

Is the church not going through the great tribulation?

For as long as people have seriously studied the scriptures, they have not always come to the same conclusions on various subjects.

So it is with the question, "Does the church go through the great tribulation?" This question is frequently asked of me. Personally I wish it were true that the church does not have to go through the great tribulation, but my study of scripture has led me to believe that Christians will go through the great tribulation. Many Christians through all of biblical history have lived through terrible times of persecution and I would like at least to be prepared. The problem with Christians who believe the church is not going through the great tribulation is that if they do see the church entering the great tribulation, there is a chance they will be greatly discouraged, or may even fall away.

In my bible study about the end times, I did not look into detail at the differences of opinions in perspective regarding the church and the great tribulation. Only regarding 'the one who holds back ' have I given my opinion.

For those who would like some background, I shall try to explain the differences in perspective.

When I study the different reasonings, I think they are mainly based on:

1. calculating the 70 weeks of Daniel.
2. the idea that the wrath of the Lord is the same as the great tribulation.
3. the restrainer, or the one who holds back, the Holy Spirit or the Church would be.
4. the rejection, or adoption from Romans 11

We will further investigate the issues .

The calculation of the 70 year-weeks as mentioned in Daniel.

Daniel gives a prophecy that he has received from God. (Daniel 9:24-27, NIV).

24 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 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 on a wing I of the temple I he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

The "Seventy sevens"

In those 70 weeks a lot will happen. We are talking about Year-Weeks. Seventy sevens. They are biblically 70 year weeks 360 days each. This is generally not an issue, so I do not get into the details here.

The transgression will be finished;
sin ended;
iniquity reconciled; and
eternal righteousness will be brought.
Vision and prophecy will be sealed and
the most holy will be anointed.

This all happens in the last year-week.

When do these 70 weeks start?

That doesn't seem difficult. Verse 25 says: "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem"

So, when was the beginning – so that we may start counting?

According to Nehemiah 2, that occurred in the month Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes.

Now it no longer seems so difficult to find the date that King Artaxerxes had given the word to restore Jerusalem. Unfortunately I am not an expert in history, so I have to listen what others say about that. It is difficult because I have read a number of statements that ... each came with different dates.

This certainly makes it uncertain as to when that first week began, and so makes our ability to calculate the start of the 70th week problematic. . . And it's all about that seventieth year-week. This is the year-week where the significant differences arise.

Many Christians who argue so strongly that we, as believers, will be with the Lord when the great tribulation starts build their calculations primarily on a specific date when the 70 weeks starts. They propose that the first 69 weeks end on the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a colt. Others, however, calculate that those 69 weeks ended when Jesus' public ministry began, so when he was thirty years old. Still others ...

Which brings us no further. We must admit that using a firm start date for the 70 weeks is not reliable, and see if we can get more understanding by simply reading the Bible. That has always been the best way for me on other issues, so why not now? Let's just compare Bible with Bible.

As we read those texts from Daniel 9 again with special attention we see if we can find clues that can help us to better understand.

²⁵“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ “
 “It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.”

I noticed some people find it difficult to understand why there are two numbers in the text. I want to be sure you will understand what these two numbers mean.

First is mentioned 7 sevens, that is 7 Year-Weeks or 49 years. Jerusalem was restored and rebuilt in those 49 years. The second number is 62 sevens, that is 62 Year-Weeks.

The text in Daniel says: “After THE 62 sevens...” That means after the aforementioned 62 sevens, and after the earlier mentioned 7 sevens (total 69 Year-Weeks) “the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing”.

The New King James Version says:

²⁵Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. ²⁶And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself”

Here we see that unto the Messiah the Prince it will take seven (year) weeks and sixty-two (year) weeks. Pay attention to the last line of this text: “shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.”

First we must determine when that is: **after** 69 weeks. This is the week following that sixty-ninth week. So it must be the seventieth week. That seems logical, but in many arguments I read it looks like this is not clearly understood. The Messiah will be cut off, but not for himself. He will be cut off **after** 69 weeks, so in the 70th week.

