

CHAPTER 7

The Time Of Great Trouble

Our world has gone through some very difficult times. There have been **times of famine and great hunger**. We read about one such famine in the days of Joseph: "And the famine was over _____ the face of the _____" (Genesis 41:56). There have been times when thousands have died from **disease**. In the 14th century about one fourth of all the people in Europe (about 25 million people) died of a terrible disease which was called the "Black Death." This disease or plague was carried by fleas and rats.

There have also been **terrible wars** fought on Planet Earth. In the 20th century there have been two great WORLD WARS. Thousands and thousands of men and women from many different countries have lost their lives because of these bloody wars. This world has also known some very **cruel rulers** such as Pharaoh who lived in the days of Moses, Nero who lived in the days of Paul, and Hitler who lived in the 20th Century (who put to death millions of Jewish people). Great numbers of people have suffered under rulers such as these.

There have also been **terrible persecutions** which have taken place on Planet Earth. The early Christians were greatly persecuted by the Romans. Some were killed with the sword; others were burned; others were destroyed by wild animals; others were tortured by even more cruel methods. Later many Christians were burned at the stake in Spain. Even today there are Christians who are suffering and being persecuted and dying because of their faith in Christ. God's people have never had an easy road (see Hebrews 11:35-38). During the second World War it is believed that about six million Jewish people were put to death by the Germans.

Yes, the world has known all of these things: famine, hunger disease, death, wars, wicked rulers and terrible persecutions. As we look ahead to the future, what should we expect? Will the days ahead be brighter? We might think, "Surely things cannot get worse. Things should start getting better. Brighter days must be ahead. This world has been through so much trouble already. How could things possibly get worse?"

This world has gone through times of great trouble, but the Bible clearly teaches that the time of greatest trouble is still in the future. The worst is yet to come! Things will not get better (at least not yet). Things will get much, much worse. The world is headed for a time of trouble greater than anything mankind has ever experienced. Planet Earth has gone through some whirlwinds of trouble, but a great TORNADO is on its way!

There Has Never Been A Time Like It!

The prophet Daniel said that there shall be a "TIME OF T _____" upon Planet Earth (Daniel 12:1). This will be the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this same time in Jeremiah 30:7: "Alas, for that day is _____, so that _____ is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's _____."

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about this same time of trouble in Matthew 24:21. In this verse He said "for then shall be G _____ T _____." TRIBULATION means "trouble, great distress." According to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, has the world ever known such a time of trouble as this? _____ When this time of trouble is over will there

ever be another time of trouble like it? _____ This will be the darkest hour the world has ever known.

It Will Be a Short Time

There is only one good thing about this time of great trouble: *It will not last very long!* The Great Tribulation that our Lord spoke about in Matthew 24:21 will only last 3½ years. This is good news for those people who will be living on earth during this time. God will not make this a long time; He will make it a short time (see Matthew 24:22). Even though it will be a very difficult time to live, the good news is that it will be over soon!

World War II was a very terrible and difficult war, but one good thing about it was that it only lasted about five years. Most people do not enjoy sitting in the dentist's chair, but they do it anyway because they know that it is needful, and they know that they only have to sit there for a short time (usually for an hour or less). It will soon be over! If you told them that they would have to sit in the dentist chair for three days they would probably never do it!

When we get into times of trouble in our own lives we need to remember that the trouble will not last forever. There will be an end to it. Job went through a time of great trouble and suffering. Was there an end to it (James 5:11; Job 42:10-17)? _____ Joseph was thrown into a pit (Genesis 37:24). Did he stay in that pit forever? _____ Joseph was also thrown into prison (Genesis 39:20). Did he stay in prison forever? _____ The time of great tribulation will not last forever. It will only last for 3½ short years. It takes a person longer to go through a four year college than it will take a person to go through this time of great trouble!

The Worst Will Be Followed By the Best

The time of greatest trouble will be followed by the time of greatest blessing! According to the Bible, what will happen immediately after this time of great tribulation (see Matthew 24:29-30)?

The KING OF KINGS will return to this earth and set up His kingdom on the earth!

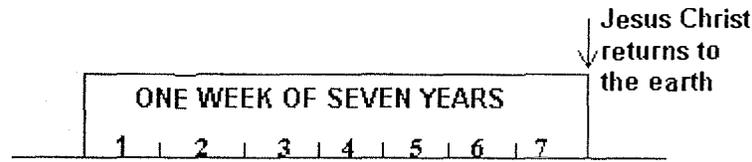
Have you ever seen a thunder storm approaching? Everything gets very dark and then the storm begins and the thunder crashes and the rain pours down. But then the storm passes, the sun comes out, and everything is quiet and peaceful. There might even be a rainbow in the sky! This is the way it will be on earth after the stormy time of tribulation. The "sun" will come out (see Malachi 4:2). Jesus Christ will return to this earth. It will be a time of peace and blessing. It will be the most wonderful time the world has ever known. The worst will be followed by the best!

