

What is the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24?



The siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 ad.

The words “great tribulation” appear three times in the King James Version of the Bible. But are they all referring to the same event?

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, except they repent of their deeds.

Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of **great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

I don't think these three Scriptures are all talking about the same event. You may dispute that. But this article is specifically about the tribulation Jesus was talking about in Matthew 24:21.

What do most evangelicals today teach about the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24? Some teach it's a *future* event of God's judgement on the wicked, and God's people will escape it in the Rapture. Correct me if I'm wrong but I think this is what John MacArthur teaches.

Others say the Great Tribulation is about the *wicked persecuting the saints!* They say this because they do not believe the Bible teaches a pre-tribulation rapture. I think so too. But is this really what the great tribulation of Matthew 24 is all about?

I hope you agree with me that the Bible is its own best interpreter. If that

is true, shall we not look at what the two parallel passages of the other two synoptic Gospels in Mark and Luke have to say?

Mark 13:19 For in those days shall be **affliction**, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

Mark 13:19 is similar to Matthew 24:21 but rather than say “great tribulation” it says “affliction”. Affliction on whom? Let’s see what the Gospel of Luke has to say.

Luke 21:22-24 For these be the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be **great distress** in the land, and **wrath upon this people**. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

I hope you can see from the verses in Luke 21:22-24 that this is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. It’s talking about the wrath of God through the Roman army on the unbelieving Christ-rejecting Jews. How do I know that only Christ-rejecting Jews are the ones who are afflicted and slaughtered by the Romans? Because Jesus told His followers to flee Jerusalem and Judea when they see the Romans coming!

Luke 21:20-21 And **when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. {21} **Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains**; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

And by the way, “Jerusalem compassed with armies” is the same thing as the abomination of desolation of Matthew 24:15!

Matthew 24:15-16 **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) {16} Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:

I hope you can see clearly that the parallel passage of Matthew 24:15-16 is Luke 21:20-21, It clearly defines the abomination of desolation as the armies of Rome. Rome was an abomination to the Jews and its armies made their capital city of Jerusalem desolate. It clearly tells Jesus’ disciples what to do when they see the armies coming: To flee Jerusalem and Judea and run to

the mountains. All the Christians who knew believed and obeyed Jesus' commandment were saved from slaughter by the Romans. The Christ-rejecting Jews believed the false prophets that they would be saved by running into the temple. They were all killed by the Romans! And this is all confirmed by secular history and the writings of Josephus.

To sum up: The great tribulation of Matthew 24 occurred in 70 ad. It was God's judgment through the Romans for rejection of their Messiah, Jesus Christ. It was a past event that will never happen again! Why do I think so? Because Jesus said so!

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, **nor ever shall be.**

Mark 13:18-19 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. {19} For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, **neither shall be.**

Jesus told the high priest that he will see the Son of Man at the right hand of power.

Matthew 26:64-65 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, **Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.** {65} Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

When do you think the high priest saw Jesus sitting at the right hand of power? It must have been when the high priest was still alive! I believe it was most likely during the attack on Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. It was 40 years later and the high priest was most likely still alive. When he saw Jesus up in the clouds, how could he not help but think God was punishing him and his people for rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as the very Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah!