

The 7 Greatest Threats of the Great Tribulation

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All nations and government bodies who seek to defend themselves engage in some kind of threat assessment process. By assessing threats, a nation plans its military expenditures and strategic placements. Depending on the direction of the threat a threat axis will be set. Judgments will be made on how frequent the threat might present itself and how much of an impact that threat will be if it occurs. Threat analysis is relatively simple and answers a series of questions. What is the threat? What direction will the threat come from? How frequent or often will the threat present itself? And finally, what is the threat impact?

As end time believers, we are anticipating the Great Tribulation, a 3 ½ year period prior to the coming of the Lord. Most of us have heard enough of the prophecies to know that the Great Tribulation will be a difficult time for believers. Life will not be as it is today. We will be oppressed and our lives will be at risk.

Many believers today don't deal with the Great Tribulation at all. Some hope for a pre-tribulation rapture and ignore the prophecy of the Great Tribulation. Still others hope that they can "hunker down" somewhere and outlast the event with stored food and ammunition. Very few do any kind of serious "threat analysis." They look to themselves and their personal beliefs for salvation.

Quite honestly, if God doesn't save and deliver us from the threats in the Great Tribulation, then none of us will make it. Only by trusting Him and what He says will or will not happen is the path through this future period of time.

Let's review some basics so that we are speaking of the same period. The Great Tribulation begins in the season of winter with the shutting down of an altar on the temple mount. The daily sacrifice of morning and evening lambs will be stopped (see Daniel 12:11-12). Approximately 30 days later a statue of the antimesiah will be set up on the temple mount. This is the prophecy of the *abomination of desolation*. The Great Tribulation will last 1290 days from the shutting down of the altar. The last 5 months of the tribulation will be in darkness (Revelation 9:1-3, 5). It is referred to as the *final days of the indignation*. A 45 day period will follow the tribulation resulting in the resurrection of the saints (the rapture), the day of the Lord, and the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles with the Lord in Jerusalem. Getting through the 1290 days is the tough part.

There are numerous threats that will confront the tribulation saints. The world will be in travail. The people of the world will be gathered for the most part in large city areas to be controlled. Everything will be rationed and there will not be enough. Hope will be dashed and there will be no options or choices for anyone. According to the prophecy math, at least half of the world's population will die during the Great Tribulation prior to the Day of the Lord.

The seven greatest threats to the tribulation saints will challenge them if they escape, survive, and endure to the end. It is those threats that we will address in this article. They are listed in ascending order of threat to the tribulation saints.

1. God's judgments
2. The darkness and the demons
3. Antimesiah and the mark of the Beast
4. Lack of basic food and water
5. Disease (Communicable)
6. Other people (Amalek at the edge of the camp)
7. Unbelieving and fainthearted brethren within the camp

God's Judgments

The book of Revelation outlines a series of twenty-one judgments that will occur at the end of days. The majority of these judgments occur in the days of the Great Tribulation. You are probably familiar with the seal, trumpet, and plague judgments of the book; however, the very first judgments of the Great Tribulation are not listed in the book of Revelation. The prophet Ezekiel explains the judgment that comes upon the "house of the Lord" first while the 144,000 are being sealed (an event that happens early in the Great Tribulation).

Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his shattering weapon in his hand; and among them was a certain man clothed in linen with a writing case at his loins. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case. And the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity, and do not spare. Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." So they started with the elders who were before the temple. And He said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" Thus they went out and struck down the people in the city. Then it came about as they were striking and I alone was left, that I fell on my face and cried out saying, "Alas, Lord God! Art Thou destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Thy wrath on Jerusalem?" Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is very, very great, and the land is filled with blood, and the city is full of perversion; for they say, 'The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!' But as for Me, My eye will have no pity nor shall I spare, but I shall bring their conduct upon their heads. Then behold, the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case reported, saying, "I have done just as Thou hast commanded me."

Ezekiel 9:1-11

When an altar is first set up on the temple mount and begins operation with the morning and evening lambs, not everyone of the faith is going to think that this is a good thing. In fact, many Christian leaders will be opposed and speak against the altar. This same altar will be opposed by the antimesiah and his hordes. When the antimesiah is successful in shutting down the altar service, the Great Tribulation will begin. If a Christian has participated in this process, he will have made a huge mistake. Joining with or agreeing with anything that the antimesiah does cannot be the truth in these days.

Judgment comes first on the household of God. When Gabriel goes to seal the 144,000, writing the name of God in their foreheads, six other angels follow to judge all those of God's house who participated in the abomination that makes desolate.

I have said this many times in my public ministry: do not speak against the altar that will be set up in the future on the temple mount. Even if you don't understand the theology or how it is God's ownership symbol of the Earth, remain neutral and just watch. I personally won't stand within 50 feet of a brother who has blasphemed the altar at the start of the Great Tribulation.

The prophet Ezekiel saw the severity of God's judgment upon the remnant and cried out for our sakes. It will be clear to us in that day that God's judgment is very real and, based on His discipline of us (believers), unbelievers are in very serious trouble.

