

Apostolic Pre-Millennialism

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Apostolic Pre-Millennialism

I. apostolic Christianity: the key to understanding the End-Times

A. We use the term "apostolic" as an adjective to describe the vision, values, and perseverance (in persecution) of the New Testament Church, as raised up under the leadership of the first century apostles. In other words, Apostolic Christianity embraces a New Testament lifestyle. (Note: we are not using the term in this paper as a noun, thus referring to modern-day apostles).

B. Apostolic Christianity or New Testament Christianity will emerge in the End-Times as the Spirit raises up a victorious Church that operates in unprecedented unity, intimacy and maturity (Eph. 4:13) which includes a significant release of the Holy Spirit's gifts, fruit, and wisdom (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Matt. 16:18; 22:37; Jn. 17:21-26; Rev. 19:7; 12:11; 15:2).
11 He gave...apostles, some prophets...12 for the equipping of the saints...13 till we ALL come to the unity (fully unified Church) of the faith and of the knowledge (intimacy) of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the...stature of the fullness of Christ (maturity). (Eph. 4:11-13)

27 That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27)

1. Unity – functioning as a fully unified community or spiritual family of believers in context to the End-Time outpouring of the Spirit along with persecution.

2. Intimacy – experiencing the knowledge of Jesus's heart as His Bride (Jn. 17:21-22).

3. Maturity – walking in the Spirit's gifts (power), fruit (character), and wisdom (revelation) that will lead to impact (evangelism and transformation of some geographic areas).

C. The End-Time Church is called by God to victory, wholeheartedness and relevance.

1. Victory – attaining to unity, intimacy and maturity and led by the five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:13). The Holy Spirit will restore the 5-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13; Rev. 18:20).

2. Wholehearted – walking in "Sermon on the Mount lifestyles" of self-denial and serving, giving, blessing, praying and fasting as seen in the New Testament Church (Mt. 5-7).

3. Relevance – understanding the relevance of our present labors in three ways. First, seeing how they benefit people now. Second, seeing their continuity to our life in the age-to-come. In other words, some of our impact in society now will have continuity in the Millennium (justice in legislation, education, technology, scientific advancements, etc.) and will continue after Jesus returns. Third, seeing how they impact our personal eternal rewards after Jesus returns.

II. What is Apostolic Christianity?

A. It is Church-centered – Jesus is building a Church that will openly triumph over the all the powers of hell (Mt. 16:18). The New Testament presents salvation in context to the Church as a spiritual family that walks out love and honors all its members (i.e., gender, age, ethnic, economic, etc.).

B. It results in wholeheartedness – as it embraces holiness and discipleship. In other words, the fasted lifestyle is described in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). It resists the "pleasure-seeking Western Church culture" that results in "lazy-friendly churches" that refuse self-denial and commitment. Apostolic Christianity receives God's blessing (prosperity) as a means to increase God's Kingdom rather than to live as "consumer Christians" that use most of their resources to live extravagantly.

C. Its ministries flow from intimacy with God – our ministries can only operate in fullness as we flow from a foundation of intimacy with fasting and prayer (intercession, worship, intimacy with the Bridegroom God) that contends (fights) for the release of the Spirit's power (Rev. 22:17; Jude 3).

D. It possesses a missionary spirit – our inheritance is to be effective in the Harvest and to make an impact on society (Cultural Mandate) with righteousness and justice in social institutions (government, economics, education, technology, media, etc.). There is continuity of some of our labors into the Millennial Kingdom.

E. It embraces persecution – as a part of spiritual warfare (Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 11-12).

F. It engages in God's purpose for Israel – the salvation of Israel is a foundational aspect of God's End-Time drama. Jews and Gentile believers will come together as One New Man (Eph. 2:15) with a profound unity that matures in context to the unique dynamics of the End-Times. Israel will be provoked to jealousy (Rom. 11:11, 14) by an anointed apostolic Church that stands with them in context to anti-Semitism and persecution. The End-Time falling away will be related to this (2 Thes. 2:3).

G. It prepares "Day of the Lord prophetic preachers" – the Spirit is raising up forerunners like John the Baptist and Paul who will not draw back in fear from declaring the whole counsel of God, which includes End-Time themes that will enrage many (Acts 20:20, 27; 5:20; Joel 2:1).