There was never an Anointed One who died “but not for himself” then Jesus.

Jesus died for us!

The second part of verse 26 is a parenthesis. I'll come back to that later. For clarity, I will show these lines as a whole:

The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'

Then the prophecy resumes about the Messiah in verse 27.

"In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.

When we read these texts well, we see that the Messiah in the seventieth week was cut off, and that happened in the middle of the seventieth week, He ceased sacrifice and offering.

For anyone who knows the story of Jesus dying, it is clear that these two events coincide. When the Messiah died the veil of the temple was cut from top to bottom in two. The Lamb, of whom all the previous sacrifices were merely a symbol of, was sacrificed, “once for all.” Hebrews 9:27. No more sacrifices were required.

At the middle of the last year-week, after the three and half year ministry of the Son of God on earth, the covenant that God made with Israel was suspended. He has not rejected Israel. Israel is still God's people, but the covenant regarding the Messiah has been suspended.

As we have seen in many other studies many prophecies are fulfilled in two ways. Usually we see a literal fulfillment first and later a spiritual fulfillment. We have seen in other Bible studies that can also be reversed.

Also in these texts, we see that what is written 'he will put an end to sacrifice and offering' will happen again.

God suspended the covenant with Israel, but they don't know that, or at least the Jews do not recognize that. They assume that God still has a covenant with them. That's why they want the temple rebuilt and its offerings reinstated. We regularly read about that in various newsletters and newspapers.

The Lord himself has indicated that another temple will come.

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."....
 (Matthew 24:15, NIV).

That holy place is defined by Paul in 2 Thessalonians as 'the temple'.

...the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
 (2 Thessalonians 2:4, NIV).

We thus see that the abomination of desolation, which we already encountered in Daniel, will sit in the temple of God. That temple must be there otherwise it wouldn't be possible. And then of course the sacrifices will also be brought back. But then the enemy of God will come into the temple declaring himself a god. He will again cease the sacrifices

The great tribulation will begin. Satan will then be thrown to the earth (Revelation 12: 7-18) and gives his power to the abomination of desolation (Revelation 13:11-18).

Daniel chapter 12 speaks to his people, the Israelites. In verse 1 he says something about the great tribulation:

1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered." (Daniel 12:1, NIV).

God's people, Israel, will be the first target of the devil and his son. It will be a time of trouble for them, such as never was since there were nations even up to the present time. This is the great tribulation. But Michael, the great prince will assist Israel. The dragon, the serpent, the devil, will chase them, but Israel will be able to flee to the desert, where they will be kept, from the face of the serpent for three and half years.

But that is something that makes the devil angry.

17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

(Revelation 12:17, NIV).

The devil is going to war with the remnant of the seed of Israel, especially those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, will get a hard time. Who are they?

Who are the rest of the seed of Israel?

Who keep the commandments of God?

Who have the testimony of Jesus?

These are not the people of the world, unbelievers. The rest of her offspring could, of course, be the Jews which are still spread across the world. But do they have also the testimony of Jesus?

Paul shows the Romans that the children of promise apply to posterity.

Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

(Romans 9:7-8, NIV).

It is not just the called of the Jews but also the called of the Gentiles. (Romans 9 :25). These are the Christians of the Gentiles.

So what we see is that Jesus began his ministry when He was thirty years old. Three and half years later, halfway the last year-week the Messiah was 'cut off', while there was nothing against him. By his death He ceased the sacrifices, an outward sign of this was that the veil in the temple ripped from top to bottom.

The second half of the last year-week begins when the abomination of desolation will sit in the temple of God to

show that he is a god. Then begins the great tribulation for God's people and the rest of her offspring that have the testimony of Jesus.

The parenthesis in Daniel 9

When we talked about the prophecy in Daniel 9 we didn't discuss the previously mentioned parenthesis. We will do that now.

The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'

At this time in history, our eyes are more and more opened to the role of Islam in world affairs. We also get more knowledge of Islam itself. Books by Joel Richardson and Walid Shoebat help us to understand more about the relationship between Islam and Christianity. These writers have a deep knowledge of both religions.