With the exception of this first judgment the remainder of the Revelation judgments are not for the believers. Just like in Egypt, God poured out many judgments that struck Egypt, yet the children of Israel were spared. The same will happen to us in the Great Tribulation. Therefore, God's judgments will be severe and numerous, but they are not a threat to us directly. Our awareness of these judgments and their purpose will help us tremendously to avoid the difficulty associated with them.

Before, we leave this threat I should also mention one judgment that will affect us. It is the scorching of the Sun.

And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

Revelation 16:8

You will need a good hat and covering for that one.

The Darkness and the Demons

The fifth trumpet angel and the fifth bowl of plague explained in the book of Revelation share something in common. They are both prophecies of darkness to come on the Earth. The fifth trumpet offers more explanation as to how it occurs and what happens as a result. It is caused by a heavenly body, comet or asteroid, striking the Earth. A great abyss will be opened and much debris will be cast into the atmosphere. This airborne debris will cause the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars. But something even more frightening will come from the abyss. Apparently, a horde of demons that are highly organized will travel about the surface terrorizing mankind.

Maybe you are asking yourself why God would permit such things to appear. I believe it has to do with the nature of God's judgments. Some people believe in demons, so God is going to give them some to prove that He is the Lord. Let's review the key prophecy of this special judgment.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And they were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Revelation 9:1-5

This judgment comes in the last five months of the Great Tribulation. It is not something to be concerned with at the first; however, it is a very serious and frightening type of judgment. Defending

against the demons will require green things. Hopefully, evergreen bushes and trees will still be present. But even more effective will be the 144,000 with the name of God on their foreheads.

If you are a tribulation saint who has joined yourself with other believers and some of the 144,000, then this threat will be minimal. Otherwise, it will be a living nightmare.

Antimesiah and the Mark of the Beast

The antimesiah is to come to power at the beginning of the Great Tribulation and rule for 42 months. The antimesiah himself is not the great concern here, it is the governmental system that will support him that will affect the citizenry. One of the most powerful elements of his governmental system will deal with the economics of the world. The mark of the beast “system” will affect the ability to buy or sell.

And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Revelation 13:16-17

The prophecy also goes on to say that anyone taking the mark in their hand or forehead is automatically doomed to eternal judgment. So how do people “buy or sell” in the Great Tribulation and avoid the mark of the beast?

If you are an unbeliever and have not escaped yet, your choices are limited to only taking the mark. But if you are a believer, then you will have left the system of buying and selling. You won't even be living in the same community anymore. You will be in the camp of the righteous. Therefore, there is virtually no threat to a believer in this situation.

If, however, a believer returns to this system having left it earlier, then they have made a clear choice of eternal death.

Many believers fear that the government in the days of the Great Tribulation will be opposed to believers. This fear is well founded; however, the government will probably not come looking for believers hiding and evading in the wilderness of the peoples. The reason is obvious. They will have their hands full keeping track of all the people in the cities. They will have no desire to hunt down small groups and try to bring them into their fold.

If you remember the ancient exodus from Egypt, God dealt with the Pharaoh and his chariots at the Red Sea. Israel did not have to lift a sword against him. The same will be with us. God will deliver us from the antimesiah and the antimesiah will write us off, believing that we will die on our own. Yet, God has pledged to deliver us and save us.

But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Matthew 24:13

“And fear not, O Jacob My servant,” declares the Lord, “And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you,” declares the Lord, “to save you; for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly, and will by no means leave you unpunished.”

Jeremiah 30:10-11

The threat of the antimesiah and the mark of the beast system is only a threat to those who have not

joined the camp of the righteous and escaped with those who endure to the end. Therefore, to the believers this is a threat primarily to the remaining world.

Lack of Basic Food and Water

No mortal can live for any significant period of time without food and water. If God is going to save His people, then He will have to supply the necessary food and water (the basics of life) to those brethren who escape from the cities during the Great Tribulation. With that being said, it is comforting to recall that God had already done this very thing in the ancient exodus from Egypt.

The children of Israel left Egypt traveling into the wilderness of Sinai and the land of Midian. The Bible tells us explicitly that God provided manna in the mornings and water came flowing from a rock. Sometimes we gloss over this miracle, but the fact is that Israel would not have lived for the 40 years in the wilderness without God supplying these resources.

The Great Tribulation is a much shorter time period (only 42 months) compared to 40 years. The real question here is not "Can God do this?" Instead, the question is whether we believe God will do this for us?

I am certain that question will not be answered until we are in the Great Tribulation. We will have to come face to face with God to know this answer. In the ancient exodus, God used the lack of food and water to see what was in the heart of the people. This is a lesson we need to learn ahead of time. I am certain that we will be tested as well.

And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

The lack of food and water is very threatening to people at anytime; however, for the tribulation saints it will be more of a test to see if we have learned the lessons of the past and whether we have learned to trust the Lord with the basics of life. This is the real agenda planned for us when it comes to experiencing the Great Tribulation.

And I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord God.