It is true that the worst days are still ahead. The time of great trouble is coming. But it is also true that the best days are still ahead. No matter how dark the days might be we can pray, "THY K _____ C _____!" (Matthew 6:10). LET THY KINGDOM COME! After the storm there is a great day coming!

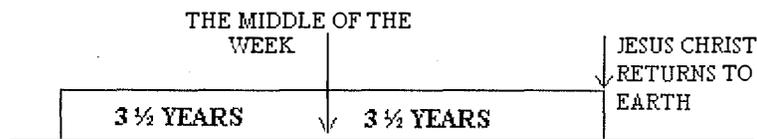
The Length of This Time of Great Trouble

In Daniel 9:27 the prophet talks about "ONE W _____." He is talking about the one week before Jesus Christ returns to this earth. This is a very special week. Usually when we talk about a week we are talking about a time period that is made up of seven days. But Daniel is not

talking about a week of days. He is talking about another kind of week. He is talking about a WEEK OF YEARS. When Daniel spoke of ONE WEEK he was talking about SEVEN YEARS! He was talking about the seven years before Jesus Christ returns to earth:



Also in Daniel 9:27 the prophet talks about "the midst of the week." This means "the MIDDLE of the week." Remember, this week is made up of seven years. If you put a line right in the middle of this week then you have divided this week into two parts with each part being 3½ years:



The time of Great Tribulation that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21 is the last 3½ years (the last half of this week). This time of great trouble will take place during the 3½ years before Jesus Christ returns to earth. The Bible uses different ways to describe this 3½ year period of time:

1. **1,260 DAYS** (Revelation 12:6,14).
2. _____ MONTHS (Revelation 11:2; 13:5)
3. "A time, times, and half a time" (Revelation 12:14)

A time = 1 year times = 2 years half a time = half a year

What is the total number of years? _____

4. "A short time" (Revelation 12:12)

A Time of Judgment

Today we are living in a day of GRACE. God is being kind to men even though they do not deserve it. God is offering His gift of salvation to all men (John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11-12). God is not judging the world; rather He is giving people time to be saved.

When men reject God's grace then there is nothing left but God's judgment. If men reject God's love then they must face God's wrath and anger.

In the days of Noah, God was gracious to men for 120 years (Genesis 6:3 and 1 Peter 3:20). During these years Noah was building the ark and men, women, and children were given an opportunity to be saved. People could have come into the ark with Noah but they refused to believe God. Finally the 120 years came to an end and the door of the ark closed. The day of grace was over, and the day of judgment began. THE FLOOD CAME!

A Time of Grace

Today God has been gracious to men and women for much longer than 120 years. For about 2000 years God has been gracious to this world, inviting men to be saved. But soon God's day of grace will be over and God will pour out His anger upon this world. Instead of being the God of grace, He will be the God of judgment. This is one of the reasons the tribulation will be such a difficult time. God will pour out His judgments upon the people who live on the earth.

Three Series of Judgments

The book of Revelation teaches us that there will be three series of judgments or plagues that will fall upon the earth:

1) The Seven Seal Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapter 6 and 8:1. What are some of the things that will happen to those living on the earth?

2) The Seven Trumpet Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapters 8 and 9 and 11:15. What are some of the things that will happen?

3) The Seven Vial Or Bowl Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapter 16. What are some of the things that will happen?

These terrible judgments remind us of the plagues that God brought on the land of Egypt in the days of Moses (Exodus 6-12). One difference is this: in the days of Moses the plagues came only upon the land of Egypt. During the time of great trouble the plagues and judgments will come upon ALL THE EARTH (see Revelation 3:10).

What will these people do when these plagues come down upon them? Will they wake up and turn to God? Will they believe God and turn away from their sinful ways? Will they repent? The answer is found in Revelation 9:20-21. Do they change their minds and turn from their wicked ways? _____

A Time of Grace

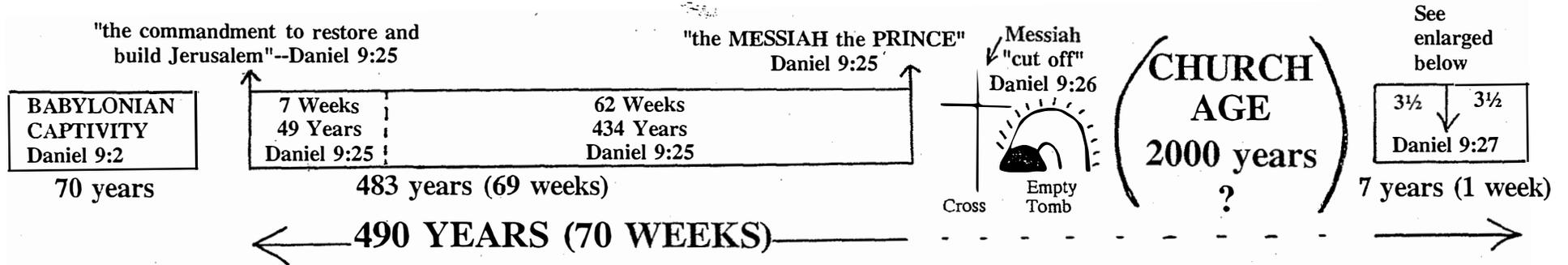
Even though this time of great trouble will be a time when God will judge sinful men, it will also be a time when people will be saved. Even at a time when God judges, His grace can be seen. Even at the darkest hour of human history there will be a ray of light. God will reach down in love and save people by His grace!