We learn thereby to understand how the Muslims think and what their future expectations are as they are written in their sacred writings, the Koran and the Hadith.

This site is called "Bible Open". We study things about the Bible, but it can be very instructive to see what Islam, as a significant religion, has to say. This is especially true when it makes things clearer as we study those same issues in the Bible.

For example, many texts in the Bible describe the Antichrist. Those definitions are very similar to the description which Islam gives to their, expected leader, the Mahdi.

According to Islamic scriptures that Mahdi will enter a covenant of peace with a Cohen, that is a Jewish priest. This covenant will be concluded for a period of seven years.

Some significant books have been written on this subject, both by Islamic scholars and by the aforementioned writers. This subject is too big for this study. But when we read the parenthesis from Daniel 9, and take account of what Islam says, then it seems apparent that the prince who comes is the Mahdi, the new Caliph of the Muslims.

The covenant that he will confirm will be to many a heavy covenant. Imagine an alliance with the leader of the Muslims, that is an alliance with the devil for Jewish believers. Many in Israel will experience that in this way.

But Israel will enter this covenant because they are hungry for peace. Israel is completely surrounded by Muslim nations who shout the loudest that Israel must be destroyed. So peace is very important. And there will be peace, as we read in the Bible.

3 "While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape."
(1 Thessalonians 5:3)

That peace will suddenly turn into a great tribulation. And that will happen when the ruler of a people that come will put himself in the temple to show that he is a god. He is the antichrist.

When the antichrist sits in the temple he will cease the daily sacrifice. Thus the prophecy of Daniel 9 is then fulfilled twice. The first time through Jesus, the second time through the "anti-Jesus."

The wrath of the Lord

(This section is also in the study of "the Last Things")

Is the GREAT TRIBULATION the same as THE LORD'S DAY?

Often the argument is used that the church is not going through the great tribulation because God has not appointed us to suffer wrath, as we read in Thessalonians.

"9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. "(1 Thessalonians 5:9, NIV).

There is a difference between 'tribulation' and 'wrath'. Christians have always been oppressed. Oppression remains the same whether it is large or not. Large only indicates the scale. What is the difference between being martyred in the first century to the testimony of Jesus, or being martyred for the same testimony in the last century? The persecuted from the past and those of the (near) future need all God's help.

"so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them." (1 Thessalonians 3:3).

But is the day of His wrath then the same as "the Lord's day"?

To find out we compare a number of Bible passages . We begin in 2 Thessalonians

"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."
(2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, NIV).

Paul reassures the Thessalonians "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **and** our being gathered to him,... saying that the day of the Lord has already come."

Paul here clearly states the moment of our union with Him at the beginning of the Lord's day. But, he says, before that happens, the man of lawlessness will be revealed.

The prophet Daniel also speaks of the man of lawlessness "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 on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."
(Daniel 9:27, NIV).

And:

31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation."
(Daniel 11:31, NIV).

And:

"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."
(Daniel 12:11, NIV).

The context of these verses (vs.24) show that one period is deferred that lasts 70 weeks. We could not go into that now, but meant are year-weeks. This means that it is 70x7 = 490 years.

In that last year-week will happen that the abomination of desolation will be revealed. Also, in this last year-week, for the people of Israel, transgression will be finished, sin will be put to an end, wickedness will be atoned, and everlasting righteousness will be brought. These latter things will happen when Jesus returns.

The ruler of a people to come, says Daniel, will cease sacrifice and he will reveal himself as the abomination of desolation when the second half of the last year-week begins.

Jesus also cites Daniel in his speech on the last things:

15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."
(Matthew 24).

Thus that time will be three-and-a-half-years. Half a year - week. Daniel speaks in this context about 1290 days. Thirty more than 1260 days. Why? Frankly, I have still no certainty about what this means.

These 1260 days are also mentioned in Revelation.

"1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the

moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. 4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. 5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

“woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has gone down to you!
He is filled with fury,
because he knows that his time is short.”

