

Doctrinal Summary of The Tribulation

In Daniel 9:24 Daniel prophesies that God has decreed 490 years to the Israelites and their city.

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.”

The word “weeks” is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word שָׁבָעִים (“shah-bu-iyim”) which literally means “sevens, based on initiation.” The statement made by Daniel identifies that Israel has been decreed from God seventy periods of seven for their stewardship as His chosen people. Contextually the period of seventy periods of seven is speaking of seventy sets of seven-year time periods. Thus, Israel is decreed by God a final 490 years of stewardship from the time of Daniel’s prophecy. However, Israel’s stewardship was interrupted seven years shy of completion at the death of the Messiah and the interruption of the church age (cf. Dan. 9:25-26). This leaves one final period of seven years left in Israel’s stewardship on earth. Those final seven years will begin when the church is raptured from the earth (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-3) and will end when Christ and His bride return to establish the second advent of Christ (cf. Rev. 19:7ff).

Israel’s final seven years of stewardship will occur during a time of worldwide judgment and testing (cf. 2 Thess. 2:11-12; Rev. 3:10), as well as Satanic activity and deception (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-10). The man of lawlessness will be revealed following the rapture of the church and he will make a peace treaty with Israel for seven years (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3; Dan. 9:27). However, he will break his peace treaty in the middle of the seven years which marks a distinct separation between the first half of the tribulation and the second half. Chapters 6-10 of Revelation identify several occurrences which will take place during the first half of the tribulation. They will include a period of dictatorship (cf. Rev. 6:1-2), warfare (cf. Rev. 6:3-4), famine (cf. Rev. 6:5-6), death (cf. rev. 6:7-8) as well as heavenly catastrophes poured upon earth (cf. Rev. 8:7), catastrophes upon the sea, its inhabitants, and ships (cf. Rev. 8:8-9), the destruction of one third of the earth’s drinking water (cf. Rev. 8:10-11), and galactic catastrophes upon the sun, moon, and stars (cf. Rev. 8:12).

During the second half of the tribulation, marked as a time of great tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:15-21 harmonized with Dan. 9:27), these judgments will increase in degree resulting in martyrdom for tribulation believers (cf. Rev. 6:9-11), a globally destructive earthquake (cf. Rev. 6:12-14), the release and attack of locusts possessing the ability to torment tribulation unbelievers in similar fashion to a scorpion’s sting (cf. Rev. 9:1-12), the release of angels who had been specifically prepared to kill a third of mankind (cf. Rev. 9:13-21), and seven vials of God’s wrath (cf. Rev. 16:1-21).

In spite of the horrific judgments, catastrophes, and satanic exhibitions of power and ability, 144,000 Jews will be saved and sealed during the tribulation (cf. Rev. 7:1-8) as well as a multitude of non-Jewish tribulation saints (cf. Rev. 7:9-17). This is due, in part, to the witnessing of two of God’s evangelist prophets during the second portion of the tribulation (cf. Rev. 11:3-12).

The tribulation will conclude when Christ returns to establish His kingdom at the second advent. Upon His arrival He will deal justly with His enemies (cf. Rev. 19:20-21; 20:1-3).