

## Briefing Document – Tribulation Terrors: Lesson 2

September 14, 2025

### I. Overview of the Tribulation

The core theme of the lesson is a detailed, scripturally backed exposition of the “Tribulation” and “Great Tribulation” periods as prophesied in Scripture, primarily from Matthew 24 and Revelation 6.

- Duration:

- Seven years total, divided into two halves.
- First half = The Tribulation.
- Second half = The Great Tribulation.
- This division is supported by multiple passages indicating a seven-year period split into halves.

- God’s Perspective:

- The Tribulation marks the end of man’s rule over the earth: 'Man has had his day... now God will begin to do His own thing.'
- It is characterized by great, fiery, and terrible judgment against humanity.
- The speaker stresses: 'Nowhere in the Bible will you find one single word that alleviates the punishment, the wrath, the fear, the terror, the misery, the judgment of a furious God against mankind.'

### II. Matthew 24: Jesus’ Description of the Tribulation

Jesus answers two questions from His disciples:

1. 'Tell us, when will these things be?'
2. 'What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' (Matthew 24:3, NKJV).

- Audience for Warnings:

- Jesus is not addressing the church but the Jewish nation.
- The church is gone (raptured) if the Tribulation has begun.
- These warnings apply to Israel specifically ('His people').

#### First Half – The Beginning of Sorrows (Matthew 24:4–8)

- False Christs (v. 4): 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many.'

- Israel will be tripped up by false prophets and Antichrist-promoters.

- Wars & Rumors of Wars (v. 6): These occur, but 'the end is not yet.' Israel begins this time at peace due to a covenant with the Antichrist.

- Nation vs. Nation, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes (v. 7): Global chaos accompanies this period.

- Note: 'Pestilences' is absent from some manuscripts, including the Nestle-Aland (NU) text.

- Beginning of Sorrows (v. 8): Greek term = 'birth pains.' These are precursors, not yet the fullness of judgment.

### **Second Half – The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:9–28)**

- Abomination of Desolation (v. 15): At 3½ years, Antichrist sets up a speaking, moving image in the temple. This begins the Great Tribulation.

- Persecution of Jews (vv. 9–10): Delivered to tribulation and killed. Hated by all nations. Betrayal within families and communities.

- Informants: Believers will be betrayed to Antichrist's system.

- False Prophets (v. 11): Many will deceive through counterfeit miracles.

- Lawlessness & Cold Love (v. 12): 'Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.' Some will fall away under persecution.

- Endurance (v. 13): 'But he who endures to the end shall be saved.' True believers will persevere.

- Global Evangelism (v. 14): The gospel is preached worldwide by 144,000 Jewish witnesses and two witnesses in Jerusalem.

- Call to Flee (vv. 16–20): When the Abomination is seen, Jews in Judea must flee immediately.

- Unprecedented Suffering (v. 21): 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.'

- Days Shortened (v. 22): God shortens the days for the elect's sake.

- False Christs (vv. 23–26): Warnings against false appearances of Christ.

- Christ's Return (v. 27): 'For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.' His return will be visible and unmistakable.

- Vultures & Carcasses (v. 28): Symbol of divine judgment upon the spiritually dead.

- Parable of the Fig Tree (vv. 32–33): Israel's rebirth (1948) is viewed as the budding fig tree. The generation witnessing this is near the end.

### **III. Revelation 6: John's Description of the Tribulation**

- The Greatest Prayer Meeting (vv. 15–17): All classes of people—kings, commanders, slaves, and free—cry for rocks to fall on them:

'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)

- Praying to Rocks: Rather than repenting, humanity cries to creation instead of the Creator. The terror is so overwhelming that suicide will be impossible.

#### **IV. Biblical Manuscripts and Interpretation**

- Nestle-Aland (NU) Text: The most widely used critical Greek text, revised continually with older manuscripts.

- Scribal Changes: For example, 'slave' altered to 'servant' in many Bibles (approx. 240 times).

- Legitimate Manuscripts: Most credible New Testament manuscripts date from the 1st–2nd century, often from Alexandria.

- Dead Sea Scrolls: Confirm Old Testament accuracy.

- King James Bible: Commissioned partly because King James disliked the Geneva Bible's commentary.

- Denominational Influence: Many translations carry theological biases.

- Seeking Truth: God's Word will never contradict itself; believers must be Bereanlike in study.

#### **V. Key Takeaways and Warnings**

- Urgency for Believers (the Church): The church should avoid the Tribulation—pre-Tribulation rapture is implied.

- God's Gift to Israel: Detailed prophecy is a gracious gift for Israel's awareness and recognition.

- Fearful Time: Jesus warned of unparalleled tribulation, unlike anything since the beginning of the world.

#### **Greek Words**

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