

FAQ – Tribulation Terrors, Lesson 2

September 14, 2025

1. What is the Tribulation and how is it structured according to the sources?

The Tribulation is a period of intense divine judgment and upheaval on Earth, lasting seven years.

- First Half: The Tribulation – marked by signs and precursors.
- Second Half: The Great Tribulation – characterized by the concentrated wrath of God.

2. What are the initial signs that mark the beginning of the Tribulation?

Jesus described the initial signs as 'birth pains' (Matthew 24:8, NKJV). These include:

- The rise of many false Christs who will deceive many, particularly the Jewish nation.
- Wars and rumors of wars.
- Nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom.
- Famines and earthquakes in various places.
- 'Pestilences' – though its presence in Matthew 24:7 is debated due to manuscript variations.

Despite these events, Jesus warns: 'See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet' (Matthew 24:6, NKJV).

3. What event specifically triggers the start of the Great Tribulation?

The Great Tribulation begins after 3½ years with the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15, NKJV).

- The Antichrist sets up a speaking, moving image of himself in the Jewish Temple.
- This desecrates the holy place.
- It marks the end of a period of peace (likely tied to a covenant between Israel and the Antichrist) and begins the intensified judgment and persecution.

4. How does the speaker address textual variations in the Bible, particularly regarding the word 'pestilences' in Matthew 24?

The Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (NU) text is introduced as the most widely used Greek New Testament text, continually updated with earlier manuscripts.

- In Matthew 24:7, the NU notes that 'pestilences' is absent from the best manuscripts.
- Scribal changes over time have altered words (e.g., 'slave' changed to 'servant' in many translations).
- Critical scholarship seeks to reconstruct the most accurate version of the original writings.

5. What role do 'false prophets' and 'informants' play during the Tribulation?

- False Prophets: Many will arise, performing signs and deceiving many. This is especially a warning for Israel.
- Informants: As persecution intensifies, people will betray one another—even those once attached to Christianity. Believers trying to escape the Antichrist's system will be turned in.
- Result: Love will grow cold, but endurance will mark the true believer (Matthew 24:12–13, NKJV).

6. What is the 'gospel of the kingdom,' and how is its widespread preaching significant to the End Times?

The 'gospel of the kingdom' is the proclamation of God's reign and salvation.

- It will be preached 'in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come' (Matthew 24:14, NKJV).
- During the Great Tribulation, a massive evangelistic effort will occur through:
 - 144,000 Jewish witnesses.
 - Two witnesses in Jerusalem (Revelation 11).

This global proclamation is a prophetic marker that Christ's return is imminent.

7. What is the 'greatest prayer meeting in the history of the world' described in Revelation 6:15–16, and what does it signify?

Revelation 6:15–16 describes kings, commanders, the mighty, slaves, and free men hiding in caves, crying out:

'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?' (NKJV)

- This reveals the inescapable terror of divine judgment.
- Humanity, regardless of status, would rather die than face the wrath of God.
- Tragically, they cry to rocks rather than repent and cry to God.

8. What is the 'fig tree parable' and how does it relate to the timing of the End Times?

Jesus taught:

'Learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!' (Matthew 24:32–33, NKJV)

- The fig tree is interpreted by some as symbolic of Israel.
- Israel's rebirth in 1948 is seen as the fig tree budding.
- The generation witnessing this event is suggested to be living on the cusp of prophetic fulfillment.
- While not dogmatic, this interpretation points to a heightened expectancy of Christ's soon return.

Greek Words

- Odín (ὠδίν, o-deen') – Birth pains, travail, sorrow. Used in Matthew 24:8 to describe the 'beginning of sorrows,' illustrating early tribulation signs as labor pains.