H. It is led by apostolic ministry – God will restore the 5-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13; Rev. 18:20).

I. Overview of the victorious Apostolic Church – (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Mt. 16:18; 22:37; Jn. 17:21-26; Rev. 19:7; 12:11; 15:2). Fullness of revival (Rom. 11:25; Rev. 7:9). Victorious Church (Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Matt. 16:18; 22:37; Jn. 17:21-26; Rev. 19:7; 12:11; 15:2). Fullness of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel (Rom. 11:25-26). Bridal paradigm (Rev. 22:17; Hos. 2:16; Mt. 22:37; 25:8). Worship and prayer movement (Lk. 18:7-8; Mt. 21:13; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5; 22:17, 20; Isa. 62:6-7; Joel 2:12-17, 32; Zech. 12:10). Spirit of power and prophecy and revelation (Acts 2:17; Jer. 31:9; 23:20; 30:24; 5:4-5; Dan. 11:33-35; 12:3, 10; Rev. 11:3-6; 18:20; Mt. 17:11; Mal. 4:6; Jn. 14:12). Great Harvest (Mt. 24:14; 28:19; Rev. 7:9; 5:9; 14:6; 15:4; Dan. 7:14, 27).

III. the Day of the Lord drama – 2 dimensions

11 For the Day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11)

A. Great Day – the greatest revival and outpouring of the Spirit in history results in a victorious Church full of God's glory (Eph. 4:13; 5:26-27; Mt. 16:18; Jn. 17:21-26; Acts 2:17-21; Rev. 7:9; 12:11; 15:2; 19:7-8; 22:17). It will include miracles that were seen in the Book of Acts and the Book of Exodus combined and multiplied on a global scale. The End-Time Ingathering of souls will possibly be over 1 billion (Mt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9, 14). The salvation of Israel (Rom. 11:12-15, 25-26) will occur as the Church provokes Israel to jealousy by standing with them in affliction and operating in the power of God.

B. Very Terrible Day – the greatest crisis in history is called the Great Tribulation. Daniel prophesied that it would be "a time of trouble such as never was" (Dan. 12:1). Jesus quoted this saying, that there will be great tribulation that will threaten the lives of many (Mt. 24:21-22).

C. Review: characteristics of the End-Time Church. The bridal paradigm of the Kingdom will result in believers with courageous love as they encounter Jesus as the Bridegroom God. The worship and prayer movement will operate in great authority. There will be supernatural provision of food and water. There will be supernatural direction by prophetic revelation (Jer. 31:9; Joel 2:28) as the Lord directs His people to safety and to be at the right place to escape earthquakes, or the ambush of the enemy. The spirit of power and prophecy will rest on all believers (Acts 2:17). There will be supernatural protection. God will seal individual saints protecting them from judgments (Rev. 7:2-3; 9:4).

IV. the Millennial Kingdom

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

A. The Millennium is a literal 1,000-year period in which Jesus will rule the whole world from Jerusalem in righteousness, peace and prosperity (Rev. 20:1-6). The result will be unprecedented blessing for the whole earth as Jesus restores the agriculture, atmosphere, and animal life, etc.

B. The Kingdom of God will be openly manifest worldwide affecting every sphere of life (political, economic, spiritual, educational, agricultural, family, media, arts, technology, athletics, environment, social institutions, etc.). This period of worldwide blessing is initiated by Jesus' Second Coming and the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-6; Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Deut. 8; 28; Mt. 5:5; 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 1:6; 3:21).

C. Jesus as King of Kings, will personally govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem in partnership with resurrected saints who rule with Him in establishing a biblically based, social order (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17).

V. End-Times (eschatology) – why does it even matter?

A. Ideas have consequences – God gave us information about the End-Times to describe what the Church attains to before and after Jesus' Coming. Our view of the End-Times affects our ministry focus, prayer life and lifestyle. Wrong views hinder our ministry focus and our effectiveness. Everyone has a view of the End-Times. Most have not clarified their views.

B. Eschatology is the study of the End-Times. Biblical eschatology greatly strengthens the Church while wrong eschatology hinders its effectiveness. Thus, it is essential to clarify what eschatological views hinder the gospel.