Read Revelation chapter 7. This chapter tells us about people who will be saved during this time of great trouble. How many saved Jews will there be (Revelation 7:4)?

_____ In verse 9 we learn about another group of saved people from every nation. How many were there?

_____ Yes, many saved people will come out of great tribulation (verse 14)!

GOD'S HISTORY (PAST AND FUTURE) OF THE NATION ISRAEL (DANIEL 9:24-27)

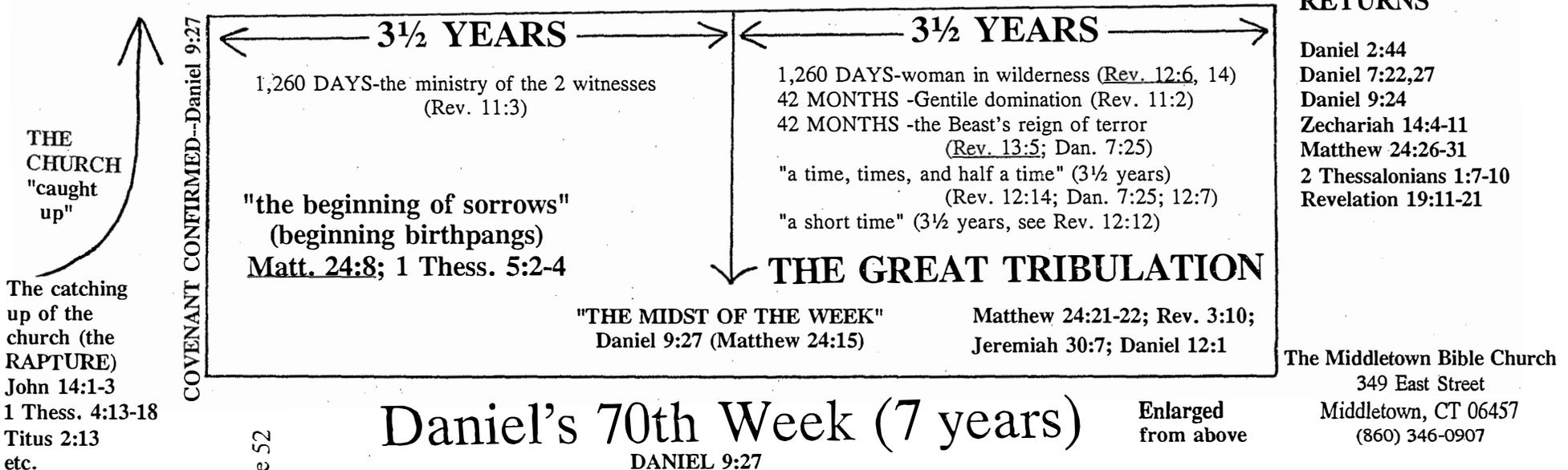


The Hebrew word for "week" in Daniel 9:24-27 literally means "seven." "Seventy sevens are determined on thy people" (Daniel 9:24, etc.). The context demands that these "weeks" be understood as weeks of years and not weeks of days. Hence, each week contains seven years. Thus, the 70 weeks equals 490 years (70 weeks with each week consisting of 7 years).

- 1) 42 months = a time, times, ½ time (3½ years). See Revelation 11:2; 13:5 with Daniel 7:25; 12:7.
- 2) 1260 days = a time, times, ½ time (3½ years). See Revelation 12:6 with Revelation 12:14.
- 3) **Therefore**, 42 months must equal 1260 days (30 days per month; 360 days per prophetic year).

The terminal point for the 69 weeks was "unto the Messiah, the Prince" (Dan. 9:25). Many Bible teachers pinpoint the fulfillment of this as taking place at the triumphal entry when Israel's Messiah/Prince was officially presented to the nation (see Luke 19:42,44). The MESSIAH was "cut off" (violent death) and crucified AFTER the 69 weeks (Daniel 9:26). The covenant or treaty (between Antichrist and Israel) marks the beginning of the 70th week (Daniel 9:27).

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THE KING OF KINGS RETURNS



The catching up of the church (the RAPTURE) John 14:1-3 1 Thess. 4:13-18 Titus 2:13 etc.