

THE WORST OF TIMES

In Matthew 24 Jesus tied “the end of the age” to what is called the “70th week of Daniel” (see Matthew 24:15). In Daniel 9:24-27 God showed Daniel via the angel Gabriel that seventy prophetic weeks were determined for Daniel’s people Israel.

A “week” is shown to be a seven-year period, so seventy-sevens would be a 490-year period of time. Sixty-nine of those weeks (483 years) have been fulfilled. One week (7-year period) remains and will begin with Antichrist signing a 7-year covenant with Israel as seen in Daniel 9:27. But then in the middle of this week (3 and ½ years in) Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel. This will be marked by the “abomination of desolation” in which he goes into the rebuilt Jewish temple and declares himself to be God Almighty (cf. 2 Thess. 2:4) as referenced by Christ in Matthew 24:15.

Jesus in Matthew 24:16-22 describes the aftermath of the “abomination of desolation”.

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV)

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.

The time following the Antichrist committing “the abomination of desolation” in the Temple will be the time of “**great tribulation**” which will be the worst time of suffering ever experienced in the world. It will be unprecedented in terms of anything that has ever gone before since the beginning of the world or that will ever be again. This will be the very worst of times.

“The additional description, not since the beginning of the world, makes Christ’s reference to Dan. 12:1 unmistakable. The further notice, nor ever shall be, prevents our identification of this with anything less than the final tribulation under Antichrist just prior to the resurrection [as seen in] Daniel 12:2.” – *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*

Jeremiah 30:7 (NKJV)

7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

Daniel 12:1 (NKJV)

1 “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be **a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation**, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

The Great Tribulation is the last half of the 7-year tribulation period and it will be the very worst of times, but it will serve to finally bring Israel to repentance and trust in her Messiah (cf. Rev. 7:14).

This clearly is yet future because neither the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 nor the Holocaust under Hitler can be described in such superlative terms. And neither of those occasions tie with Daniel’s 70th week prophecy as seen here in Matthew 24. This refers to that terrible time that immediately precedes the second coming of Christ to the earth.

“This description isolates the period from all the inquisitions, pogroms, purges, massacres, and genocides of history. This prophecy could not have been fulfilled by any previous persecutions because it is clearly stated that it will be ended by the Second Advent of Christ.” – ***William MacDonald***

Matthew 24:22 (NKJV)

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

The word “**elect**” simply means “**chosen**”. In context, it would seem to mean elect (saved) Israel first and foremost (cf. Isa. 45:4; Rom. 11:28), but it could also refer to all of God’s people throughout the entire world (cf. Rev. 17:14). But again, the context all through this immediate section is very closely tied to Israel. God is preserving His people Israel even in their darkest hour (Jer. 30:7).

We know from a good number of Scriptures that the 70th week will carry through to the end. Both Daniel 7:25 and Rev. 13:5 are very clear in saying that the beast (Antichrist) will actually have his reign of terror for 3 and ½ years. So that is set in prophecy – which means it is set in stone (so to speak) and cannot be changed.

So what does it mean when it says, ***“unless those days were shortened no flesh would be saved”***? This probably means that if this time of destruction were allowed to just carry through to a normal end the whole of humanity would die. But in the sovereignty of God, He has already prescribed a determined end before that will be allowed to happen.

By the way, all these people that are so concerned about the entire planet being destroyed and that we are all going to die in the next few years should really read Jesus. He says that is not going to happen! God is not going to allow all flesh to be destroyed. Before that happens He will intervene. But alas, here is the real problem: These people don't believe Jesus. They don't think He is God. They don't trust His prophecy. They think they know better. Such is the pathetic world of unbelief.

This statement by Jesus clearly shows that God is sovereign over the length of the tribulation period. He is in charge of the whole of history. So relax. God's got this!

The world is on a collision course with JUDGMENT DAY (the Day of the Lord) with Israel being the centerpiece. This will be the very WORST of times in human history but it will climax in the Second Coming which will unfold the very BEST of times for God's people!

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”