C. Often people accept one of three extremes.

1. First, being too negative in thinking the Great Tribulation will be so bad that nothing will change for good. This view leads people to draw back from seeking to change society. They say, "Why should we exert effort to bring change if the change will not last?"

2. Second, being too positive in thinking that most of society will be transformed before Jesus returns. This view ignores what Scripture says about the coming pressures and the necessity of Jesus' personal return to establish the fullness of the Kingdom. Hope-filled desire is important, however, it must be tempered by Scripture and not humanistic optimism. We must be loyal to God's wisdom in Scripture. Exaggerated optimism often ignores or explains away the negative specific details of End-Time prophecy.

3. Third, being too vague assuming that it is impossible to know what the Scripture says about the End-Times. Thus, they ignore the subject and let the future take care of itself without preparing for it. Many assume nothing dramatic will happen (2 Pet. 3:3).

VI. Three approaches to End-Time prophecy (as related to the Millennium)

A. Pre-Millennialism– teaches that Jesus returns BEFORE (pre-) His 1,000 year rule on earth. This is the only view that interprets End-Time prophecy in a literal or face value way.

B. A-Millennialism – means "No-Millennium." This view teaches that Jesus' 1,000-year reign is not a literal earthly reign, but rather it is a spiritual victory over sin in the heart of the believer. Millennial prophecies are interpreted as currently being fulfilled in the Church's war against sin.

C. Post-Millennialism – teaches that Jesus will come back AFTER (post-) the Millennium. This view teaches that the Church establishes the Millennial Kingdom by fully Christianizing the whole world before Jesus returns. This is idealism and optimism that goes beyond Scripture.

D. Pan-Millennial? – claims that things will just "pan out." There will be negative consequences for the unprepared. Things will pan out but will they pan out well for you?

VII. amillennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. The strength of this view is its focus on the spiritual triumph of the Church over sin and Satan before the Lord returns.

B. The weaknesses of this view are found in usually interpreting most End-Time prophecy as symbolic or figurative (instead of literal) and in embracing replacement theology which teaches that the Church replaces Israel as heir to Israel's positive prophetic promises.

C. Most Amillennialists and Post-Millennialists have the preterist view of the End-Times. Preterism is a term referred to in many eschatology books. A preterist is one with interest in the past. A preterit is a verb tense that describes a past action or condition (a verb in the preterit form).

D. Preterists usually do not believe in an End-Time Tribulation nor interpret the Book of Revelation in a literal way. Preterism sees most of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation (Tribulation, Armageddon, Antichrist, False Prophet, etc.) as being completely fulfilled in an earthly way when Israel was at war with Rome (66-70 AD) and/or seeing them as partly symbolic (as a picture of spiritual conflict throughout Church history). Israel's war with the Roman Empire led to over one million Jews being killed and to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple under General Titus in 70 AD.

E. Amillennialists see the prophecies of Mt. 24 and Lk. 21, as being completely fulfilled in 70 AD. It is true that the events of 70 AD were a partial fulfillment of these prophecies. However, they were meant to be understood also as a significant prophetic foreshadowing of End-Time events.

F. Most Amillennialists are what I call "eschatological cessationists" that do not believe the power of God will be manifest in the events related to the Great Tribulation and the establishing of the Millennium. Preterists have a domesticated eschatology that reduces most of the literal manifestations of God's power and judgments in Revelation to symbolism. Preteritists also approach many Old Testament prophecies by either spiritualizing them (seeing them as symbolic) or simply ignoring them (without even attempting to see their fulfillment in 70 AD).

24 Jesus answered and said to them (Sadducees), "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?" (Mark 12:24)

G. Amillennialists usually limit the Kingdom of God on the earth as being mostly in the heart of a believer. Most Amillennialists do not emphasize a large Ingathering of souls in the End-Times nor the restoration of the 5-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13), nor the gifts of the Spirit.

H. Amillennialism is mostly held by those with reformed theology. Amillennialists through history believed in a Great Tribulation with a literal Antichrist. However, today most Amillennialists reject this. Also, those with this view usually lack a strong emphasis on the Cultural Mandate to impact society. Amillennialists and Post-Millennialists believe in the victorious Church yet in different degrees and emphases.

