

RAPTURE CUTS SHORT THE GREAT TRIBULATION!

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Last week I suggested that Jesus' Coming ... to "catch up" His saints (Matthew 24:31) ... occurs about one year before His complete return in Revelation 19.

I think it helps our understanding of prophecy if we see this distinction.

Today ... I want to focus some more on the timing ... in particular the Great Tribulation ... and how long it lasts.

Most would say: 3½ years.

When looking at end-time prophecy ... the Bible often refers to a period described as 3½ years ... or 1,260 days ... or 42 months ... or time, times and half-a-time.

How do these fit in with the Great Tribulation?

It is important to keep the time-line as clear as we can.

Daniel 9:27

27 **Then he shall confirm a covenant/treaty with many for one week;**
("one week" — one 7 year period)

But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate/desolator."

Daniel 9:27 (NIV)

27 **He will confirm a covenant with many for one "seven."** **In the middle of the "seven" he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.**

And **at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on**

him."

This is one of 4 references to the Abomination of Desolation that Jesus mentioned.

It tells us that the Abomination begins at the mid-point of the final 7 years.

So ... 3½ years left till “everlasting righteousness” (verse 24). Jesus said at that point the Great Tribulation occurs. So ... it implies that the Great Tribulation must last for 3½ years?

At the end of that period ... Jesus returns to earth to establish His Kingdom.

Revelation 19:11-21

11 **Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.**

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name is called The Word of God.**

14 **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.** *(the armies here are the warrior saints —the Bride of Christ)*

15 **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.** And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. **He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**

16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

**KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.**

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “**Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,**

18 **that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”**

19 **And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.**

20 **Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.** (*The end of the Beast Empires — The End — the 3½ years over — nothing after this!!*)

21 **And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.** And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The Great Battle of God Almighty ... where the Beast and the False Prophet are defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire.

We can also see the same battle:

Revelation 16:12-16

12 **Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl** on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

13 **And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.**

14 **For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.** (*The whole earth coming together to fight the Lord Jesus as He returns*)

15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

16 **And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.** (*Another name for Jerusalem*)

The Sixth Bowl of Wrath. Near the end of the 21 key events.

Let's see the same battle again.

Zechariah 14:1-4, 8-9

1 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,

And your spoil will be divided in your midst.

2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;

The city (*of Jerusalem*) shall be taken,

The houses rifled,

And the women ravished.

Half of the city shall go into captivity,

But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth (*on His White Horse*)

And fight against those nations,

As He fights in the day of battle. (*the biggest battle of all time*)

4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,

Which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,

From east to west,

Making a very large valley;

Half of the mountain shall move toward the north

And half of it toward the south.

8 And in that day it shall be (*when Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives*)

That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,

Half of them toward the eastern sea

And half of them toward the western sea;

In both summer and winter it shall occur.

9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.

In that day it shall be—

“The LORD is one,”

And His name one.

**THE GREAT BATTLE OF GOD ALMIGHTY — at Jerusalem —
AGAINST ALL NATIONS GATHERED THERE** (*by the demons*).

**THAT’S WHEN JESUS STANDS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.
THAT’S HIS RETURN AS IN REVELATION 19.**

So ... the final 3½ years are fairly clear:

- It starts with the Abomination of Desolation ... and ends with Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives at the Battle of Armageddon.
- The end of the Beast and the False Prophet.

A time period of 3½ years is quite familiar? We can possibly think of various passages where we see 1,260 days ... 42 months ... time, times and half-a-time. **They are all the same? Or — are they?**

Let's review and see whether we can clarify the time-line of Jesus' eventual return.

Daniel 7:19-22

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, **exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;**

20 **and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words,** whose appearance was greater than his fellows. (*The Antichrist*)

21 "**I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,**

22 **until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.**

War against the saints — us!

Daniel 7:25-27

25 **He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, ("He" — the Antichrist)**

Shall persecute (harass) the saints of the Most High,

And shall intend to change times and law.

Then the saints shall be given into his hand

For a time and times and half a time.

26 'But the court shall be seated,
And they shall take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy it forever.
27 Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

We take a “time” to be a year. But why not just call it a “year”?

My belief: It is not just a “random 12 months” — but has a specific start and finish.

Like the Tax year ... or Academic Year. Twelve months ... but a specific start and end.

Daniel 12:4-11

4 “**But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end**; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

5 **Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.**

6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “**How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?**”

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that **it shall be for a time, times, and half a time**; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (*Hebrew for time and times — Moed and Moedim*).

