

Early Warning Signs

Revelation 6:1

Have you ever noticed that around here, we take tornado and storm warnings much more serious than say, Texas or Kansas. When the National Weather Service issues warning signs, we flock to the basements and heed the warnings of coming danger.

In areas where severe weather is common, the people are more apt to ignore the warning signs or even go outside to video the tornados on their cell phone. The warnings are there for a reason and complacency to warnings can be deadly if ignored!

The Fiercest Storm In History

Revelation tells us that a severe storm is coming to earth, and it will be the fiercest storm the world has ever experienced. It's the storm of God's wrath and although the storm hasn't come yet, we need to pay attention to the warning signs on the horizon. This "storm" is what is called "tribulation"

The Church During Tribulation

Will the church (true Christians) have to go through the terrible times called tribulation?

While there are two opposing views on this, the majority of biblical scholars agree that the church will not be present during the great tribulation. The book of Revelation gives us a clear inference we can draw regarding the church and the tribulation:

1. The absence of the church in Revelation 6-18:

- a. The church is prevalent on the earth in Rev 2-3 when Jesus was inspecting the churches in Asia Minor.
- b. In Rev 4-5 we saw that the church was worshipping in heaven.
- c. In Rev 6, the scene shifts back to earth and the beginning of the 7-year tribulation.
- d. From Rev 6-18, during that entire seven years, there's not one mention of the church.
- e. **Why is the church not ever mentioned during that entire seven years of tribulation?** Christians are not there. They are already with the Lord from the rapture

2. The promise of Revelation 3:10:

- a. Jesus promised to keep the church at Philadelphia "from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." Jesus was telling them he was going to save them from another time of severe testing upon the world.

- b. **Is the bible promising Christians will escape tribulation, persecution, or hardship?** Absolutely not, Christians have suffered these things for their faith since the beginning of Christianity, but the Bible is clear that Christians never have to fear the FULL WRATH of God. That is what the tribulation is.

3. The teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4-5

- a. Paul explained the rapture of the church in 4:13-18 (we covered this when we were investigating what the rapture actually was)
- b. Next, Paul turned immediately to the topic of “the day of the Lord”, which is the time of God’s final judgement before Christ’s second coming.
- c. Paul is delivering a message of “comfort” (4:18), not warning, for he wrote “For God has NOT destined us for WRATH, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (5:9).
- d. Wrath is referring to the judgements of the end times (tribulation)

The Nature of the Tribulation

In 6:1, the Lamb (Jesus Christ) breaks the first seal of the scroll which contains God’s final plan for humanity. God’s wrath is unleashed in steps on the earth and on those who were left behind. This will all lead to Christ’s second coming to establish his millennial kingdom.

But ultimately, before this can happen, there will be a time of great suffering known as the tribulation

What is the Tribulation

To answer this question, we have to go back to Daniel Chapter 9. This chapter outlines a specific period of time, directed towards the Jews (not the church), concerning the first coming of the Messiah, as well as the time of tribulation.

Understanding the Seventy Weeks Prophecy

READ DANIEL 9:24

What does “weeks” literally mean? “Sevens”. Daniel had been thinking in terms of years regarding Israel’s seventy years exile earlier in chapter 9

What does “seventy weeks” in verse 24 mean? Seventy periods of seven years

Q: How long is “seventy weeks”? $70 \times 7 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years}$

Q: What will occur by the time this 490 years is up? FINISH transgression, make an END to sin, make ATONEMENT for iniquity, to bring in EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, to SEAL UP vision and prophecy, and to ANOINT the most holy place.

What event is your answer describing above? The Second Coming of Christ. Only the return of Christ can put an end to sin and bring everlasting righteousness.

READ DANIEL 9:25

Q: Daniel gives us a very direct timeline here for two events. What historical events mark the beginning and the ending of this timeline and how many years will be between these two events?

- **Q: Where does the 490-year timeline start?** “From the commandment to restore Jerusalem....rebuild the city and its walls”
- **Q: How many years will there be between the first event and second event?** 483 years (7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks = 483 years)
- **Q: What happens at the end of 483 years?** “the Messiah”

READ DANIEL 9:26

Q: Daniel tells us the Messiah will be “cut off” after how many years? The messiah is “*cut off*” after 483 years.

Q: What does Daniel mean “cut off”? This is indicating Jesus’ crucifixion and death as well as Israel’s final rejection of the Messiah.