VIII. Post-Millennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. The strength of this view is found in their zeal for the Cultural Mandate or for transforming society and its laws (political, economic, education, media, arts, etc.).

B. The weakness of this view has similarities with Amillennialists in usually interpreting most End-Time prophecy as symbolic instead of literal and in embracing replacement theology. Most Post-Millennialists have the preterist view of Revelation which sees most of its prophecies and Mt. 24 and Lk. 21 as being fulfilled in Israel's war with Rome (66-70 AD), instead of being understood as a partial fulfillment and also a prophetic foreshadowing of End-Time events.

C. Jesus first endured the cross and so will His Church before the fullness of God's promises are released on earth. Peter rebuked Jesus for choosing the cross. Jesus rebuked him for being filled with humanistic thinking that was inspired by Satan. Peter's mindset is still in the Church today.

20 Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and be killed and Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You; this shall not happen to You!" 23 He said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." 24 Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me; 27 The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father; then He will reward each according to his works. (Mt. 16:20-27)

D. The zealots of Jesus' day made the same mistake in expecting Israel's Messianic Kingdom on earth to be established without the Messiah dying. They were offended at the idea of the cross being necessary. The same offense with the cross is true today with many Post-Millennialists, who are expecting the Church to usher in the fullness of God's kingdom on earth without being purified by the eschatological dimensions of the cross in the Tribulation (Dan. 11:33-35; 12:10).

E. Some refuse the plain teaching of Scripture that the whole human race and all creation will endure the birth pangs that usher in the age to come. We must refuse all theological systems that claim more compassion and optimism (victory) than God's plan that requires the Tribulation.

F. Post-Millennialism is an overly optimistic eschatology. It was most popular during the Victorian age (approximately 1840-1900) when the Holy Spirit was focused on restoring in the Church the truths of social action and human rights. Many believers thought things would just get better and better until Jesus returned. However, the reality of two world wars in the 20th century caused Post-Millennialism to fall out of favor worldwide. For example, Wheaton College was founded with Post-Millennial views, but switched to Pre-millennialism after the two world wars clearly contradicted Post-Millennial optimism. Some Post-Millennialists believed in a literal 1,000-year reign of the Spirit in the Church before Jesus's Second Coming. The distinction between Amillennialism and Post-Millennialism is not as clear in history as some suggest. Amillennial and Post-Millennial camps differ on the measure and way that the Church takes over society. In the 1600s, the consensus of the Puritans believed in Israel's salvation (yet without being restored to their land). Most Puritans were Post-Millennial. Both Amillennial and Post-Millennial theologians claim Jonathan Edwards.

IX. The Pre-Millennial view of the Kingdom of God

A. Pre-Millennialists believe that Jesus will return to rule the earth for a Millennium (1,000 years).

B. The strength of this view is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy.

C. Three views of Pre-Millennialism:

1. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism (pre-tribulation rapture)

2. Historic (classic) Pre-Millennialism (post-tribulation rapture). Pre-Wrath and/or Mid-Tribulation have strengths and

weaknesses similar to this position.

3. Apostolic Pre-Millennialism combines the biblical strengths of the other eschatological positions. It understands the End-Times from the perspective of the values, vision, and power of the New Testament Church in the midst of world crisis and persecution.

X. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

A. This is the most popular eschatology today. It is called dispensational because it teaches that God has related differently to His people in seven different dispensations or seasons of history. The different dispensations speak of different stages in God's plan of salvation through history.

B. The strength of this view is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy and in embracing God's purpose for Israel in the End-Times.

C. The weakness of this view is its error that Jesus will rapture the Church before the Tribulation. It is a dangerous deception that hinders the effectiveness of the gospel in several ways.

1. First, it undermines the need to urgently prepare the Church for the hardship and persecution of the Great Tribulation. It does not see the role of Gentile believers to provoke Israel to jealousy and salvation by standing with them in persecution while functioning as an anointed apostolic Church. Most with this view see Israel's salvation as the responsibility of the Two Witnesses and the 144,000 sealed Israelites (Rev. 7; 11).

