

Dispensations:

The Key to Rightly Dividing God's Word



The Tribulation

Names: The Tribulation. The Great Tribulation. Daniel's 70th week. Time of Jacob's Trouble. Dispensation of Judgment.

Scripture: Acts – Matthew 24-25, 1&2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, Revelation 4-19, Daniel 9. (Rapture of Church to 2nd coming).

Covenant: None.

Key events to know:

1. The end of the Church age (rapture).
2. The Antichrist.
3. The Battle of Armageddon.
4. Salvation in the tribulation.
5. Key scriptures

Like the dispensation of innocence, this dispensation has a clearly defined start and end. It begins after the rapture of the Church and ends with the 2nd coming of Christ – a period of approximately ____ years based on Daniel 9:24-27.

KEY: the main purpose for the Tribulation period is the **restoration of the Nation of Israel**. Since they rejected their King as we saw back in Acts, God uses intense persecution, signs and wonders, and special witnesses to draw them back to Himself and have them finally recognize and receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah. This must take place for God's promises, covenants, and prophecies to be fulfilled concerning Israel.

THE RAPTURE

The term "rapture" is taken from 1 Thess. 4:17 – "caught up". It is the catching up into heaven, by Jesus Christ, all the living and dead Church Age saints, and the receiving of their new glorified bodies. The promise of being forever with the Lord Jesus Christ is realized – 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58.

The saints that died prior to the rapture are together with the Lord in _____ in soul and spirit – 1 Thess. 4:14; Acts 7:59; 2 Cor. 5:8. At the rapture, they will receive and be united with their glorified bodies in the air.

The Sequence of the Rapture:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ descends into the atmosphere of the first heaven.
2. He shouts with the commanding voice of an archangel (*possibly saying* "Come up hither" – Rev. 4:1, 11:12).
3. A trumpet sounds – 1 Thess. 4:16.

<u>Dispensation</u>	<u>Covenant</u>	<u>Description</u>
Eternity Past	None	Original creation. Lucifer & angels.
Innocence	Edenic	Reconstruction of earth. Creation of man.
Conscience	Adamic	Adam's lineage and sons of God.
Human government	Noahic	Noah's flood and lineage.
Promise	Abrahamic	Abraham's seed and birth of nation of Israel.
Law-Kingdom	Mosaic	Moses leading the exodus, the giving of the law, the kingdom's rise & fall.
	Davidic	The line and Kingdom of David.
Christ's 1 st coming	Davidic	2 Kingdoms. The start of the Church.
The Church & God's grace	None	Transition of Church from Jew to Gentile oversight.
Tribulation-judgment	None	A time of great trouble for the Jew.

4. The bodies of all dead believers are resurrected, glorified, and reunited with their soul/spirit in the air - 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52.
5. The bodies of all living believers are instantaneously translated and caught up in the air - 1 Thess. 4:17.
6. All dead and living believers, with their glorified bodies, meet Jesus Christ in the clouds of the 1st heaven - 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:35-53.
7. All believers are then taken to the third heaven to be with God where the events of Rev. 4-5 unfold, including the Judgment seat of Christ – 2 Cor. 5:8-10.

KEY POINTS

DO NOT confuse the rapture with 2nd coming of Christ when He _____ returns to the earth. This rapture of the Church marks the end of the Church Age and the dispensation of grace. Now begins Daniel's 70th week, and the beginning of the tribulation period.

THE ANTICHRIST

The tribulation period, when examined, is typically divided in half based on the works of the antichrist who will be revealed during this time – Daniel 9:27; 1 Thess. 5:2-3. The first 3 ½ years he will bring peace to a very chaotic world.

Some things we know about him:

- He is a leader of leaders that will have answers in the middle of worldwide chaos.
- He has a mouth that speaks great things (Dan. 7:20; Rev. 13:5) and blasphemy (Dan. 7:25).
- The first 3 ½ years he accomplishes peace without war (diplomat) – Rev. 6:2; Dan. 8:25.
- He is a political mastermind – Rev. 17:11-14; Dan. 8:25.
- He deceives many with signs and lying wonders – 2 Thess. 2:9-10.
- He claims to be God – 2 Thess. 2:4.
- He denies Jesus Christ while proclaiming himself to be the Christ – 1 John 2:22.
- He receives his power from the devil – Rev. 13:2.
- He is worshipped by many – Rev. 13:4.

