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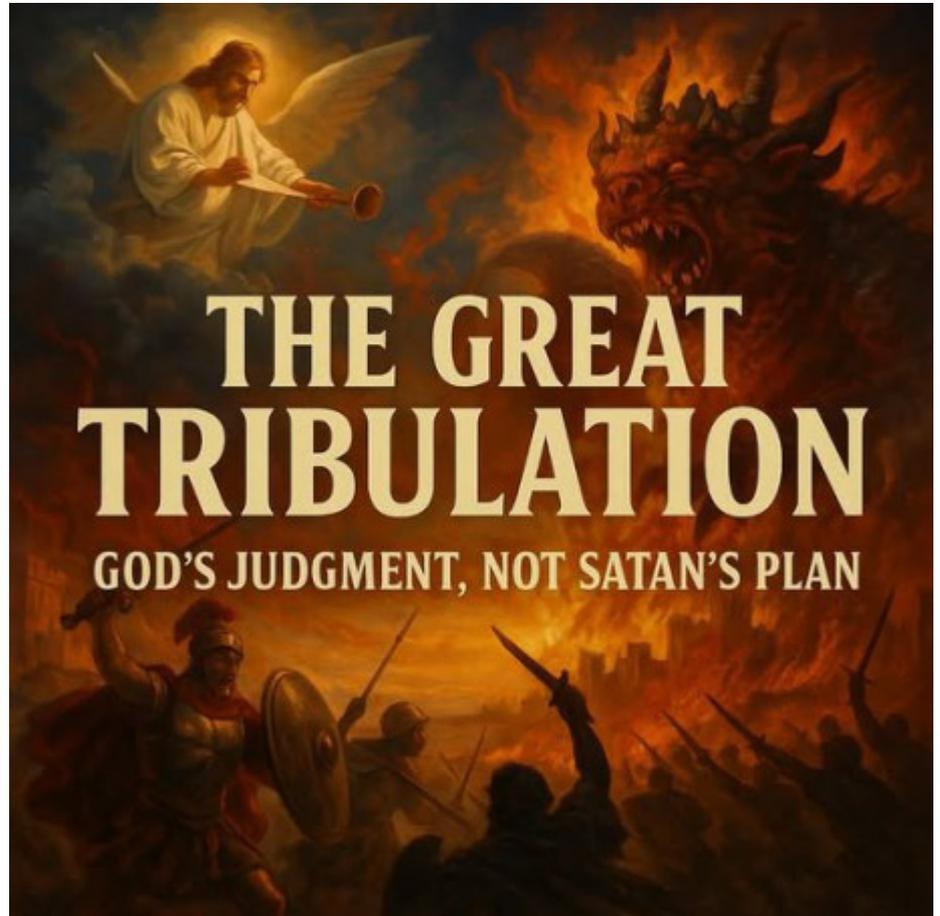
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Tribulation - The Great Tribulation: God's Judgment, Not Satan's Plan



By Dan Maines

The Great Tribulation: God's Judgment, Not Satan's Plan

Many people teach that the Great Tribulation is Satan's doing, often pointing to Revelation 13:5-8. But when we look at the full context of Revelation, we see that this is not Satan's master plan. It is God's covenantal judgment, carried out through events that He ordains and controls. The entire structure of Revelation, the seals, trumpets, and bowls, is initiated by God, not by Satan.

The Lamb Initiates the Judgments

Revelation 6:1 says, "Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals." Every seal is opened by Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Revelation 8:6 says, "And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them." These judgments come from heaven, by the command of God.

Revelation 16:1 says, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." The bowls are explicitly called God's wrath, not Satan's.

This structure mirrors Old Testament covenant judgments, where God used nations (like Babylon or Assyria) to bring wrath on His people. In Revelation, God is doing the same through Rome.

The Devil's Wrath Is Reactionary

Revelation 12:12 says, "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."

Satan is furious because his time is short, but he is reacting to God's judgments, not directing them. His actions are limited and permitted only for a brief period.

Revelation 12:9-10 shows that Satan had been defeated and cast down before his wrath is mentioned. This proves his role is subordinate.

The Beast's Power Is Given, Not Taken

Revelation 13:5 says, "A mouth was given to him speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-

two months was given to him."

Revelation 13:7 continues, "It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority was given to him over every tribe, people, language, and nation."

The text does not say the Beast seized this authority on his own. It says it was given. This implies divine permission, showing that God is still sovereign, even over the Beast's limited reign.

Revelation 17:17 confirms this: "God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose... until the words of God will be fulfilled." Even the Beast fulfills God's plan.

The Antichrist Is Not in Revelation

Many people assume that "the Antichrist" is the Beast of Revelation, but the term "Antichrist" is never used in Revelation.

John explains the concept of Antichrist in his letters:

1 John 2:18, "Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared, from this we know that it is the last hour."

1 John 2:22 says, "Who is the liar except the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist..."

1 John 4:3 and 2 John 7 also refer to antichrists already present in the first century.

John links the Antichrist idea to **apostates from within** the faith community, not a future global dictator.

The 42 Months and the Siege of Jerusalem

The Beast's authority lasts 42 months (Revelation 13:5), which aligns perfectly with the historical siege of Jerusalem by the Romans from 66 to 70 AD.

This time frame corresponds to three and a half years, matching other prophetic time statements such as:

"time, times, and half a time" (Daniel 7:25)

"1,260 days" (Revelation 12:6)

Revelation 11:2 says, "They will trample the holy city for forty-two months." The "holy city" is Jerusalem, just as in Matthew 4:5 and Nehemiah 11:1.

History confirms that the Jewish-Roman war lasted from late 66 AD to the destruction of the temple in August 70 AD a span of about 3.5 years.

The Great Tribulation in the Words of Jesus

Matthew 24:15-16 says, "Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."

Jesus places the Great Tribulation in **Judea**, not the entire world.

Luke 21:20-22 gives the same prophecy more plainly: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near... because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled."

Matthew 24:21-22 adds, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the

world until now, nor ever will again."

This was a **one-time** covenantal judgment, not a future global apocalypse.

Matthew 24:34 concludes it plainly: "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

A biblical generation is around 40 years (Psalm 95:10, Hebrews 3:9-10). Jesus said this around 30 AD, and the temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

Revelation Confirms the Timeframe and Scope

Revelation 11:2 mentions 42 months of trampling the holy city — the same timeframe and city Jesus warned about.

Revelation 17:16-17 confirms that the Beast and ten kings destroy the harlot city (Jerusalem), not Rome, and that **God** is the one who **put it in their hearts** to do it.

This mirrors Old Testament patterns, like when God used Babylon to destroy Jerusalem in 586 BC (Jeremiah 25:9).

Conclusion The Great Tribulation was not Satan's plan but God's covenantal judgment on Jerusalem, fulfilling what Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:34: "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Satan's wrath was real, but it was short-lived and under God's control. The Beast's power was permitted, not autonomous. And the concept of "the Antichrist" is separate from Revelation altogether, rooted in John's own time, not in some distant future apocalypse.

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