2. Second, with its doctrine of imminency (Jesus returning at any moment), some do not emphasize the need for a long-term plan for their life or ministry, nor a commitment to impact society. Thus, those with this view usually neglect the Cultural Mandate.

3. Third, it often minimizes the certainty of the End-Time Ingathering of souls (Rev. 7:9).

D. Summary: it neglects to prepare the Church for persecution and to stand with Israel during the Great Tribulation, is not actively seeking breakthroughs in transforming society, and it minimizes the certainty of the End-Time Harvest. Thus, it is an overly pessimistic eschatology.

E. The common response is escapism (why bother if we will soon be raptured) along with fatalism and defeatism (society cannot be effectively changed). This view usually sees the Church's mandate as being like a life raft limited to delivering people from drowning (preaching only salvation) while abdicating the rest of society to the devil with its overly pessimistic future.

F. This view can lead to a lazy disengagement (complacency) instead of urgency to be prepared in prayer with fasting as we seek for spiritual breakthroughs in the Kingdom. Note: some Dispensational Pre-Millennial churches are very active in soul winning.

XI. Historic (Classic) Pre-Millennialism

A. The strength of this view is found in its literal interpretation of End-Time prophecy, in preparing the Church for future persecution and in our responsibility to provoke Israel to salvation.

B. The weakness of this view is found in lacking the assurance of a victorious Church functioning in her bridal identity (Rev. 22:17), a large End-Time Ingathering of souls, and the Cultural Mandate. Therefore, it does not usually emphasize intimacy with God, or the need for night and day intercession, or the certainty of an End-Time victorious Church. A few with this view do see a measure of victory in the Church.

C. Historic (classic) Pre-Millennialism (post-tribulation) has similar strengths and weaknesses as Pre-Wrath and/or Mid-Tribulation Pre-Millennialism. (J. O. Bengel wrote a classic book on Historic Pre-Millennialism as did George Ladd).

XII. Apostolic Pre-Millennialism

A. "Apostolic eschatology" speaks of a view of the End-Times that reflects the vision, power and lifestyle of the New Testament Apostolic Church. Apostolic eschatology will equip believers for apostolic (New Testament) lifestyles and perspectives in the midst of the coming great revival and persecution. I refer to apostolic eschatology as "Apostolic Pre-Millennialism."

B. The strength of this view is found in combining the biblical strengths of other End-Time views. This view calls the Church to victory, wholeheartedness and relevance. It will include all the elements of Apostolic Christianity as mentioned on pages 1-2. I will repeat a few of them.

C. A victorious Church that attains to unity, intimacy and maturity resulting in the greatest revival in history as it is led by the five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13; 5:27). This prophetic praying Church will walk in power and revelation as it is used to bring in the End-Time Ingathering of souls, be purified by persecution and will stand with Israel in pressure.

D. A wholehearted Church that walks in "Sermon on the Mount lifestyles" of self-denial and serving, giving, blessing, praying and fasting as seen in the New Testament Church (Mt. 5-7). This discipleship lifestyle of "happy holiness" will be energized by bridal intimacy and an ever deepening experience with Jesus as the Bridegroom God (Rev. 22:17). In the End-Times, the Church will be purified in the context of the great revival and pressure, resulting in a significant separation of true believers from compromising ones. All who are currently in the Church will either become wholehearted or they will deny the Lord. Part of the Church will fall away (2 Thes. 2:3) as the other part rises up to walk out Apostolic Christianity. The options are "apostate Christianity" or "Apostolic Christianity."

E. A relevant Church that understands the value of our present labors in three ways. First, in seeing how they benefit people now in winning the lost, preparing the Church as End-Time forerunner messengers, and releasing God's justice (judgments) against evil by intercessory worship (Ps. 149:6-9). Second, seeing the continuity of our labors now to our life in the age-to-come. In other words, some of our present impact in society (releasing justice in legislation, education, technology, scientific advancements, etc.) will have continuity in the Millennium by continuing after Jesus returns. Third, in seeing how our current labors of love will impact our personal eternal rewards and ministry assignment in the Millennial Kingdom.