After the first 3 ½ years, his true nature is revealed when he sits in the temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be God – Matt. 24:15-16. This second half is referred to as the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21) or Time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). It is a time when he violently pursues the Jew in order to destroy him – Rev. 12:14. It is when God's judgments are released on the earth (seals, trumpets, vials) and will be a time of death and destruction the world has never before seen.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Near the end of the 7 year tribulation, the antichrist will lead the armies of the world on a final crusade against Israel and will trap them in a place called Armageddon:

- Details of this battle are found at the end of all the tribulation accounts:
 - Rev. 6:15-17 (seals).
 - Rev. 11:15 (trumpets).
 - Rev. 16:16-21 (vials).
 - Rev. 19 contains the most details.
- All the kings of the world are gathering at Armageddon – Rev. 16:12-16.
- Heaven opens and the Lord Jesus Christ descends with an army (His 2nd coming; "that day"!) – Rev. 19:11-14. His army follows him adorned in fine, white linen – that's us (believers)!!
- Jesus is here to take the kingdoms of the world back by FORCE – Rev. 19:15-16.

- The Beast and False Prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire. His forces are killed with the sword from Jesus' mouth. The devil is imprisoned – Rev. 19:20-21, 20:1-3.
- The tribulation ends as the KING OF KINGS finally takes the throne and will reign on earth for _____ years!

SALVATION IN THE TRIBULATION

- If one heard the gospel during the church age, and never got saved, and now is in the tribulation period, it would **seem** that this person will _____ – 2 Thess. 2:1-12.
- There will be people who get saved in the tribulation period:
 - Those martyred for Christ – Rev. 6:9-11, 7:13-14, 13:15, 20:4 (Note: they did NOT take the mark of the beast).
 - Those who endure to the end – Matt. 24:13-22, 31; Mark 13:13; Rev. 12:17. (no mention of mark)

NOTE: They must have faith in what God says and in His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 11:1, 6) **and** must keep His commandments – Rev. 12:17, 14:12; 15:2-3; Matt. 24-25. (**Faith plus works** – just like in the OT)

- **WARNING:** The mark of the beast (mark, name, or number of his name) in the right hand or forehead – Rev. 13:16-18.
 - There is judgment against those who have taken the mark – Rev. 14:9-11, 16:2.
 - They _____ be able to cut off the mark – Matt. 5:29-30, 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-47. OR it may be too late for them - Matt. 5:29-30, 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-47.

KEY SCRIPTURES

- **Hebrews:** Just like Acts, Hebrews is a transitional book! Doctrinally speaking, it is written TO Jews in the tribulation period. Certainly, there are things FOR us in the book, but we must be careful not to apply tribulation verses to the Church Age as these are 2 **different** dispensations!
- **Rev. 6-19:** Just as the Bible contains 4 gospels (Matthew-John) concerning Jesus first time on earth, Revelation 6-19 contains 4 descriptions of the events leading up to His second coming. (seals, trumpets, vials, 144,000, the 2 witnesses, the beast, and the false prophet.)
- **Matthew 24-25:** Although commonly used by people to describe the rapture of the Church, the events in these chapters reference the tribulation (after we have been raptured). These are TO the Jew...remember the Church was not yet revealed. The events Christ describes line up perfectly with the seals being opened in Revelation 6. Matthew 25 contains parables about the coming Kingdom of Heaven after the tribulation and also the judgment to then take place prior to the millennial reign.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:** This chapter reveals important details about the order of events for the rapture and the judgment of those not saved who go into the tribulation.

KEY POINTS

Note: there are over _____ verses in the New Testament that reference a works-based salvation or losing your salvation. Those are obviously **NOT** for the Church age dispensation of grace. Knowing the dispensations will help you rightly divide!