Q: What other things does Daniel tell us will happen after the Messiah is “cut off” and who will be doing those things? “*The people of the prince shall come destroy the city and the sanctuary, the end will come with a flood, and wars and desolations are determined.*”

Q: Who are these “people of the prince”? Who is the prince? The “people of the prince” are the evil-doers of Satan, who will be the force behind the anti-christ that is to come. The people of the prince are evil people that either knowingly, or unknowingly, are controlled by Satan. The prince obviously is the one in charge of the evil, Satan.

- In AD 70, the Emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the “sanctuary” (temple).
- The “flood” marks the great dispersion of the Jews into all the nations which was enforced by the Romans in AD 135
- “Desolations are determined” refers to the idea that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, was “cut off” and in the 1900+ years since, there have been wars in one part of the world or another at all times.

Dating the Crucifixion based on Daniel’s prophecy

In this amazing prophecy, Daniel hand-delivers us the exact date of the Messiah’s crucifixion, but there still has been much debate on this topic. This debate is not because of God’s inability to accurately foresee the future, but on our ability to fully understand. The main reasons the dates vary are as follows:

- We are so far removed from many of the actual historical events, it is difficult to date certain things with certainty. Scholars generally agree within a few years of each other, but no one can be certain in some instances .

- There is debate on how many days were in a Jewish year. The Jews had a very complicated dating system with less days per years, but would also add an extra month in every so many years to keep the harvest times the same. This is an entire subject in itself to be studied

There are entire books dedicated to all the arguments for different dates, but given the evidence, all popular views land between AD27-AD33 with certainty.

If you take the overwhelming majority views of every leading biblical and historical scholar, past and present, they will give the date of either AD30 or AD33, with compelling evidence to back it up. If you polled these AD30 and AD33scholars, the majority view would be for AD30 as the date of Jesus' crucifixion.

I have personally spent a lot of time looking into these dates and see very compelling evidence for both AD30 and AD33 from a historical standpoint that fit the timeline of the bible, but do personally think AD30 is the correct date for a number of reasons. This is not a salvation issue by any means and there is a possibility I find out I am wrong one date, which is fine, but **we will move forward with the majority date of AD30**. Feel free to do your own research.

CRUNCHING NUMBERS AND WHY AD30 FOR CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

When does Daniel's 490 year prophecy start? "From the commandment to restore Jerusalem...the streets shall be built again and the wall..." After the great exile, the Jews were allowed to return and begin rebuilding Jerusalem in three waves. The first was in about 536bc by the Emperor Cyrus who Isaiah prophesized would do this over 150 years before these events, before Cyrus even existed (*Isaiah 44:28, 45:1*). This commandment only decreed the rebuilding of the temple, so it cannot be correct. The formal commandment to begin to rebuild the city itself was issued by the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes in about **446bc**.

We have 365 day years. How many days were in a Jewish year? There is much evidence inside and outside that the bible heeded to a 360 day year. In fact, the original created year in Genesis was twelve 30-day months. Later on in Revelation in the end times, a year is also associated with twelve 30-day months. If we apply this factor to the seventy week prophecy, then 483 prophetic years would only be **476 calendar years**.

The Math:

483(yrs) x 360(days in a prophetic year) == 173,880 days
 173,880 days / 365(days in our calendar year) == 476 years

What date is 476 years after 446bc? 446 - 476 == 30. 476 prophetic years after 446bc would end sometime in AD30.

What did Daniel prophesize would happen at the end of the 483 years? "Unto the Messiah"

Is there other clues that Christ was crucified in AD30?

- **Year of Birth:** Jesus was born at the time of the first Roman census (Luke 2:1-2) when Quirinius was Governor of Syria. Roman documents describe this time as late October or November of 5bc.
- **Year of Baptism:** The birth date above means that Jesus was 12 years old at Passover in 9AD (Luke 2:42-52) so we can determine Jesus was about 33.5 years old in AD 30.
- **When Jesus started his ministry:** Jesus began his ministry shortly after John began his. John began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius (Luke 3:1-23), which was about July of 11AD. This means John began his ministry between 26ad and 27ad. Jesus public ministry lasted a little over three-and-a-half years before he was crucified, ending on.... 30AD.
- **Confirmation by several ancient historians:** Darkness occurred from noon until 3:00pm on Nisan 14 (which was the Passover in 30 AD). The historians Phlegon, Thallus, Africanus, and Tertullian all mention this three hour period of darkness that does not have a scientific explanation. It could not have naturally been a solar or lunar eclipse for many reasons.
- There are many more things that support an AD30 crucifixion, but we must move on...