XIII. Three common objections to Apostolic Pre-Millennialism

A. Some claim that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer that is removed when the Church is raptured. Paul prophesied that someone and something who restrains the Antichrist from being revealed would be removed (2 Thess. 2:6-8). Paul described the restrainer of the increase of sin and the release of the Antichrist as a "what" (neuter gender in 2:6) and as a "He" (masculine gender in 2:7). Paul taught that governing authorities are appointed by God to restrain evil (Rom. 13:1-4). I believe the restraining force that is removed is a combination of a "what" which I believe to be the existence of national governments that will not allow that Antichrist's one-world government to emerge, and a "He" which I believe to be God and His sovereign decree to bring the ten-nation confederation into unity with the Antichrist (Rev. 17:17; Dan. 7:9-12, 19-27).

B. Some claim that Christians will not go through the Great Tribulation because "we are not appointed unto wrath" (1 Thes. 5:9). It is true, the Church is not appointed to wrath. The wrath of God in the Great Tribulation is released by the praying Church (Rev. 8:3-4) to destroy the Antichrist's empire. The Church will receive supernatural provision, direction and protection. The saints will have a protective seal given by God (Rev. 7:2-3; 9:4; 14:1).

C. Some claim that Jesus may return at any minute (referred to as imminency) instead of after specific prophetic signs that must be discerned by the Church. They say we are not to know these prophetic signs because Jesus said that "no one knows the day or the hour" (Mt. 24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13). These prophetic signs must be discerned. This will be an issue of life and death (Lk. 19:43-44). The Scripture requires those in the generation the Lord returns to know it and prepare accordingly. Jesus and Paul emphasized the knowability of the prophetic signs of the End-Times (Mt. 24:32-34; Lk. 21:25-29; 1 Thes. 5:1-6; 2 Thes. 2:1-11).

XIV. Apostolic Pre-Millennialism: Confronting 5 deceptions in the Church

A. "Lazy-friendly" spiritual culture that is currently seducing the Western Church by its casual view of compromise and a false view of eternal security that does not depend on vibrant faith. All have an eschatology even if it is simply to be happy with and have an easy life. This view of the future is the most popular one and will please many people, be very popular and will make one many friends. However, we desire to be an oracle of God not man pleasers.

B. Replacement theology that denies Israel's place in God's purpose.

C. Pre-tribulation Rapture that leaves the Church unprepared.

D. Prayerless cessationism that believes that the gifts of the Spirit and the five-fold ministry have ceased. Therefore, they do not contend in prayer with fasting for their full release.

E. Symbolic interpretation of most End-Time prophecy that significantly reduces, dismisses, or ignores the literal, future events in the End-Time drama. This approach to Scripture fuels a scoffing spirit of unbelief and hardness of heart (2 Pet. 3:3; Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:25, 38).

XV. the Great Tribulation was not fulfilled in 70 AD (Mt. 24:21)

15 Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" ...21 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. 22 Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved (physically spared); but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. (Mt. 24:15, 21-22)

A. Jesus prophesied that the Great Tribulation would be the most severe time in history. It will surpass all other times of crisis. Some seek to minimize this prophecy by reducing it to symbolism or by seeing it as being fulfilled in 70 AD. The Great Tribulation will be so severe that God shortened it to 3½ years to keep the entire human race from being physically killed.

B. The events of 70 AD were a prophetic foreshadowing of the Tribulation. Yet, they did not fulfill most of the scriptural details of the Tribulation. The Tribulation will threaten the life of every human being (Mt. 24:22) and will not occur until after the abomination of desolation, which is described in Rev. 13. The scriptural details of the Great Tribulation require a talking image, the mark of the Beast, a healed head wound, mandatory worldwide worship of the Antichrist and a False Prophet. Nothing close to this happened in the Jewish Revolt against Rome (66-73 AD). In this crisis, Jerusalem and the Second Temple were destroyed in 70 AD. Then in 132-135 AD, the Jews revolted against Rome again, resulting in 500,000 Jews being killed and 1,000 villages being destroyed. In World War II, 50 million died which far surpassed the one million deaths (70 AD). Neither 70 AD nor World War II came close to threatening the existence of the human race as the Great Tribulation will. Neither of these terrible times are the worst time in history and neither involved the Abomination of Desolation in the Jerusalem Temple (Rev. 13:14-17). The 50 million babies aborted each year world wide overshadows both 70 AD and WWII.

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