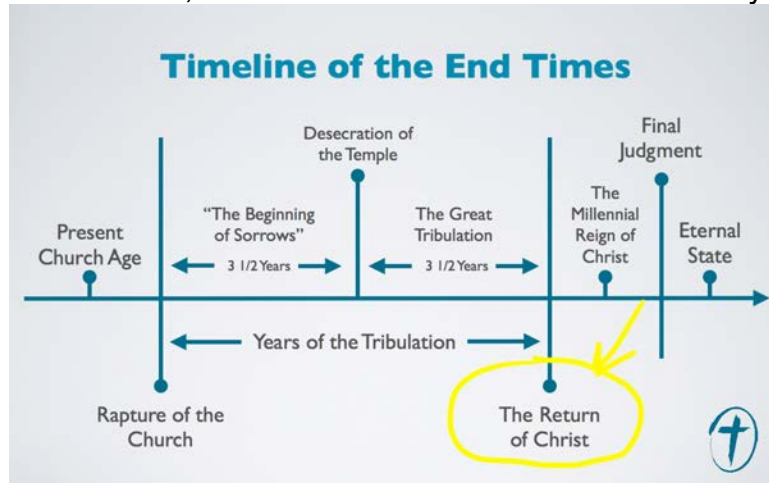
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Think with me now...about those resurrections... If you go back to the Rapture of the church...red circle...



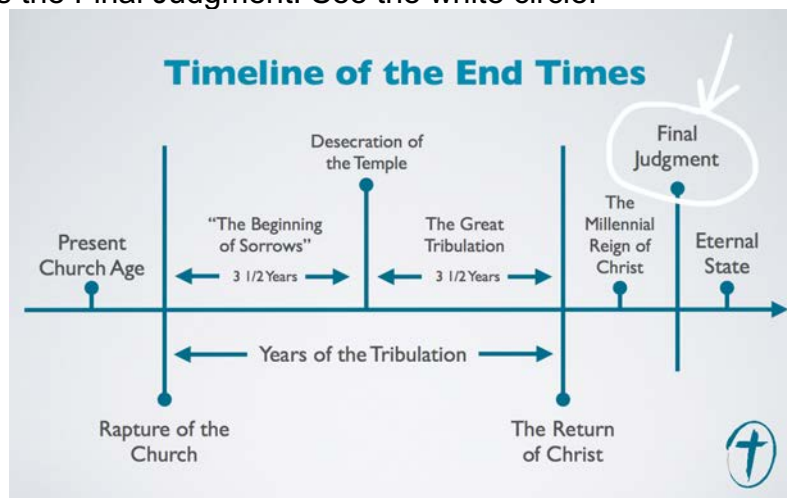
you know that according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the dead in Christ will rise first and then those who remain and are alive, will rise in the air to meet the Lord Jesus and receive their glorified bodies. They will then be taken to heaven. Again, church family, I do not believe the church is on the earth

during the Tribulation Period (and I'll show you why when we get to the Revelation Series). Finally, at the end of the 7-year Tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth...see the yellow circle...



At the end of the Tribulation, after the battle of Armageddon, according to Revelation 19, Jesus will return to the earth and we'll be coming with Him, as the armies of heaven and Jesus will resurrect the Tribulation saints...the Christians who were beheaded, and those saints, along with us...will rule and reign with Jesus for 1,000 years as part of His Millennial Kingdom. (Again, that's Jesus keeping His promise to the nation of Israel, to rule and reign from Jerusalem on the throne of David.)

But for those who have rejected Jesus...they will ultimately be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment...known as the Final Judgment. See the white circle.



That's where the lost, of all the ages will be judged.

**Turn to Revelation chapter 20.** I want to show you the final judgment of the lost. This Judgment is sometimes called (by scholars) the "Resurrection to Everlasting Death."

**Revelation 20:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit<sup>[a]</sup> and a great chain. <sup>2</sup> And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. <sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!

Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

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Jump down to verse 11.

**Revelation 20:11-15**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

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Sobering...heavy stuff, isn't it? You see, Daniel was being told that his people were going to suffer greatly! You can see why Daniel was so burdened by what he had seen...remember he fasted, (ate no meat or delicacies), and prayed for 21 days...not taking a bath...because he was so distraught by what he saw...but, here comes hope...

**Daniel 12:3**

<sup>3</sup> And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;<sup>[a]</sup> and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

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What does this mean...who are the wise? We saw this from verse 35...the wise are the ones who were willing to trust Jesus and risk their lives to share Jesus, suffering greatly...many of whom...lost their lives. They'll be rewarded. I was reminded of Romans 8.

**Romans 8:18**

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

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It's been said, "People can endure almost anything as long as they have hope." That's true! Gabriel, in sharing all of this to Daniel...gave him hope...but not only to him, but also to the nation of Israel...and vicariously, to all of us. We have hope in the Lord Jesus Christ... our Deliverer...the One who is coming back... and then we'll sing the "Hymn of Heaven!" In the end we'll see that it was worth it. When He returns to wipe away our tears!

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