Putting the Daniel Prophecy All Together So Far

Daniel foretells the future as follows:

- Unfolds the last 490 year cycle before the return of Christ
- Tells us when the last 490 year cycle starts which is when the commandment was given to rebuild the temple and walls of Jerusalem. Artaxerxes gave this command about 446bc when the the second wave of Jews returned from exile to rebuild not just the temple, but the city and its walls.
- Gives us the date Christ will be “cut off” (crucified) which was 483 calendar years (476 prophetic years?) after the commandment in 446bc which puts Christ’s crucifixion on AD30
- Tells us after Christ is crucified, the temple and city will be destroyed. Jesus states in the his own words this will occur within the generation of those listening to Him. A generation is considered 40 years in biblical times. The temple and city was destroyed in AD70, exactly 40 years after Christ’s death in AD30.

This covers 483 years (69 weeks) of Daniel’s prophecy, but what about the last seven years (the 70th week)?

When Israel completely rejected Christ through his crucifixion, God stopped his stopwatch. There is still “one week” left on his stopwatch, the 70th week. This is the future tribulation, the seven year period of time during which God will finish everything He’s going to do with Israel.

READ DANIEL 9:27

Q: Who is “he”? The antecedent of “he” must be the last person mentioned, that is “the prince that shall come”, the one whose “people” had destroyed the city. This can be none other than the future antichrist.

Q: How long does “he” make a covenant with the many (don’t forget what a week represents)? One week which is seven years. This is the last seven years of the 490-year prophecy.

Q: What does this prince do in the middle of the seven years? Causes the sacrifices to end, oblations to cease, spreading of abominations...

Daniel foretells about the future as follows:

- **When the rapture happens, what do you think will happen in the world?** There will be worldwide chaos and confusion when the rapture occurs, which will be the ideal time for the Antichrist to emerge on the world stage. He will more than likely show up very soon after the rapture.
- The Antichrist will make a firm covenant with Israel for “one week” and that is when the final seven years will begin ticking. He will allow them to restore temple worship and temple sacrifices.
- In the middle of the seven years (three and a half years), the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel. He will put a stop to temple worship and sacrifices. He will set an image of himself in the temple and demand worship of himself and his master, Satan. He will make himself an idol by replacing the holy images in the temple with an image of the beast (possibly in the place where the images of the cherubim once were), the ultimate act of blasphemy, trying to take God’s rightful place.
- This last three-and-a-half years will be when God brings an outpouring of his wrath and is the time Jesus called “a great tribulation”

The Purpose of the Tribulation

Does God just love punishing people? What is the purpose of it all?

- **THE SALVATION OF THE ELECT:** This is the first and primary reason. He is giving Israel one last chance to repent and accept Jesus as their Messiah before his final judgement. Though many Gentiles will be saved still in this time, the primary focus is on Israel.
- **THE CONDEMNATION OF UNBELIEVERS:** A holy God will not let evil go unpunished. God’s greatest desire is that no one would receive his wrath, “not wanting for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9). You either choose to accept God’s grace embodied in His Son, Jesus Christ, or you choose to stay an enemy of God. There is no other way except through Christ.

An Overview of the Tribulation Judgements

The seven years of tribulation are a time of judgement and heartache. It is the outpouring on God's wrath, which is described in the book of Revelation as a series of three sevens:

- **The Seven Seals:** The first series of judgements, with an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal
- **The Seven Trumpets:** The opening of the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpet judgements, which are more devastating than the seven seals. There is an interlude before the seventh trumpet.
- **The Seven Bowls:** This sounding of the seventh trumpet introduces the series of seven bowl judgements, called the "seven plagues, which are last, because in them the wrath of God is finished" (Rev 15:11). The last of which will result in the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ.

IN CONCLUSION

This is why the picture of God the Father on the throne handing the scroll to Jesus the Son is so powerful. He is holding in His hand the judgements that will culminate with His return to reclaim which belongs to Him.

How do we prepare for all of this?

"Let us who live in light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. For God CHOSE to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with Him forever."

Trusting in Jesus Christ is the only way to escape the coming and certain storm of God's judgement