

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Tribulation at the End Times

There have been many things taught in error about a "tribulation" at the end times. To better answer this statement we need to understand what the prophecy in Daniel chapter 12 is referring to. "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people [Jewish nation], will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people [Jewish nation], everyone who is found written in the book [Exodus 32:32-33; Psm 69:28], will be rescued. But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end time" (Dan. 12:1, 4). The first thing we must understand about the prophets of the Old Testament, including Daniel, is that they prophesied of the first coming of Christ. The prophesy from Daniel 12 has nothing to do with the second coming of Jesus. It is important to understand that in these verses "the latter days," "the latter years," "the end of time," and "the time of the iniquity of the end" would refer to the nation of Israel as God's chosen people (Daniel 2:28, 10:14, 12:9). That national life ended in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

The "latter days" do not refer to the last days of earth time, but of national time.

Jesus announced this end time when He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven [church] is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Peter said to the Jews, "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all of the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled...And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days" (Acts 3:18, 24).

The prophecy of the "end of time" that Daniel refers to is the end of the Mosaic age. Or more specifically, the end of the Jewish nation as the chosen people of God. It is not speaking of the end of the Christian age in which we now live. The end of the Jewish nation was certainly a time of great tribulation. It culminated in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, with over a million Jews being killed by the Roman Empire. When the cross of Jesus was placed on the back of Simon of Cyrene as they were walking to the place called the Skull, where Jesus was crucified, a large crowd of people were following Him, and among them women, who were mourning and lamenting.

Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us', and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they [Jews] do these things when the tree is green [while Jesus was living], what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:26-31).

The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel, saying "the prince who is to come [Titus, a governor of Rome] will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood... And on the wing of abominations [Roman Empire] will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (Daniel 9:26-27). Jesus told the disciples, when they asked about the destruction of the temple (Matt. 24:1-3), "For then there will

be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matt. 24:21-22). Jesus also said to the disciples, "this generation will not pass away until all of these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away" (Matt. 24:34-35). Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill it. "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [the Old Covenant and its ordinances], not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until ALL is accomplished [Christ's death on the cross]" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Send comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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