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11 “**And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.** (Close to 3½ years)

Moed and Moedim: used over 200 times in the Old Testament.
Nearly always associated with **God’s Appointed Times — The Holy Day Festivals!**

So ... time, times and half-a-time is a duration of 3½ years ... but I believe it starts and ends on specific Holy Days. **Maybe starting at Passover — and ending round about the Feast of Tabernacles time.**



God’s end-time timing is not random!

Revelation 12:12-14

12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! **Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.**”

13 **Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.**

14 **But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time,** from the presence of the serpent. *(A year that starts and ends at a specific time — an Appointed Time!)*

Time, times and half-a-time. Greek: KAIROS

(In Greek Septuagint of Daniel 12 ... KAIROS is used for “time, times and half-a-time”).

Revelation 12:14 corresponds to verse 6 — 1,260 days (approximately 3½ years).

Also ... we come across “42 months” in prophecy.

Revelation 12:17 - 13:7

17 **And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

Chapter 13

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. **And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.**

2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. **The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.**

3 **And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed.** And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

4 **So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”**

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and **he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.**

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

The Beast has authority for 42 months and makes war on the saints.

We will see that in the next scripture.

Revelation 11:1-2

1 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there." *(A temple in prophecy)*

2 But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

The Gentiles will trample ... tread on — desecrate — Jerusalem for 42 months.

Revelation 11:3

3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

The two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days.

I suspect these two periods overlap — but are not identical — because the two witnesses are caught up with the other saints when Jesus returns. (Maybe one year earlier).

Treading the Holy City underfoot also appears:

Luke 21:20-24

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her.

22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. **And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

- **The Abomination of Desolation — the Great Tribulation begins.**
- **Jerusalem is trampled for the latter 3½ years of Daniel's 70th week ...**
- **Matches the 42 months of Revelation 11:2 ("tread the Holy City and Jerusalem "trampled" is the same Greek word).**

There are lots of references to the period of 3½ years.

If I asked 100 church goers how long is the Great Tribulation — I suspect the majority would say 3½ years ... 1,260 days ... 42 months.

Hmm. **What about?**

Matthew 24:15-21

15 **"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation,"** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, **standing in the holy place**" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 **"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.**

17 **Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.**

18 **And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.**

19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

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 Abomination and the Great Tribulation.

Matthew 24:22

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

The days are shortened for the elect's sake. The saints are rescued "earlier".

What shortens the days? And ... by how long?

Matthew 24:29

29 **"Immediately after the (shortened) tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

The Heavenly Signs.

Matthew 24:30-31

30 **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

31 **And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

Jesus' coming for His saints.

It's the Heavenly Signs and The Rapture that cut short the Tribulation of the saints. The Beast now has bigger problems!

But — **if the Great Tribulation is 3½ years long** ... 1,260 days ... 42 months — **how can it be cut short at all?** Is that a contradiction?

Last week ... **I suggested that Jesus' Coming for His saints was approximately 12 months prior to His return on the White Horse** at the Battle of Armageddon.

I believe that is the amount of time the days are shortened — 12 months.

But ... **how do we reconcile this shortened period with a Great Tribulation of 3½ years?** An assumption!

Let's double check a couple of key passages often used.

Revelation 13:4-5, 7

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "**Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?**"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and **he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.**

7 **It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.** And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

The Beast has authority over the world for 42 months ... till the defeat at Armageddon.

BUT -The saints will be rescued/caught up 12 months earlier. The Beast's power will be greatly diminished in the final year (suffering God's wrath and the 7 Trumpets!)

Daniel 7:21-22

21 "I was watching; **and the same horn was making war against the saints**, and prevailing against them,

22 **until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.**

The horn (the Antichrist) was making war with the saints.

Daniel 7:25

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High,

Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law.

Then **the saints shall be given into his hand**

For a time and times and half a time.

The saints were given into his hands for time, times and half-a-time.

“The saints” is now in italics in the latest NKJV Bible — which means those words aren’t there. KJV ... ESV ... NASB and many other Bibles just use the word “they”. **What “they” does the verse refer to?**

Greek Septuagint: “And power shall be given into his hand for time, times and half-a-time”.

It seems the 3½ years here is referring to his authority to seek “to change times and law”.

If the Beast is Islamic ... and the horn is the Islamic Antichrist ... then **the reference is to: trying to impose Sharia Law ... the Islamic Calendar** (including the sanctity of Friday worship).

So ... **Daniel 7:25 does not explicitly state that the Great Tribulation on the saints lasts 3½ years.**

CONCLUSION.

Once the Abomination of Desolation appears ... it will be 3½ very difficult years till the Kingdom begins — the “crisis at the close of the age”.

- For the saints — the Tribulation of those days will be cut short.
- The Lord Jesus comes in the clouds to rescue His people — about one year sooner!
- The Rapture cuts The Tribulation short — at least for the saints!