Ezekiel 20:35-36

Therefore, we can conclude that the lack of food and water is really not a threat to the tribulation saints. God has promised both manna and water for us during the tribulation.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.

Revelation 2:17

They will not hunger or thirst, neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them, and will guide them to springs of water.

Isaiah 49:10

Disease (Communicable)

Disease causes the most deaths among human beings in the history of the earth. World Wars don't compare to what one global pandemic can do. This is why the present world's concern for swine, Asian, or bird flu is so compelling. Disease doesn't stop at borders and effect just one country. It spreads and keeps on spreading until it runs its full course. This is a very serious threat to the people of the world. The only effective way to combat disease is through quarantining and lack of contact.

The Great Tribulation will have a major problem with disease. If governments in their emergency planning try to collect and hold their citizens in the large metropolitan areas, they will facilitate the spread of disease, whereas tribulation saints who have escaped the cities and are dwelling in camps completely separate from others will have taken the best steps to avoid contagion and its spread.

It is the Torah that specifies the proper definition for clean and unclean. By using the Torah commandments in the camp, the people of the camp will take the exact steps needed to avoid the diseases that will come upon the world. The Psalmist speaks of the plague that will be in the Great Tribulation and our protection in the camp of the righteous.

You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes, and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent.

Psalms 91:5-10

Therefore, the threat of disease in the Great Tribulation is minimal and based upon keeping the Torah commandments of clean and unclean in the camp of the righteous.

Other People (Amalek at the Edge of the Camp)

When the Great Tribulation starts, there will be many who will not cooperate with the emergency procedures established by the governments. There are many citizens right now who already have a survival mentality and are storing food and ammunition. They don't share our theology. They will be attempting to save themselves.

A man once told me that he didn't need to store food at all. He said that with his gun he would be able to get all the food he needed whenever he needed it. He wasn't referring to hunting for deer or elk. He was referring to taking whatever he wanted whenever he wanted at gunpoint.

The children of Israel were not alone in the wilderness when they left Egypt. There were other people in the wilderness called Amalekites, who were raiders and bandits. Amalek would raid the edges of the camp and attack those who could not defend themselves.

As tribulation saints we will face the same threat. In fact, we will face our own version of Amalek in all of the various nations that we will escape from. This is where the threat has differing outcomes. If the tribulation saints try to negotiate with or avoid hostile actions by Amalek (the raiders of the camp), great harm will come to the camp of the righteous. Instead, the Scripture is very forthright in telling how we are to deal with such a threat in the Great Tribulation. We are to kill Amalek on sight.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." ...and he said, "The Lord has sworn; the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

Exodus 17:14,16

The Lord has dealt with Amalek for a long time. He has never faltered in His judgment against Amalek. The destruction of Amalek is one of the 613 commandments of the Torah.

*Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt,
Deuteronomy 25:17*

*Therefore it shall come about when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your
surrounding enemies, in the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance to
possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.*

Deuteronomy 25:19

The threat of other people raiding the camp of the righteous in the Great Tribulation is a very real threat and it will have to be addressed in a very specific manner. Moses appointed Joshua and had him select specific men to battle Amalek. I am certain there will be those appointed in the camp of the righteous to deal with the same issue. For the life of the camp, it will be essential that they are appointed quickly and given charge to protect the camp accordingly.

Unbelieving and Fainthearted Brethren within the Camp

This is the greatest threat to the camp of the righteous during the Great Tribulation. Not everyone who enters the camp of the righteous at the start of the Great Tribulation will be truly trusting the Lord. They will be like water seeking the lowest level, following others mindlessly, and looking for future advantage for themselves.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, not everyone believed the Lord in the same way. They all saw God deliver them with great judgments, they heard His voice at Mount Sinai, yet even those events did not keep some from rising up against Moses and the leaders in an effort to get more control or advantage for themselves.

The testimonies of Dathan, Abiram, and Korah are clear examples of those who sought control over the camp, against God's anointed leaders. We will have the same problems and issues come upon us in the camp of the righteous in the Great Tribulation. There will be those who have brought monies of gold and silver which they won't be able to spend in the camp. Only by leaving the camp will their monies be able purchase anything. They threaten the safety of the camp when they attempt to return. These rebels and transgressors will be found out by their lack of faith in God's deliverance. Here is how Ezekiel describes our exodus and their judgment.

"As I live," declares the Lord God, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord God. "And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I shall purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the Lord."

Ezekiel 20:33-38

This agrees with the instruction that the Apostle Paul gave us.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all

passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

I Corinthians 10:1-11

The tribulation saints are the believers at the "ends of the ages." The threat of making the same mistakes that our ancestors made leaving Egypt is the greatest of all threats to us in the Great Tribulation.

God will fight for us. God will save us and deliver us. God will provide food and water. God will lead us and not abandon us. God is for us. There is no question about where God is or what His intent is. The only question remaining is with us. What will we do? Will we trust Him or seek our own way?

As it turns out, these seven great threats against believers in the Great Tribulation translate down to only one: will we hold onto and trust the Lord for our deliverance?

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