”13When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.”

“13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. 4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 He was given power to make war

against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.” (Revelation 12:1-9, 12-14, 13:1-8 NIV).

The woman who gave birth to a male child is Israel. The male child is Jesus.

1260 Days long Israel will be protected by God in the desert. 1260 days is 3 1 / 2 years. It is also a time, times and half a time. Verse 6 and verse 14 tell the same story. We read also about this same time in Chapter 13 of Revelation. The beast will have forty-two months power to say and do profane things and to persecute the saints. This is the time of the great tribulation. This is not the time of the Lord's day. Before that day dawns first signs are visible in the sky.

“31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (Joel 2:31, NIV).

“9 See, the day of the LORD is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.

10 The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light.

The rising sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give its light.

11 I will punish the world for its evil,
the wicked for their sins.

I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty
and will humble the pride of the ruthless.

12 I will make man scarcer than pure gold,
more rare than the gold of Ophir.

13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble;
and the earth will shake from its place

at the wrath of the LORD Almighty,”

(Isaiah 13:9-13, NIV).

Signs on sun, moon and stars "I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. ..."

This is the "Lord's Day" (vs.9), the day of His burning anger.

If we compare these Bible passages, it appears that the Lord's day, the day of His wrath, comes after the signs at the Stars, Sun and Moon.

Matthew 24 shows that these signs are immediately after the tribulation.

29"Immediately after the distress of those days
"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,"

Conclusion:

The "great tribulation" is NOT the same as the Lord's day".

"The one who now holds him back"

(This section is also in the study of "the Last Things")

We read 2 Thessalonians 2.

2:1 "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.

7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-10, NIV).

To understand what Paul is talking about, we have to ask ourselves some questions. These answers have to be answered by the bible, otherwise it remains guessing.

The subject is the man of lawlessness.

Question 1: Who is this man of lawlessness?

The answer is given in the same text. Although the NIV translation is not that clear as the KJV. The NIV says: the man doomed to destruction. The KJV says: the son of perdition. That is the son of satan. Satan brings also a son in this world, but to its nature, he will be an opponent of God.

The Son of God brings peace and eternal life and Jesus came to fulfill the law. (Matthew 5:17).

But the son of Satan will bring destruction and lawlessness.

His coming will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders. (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

God's Son didn't do false miracles, but real wonders. Jesus did not seductive iniquity, but He brought God's justice.

Question 2: From whom gets the son of satan his power

The answer is logical: from his father. Like father like son.

"44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44, NIV).

Jesus got His power from His Father when the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove.

Jesus was in the dessert for 40 days after that. Then, when John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus began to preach the gospel of God. This was the first time He went public. Satan will give the son of perdition his power. We read in Revelation 13:11

11 "Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed." (Revelation 13:11-12, NIV).

The beast had two horns LIKE the lamb, but he spoke like the dragon.

This is clearly an imitation of the Lamb, the Son of God, but the imitation was not perfect: the beast spoke as the dragon.

And this beast exercises all the power of the first beast before his eyes. The first beast is the fourth kingdom, the resurrected (Eastern) Roman Empire or the Byzantine Empire, the Caliphate, which existed until 1924. Now we are seeing signs that this resurgence is the Caliphate. And when this Muslim conglomeration of Muslim states will be a fact the Mahdi (for us the Antichrist) will be the leader. Then he will get his power from the dragon (the devil). (Revelation 12:9 and 13:4).

The imitation-lamb (the son of the devil) speaks as the devil and performs great miracles. (2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:13).

From Revelation 12 and 13 it shows that the son of perdition gets his power when the devil is removed from heaven. (Revelation 12: 9) (see also 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

Here we see a parallel with the Son of God the Father: The Son of God received all power when God opened the heavens and His Spirit, Who is one with God, sent to earth and declared with that being one with the Son.

The son of the devil will receive his power when his father, who himself is a spirit, comes from heaven to earth. I believe that this parallel is not meant by the devil, but equally done the way it goes.

When we compare Bible with Bible it is clear that "he who now holds him back" is satan.

Again a parallel.

Jesus was thirty years on earth, but He was, as it were, held back by His Father, to act publicly with power.

The son of perdition will set himself in the temple to be known as a god. But he will not do that earlier than when his father is removed from heaven.

And then the great tribulation begins. That will last for three and half years.

"7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

9 The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

(Revelation 12:7-12, NIV).

How much time?

"When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach."

That is 1260 days or 42 months. Rev. 12:6 en 13:5).

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." (Revelation 12:17, NIV).

"He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given

authority over every tribe, people, language and nation."

(Revelation 13:7, NIV).

This is the offspring of Abraham.

"Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring." (Romans 9:7-8, NIV).

Paul speaks here about people who confess that Messiah (Christ) is the Lord.

The time of Satan's distress will be 3 1/2 year. (Compare Revelation 12:6, 12:14 and 13:15).

But this is not everything...

The GREAT DISTRESS is the end of an era. But not the end of everything!

At the end of that tribulation Jesus is coming.

29 "Immediately after the distress of those days "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." (Matthew 24:29-31, NIV).

He will gather His elect.

The dead shall be resurrected, and we, if we are still alive at that moment, will be changed and from that time be together with Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

Then will happen what is foretold in Revelation 20:6. We who have part of that first resurrection will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him as kings, for thousand years.

A wonderful future.

When we stay focussed on Jesus and expect all our strength from Him, we will be given the strength we need to endure all that horrible things of the great tribulation. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can bear under it. (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Let us prepare spiritually to persevere in our faith in Him who loves us.

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

(James 1:12, NIV).

"if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us."
(2 Timothy 2:12, NIV).

The rejection, c.q. the adoption in Romans 11

The fourth point which is used by some Christians to prove that the church is not going through the great tribulation is based on Romans 11.

It's about the following:

Paul says that the rejection of Israel by God, is the reconciliation of the world. Their acceptance will be life from the dead. This is not something that I want to oppose. Explained by those who believe in the pre-resurrection is that Israel was set aside by God on the last day of the 69 weeks of Daniel. And when he takes them back the 70th year-week begins.

Further they explain that the resurrection of the dead is the resurrection of the church.

The setting aside of Israel was the creation of the church as a result. The adoption of Israel will cause the removal of the church.

The argument that Israel by God, on the last day of the 69th -week of Daniel is set aside, is based on a controversial calculation. Moreover, this argumentation ignores verse 26 of Daniel 9, which states that **after** the 62 weeks (=7 + 62 = 69 weeks) the anointed one will be cut off while there is nothing against him. As we have seen, verse 27 explains in more detail, that this will happen halfway the seventieth year-week, as he'll cease sacrifice and offering. The veil tears!

Jesus then explains, just before his death in Matthew 24, that a great tribulation will come as the abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place. When Jesus died the first half of the seventieth year-week ended. When the abomination of desolation will stand in the temple the last half of the 70th year-week will continue.

There will be a great tribulation for 1260 days.

It is stated that Romans 11 meant that God had rejected the Israelites. And that if they accept the Messiah, he will take them back.

That is "life from the dead". And this life from the dead, according to this reasoning, can only take place in the resurrection from the dead when the church will meet the Lord in the air.

I think it is incorrect to say that Israel is rejected by God, actually it is more "temporarily set aside". Although this is due to the fact that they rejected the Messiah, but a little later Romans 11 clearly refers to branches that have broken away. This is something God has in control. God did not spare the natural branches because of their unbelief.

Then we read the text which speaks of 'life from the dead'.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

(Romans 11:15, NIV).

The reasoning which is followed says: If Paul in Romans 11: 15 speaks of "life from the dead", that must relate to the resurrection of those "being in Christ". And this description fits only the church. Because the church has been baptized into Christ, the church is his body. Jesus was the "first-fruit" who rose from the dead, then "those of Christ" (1 Cor 15:23,24), that is the church. This is the caught up of the church.

What Paul is saying, again according to this reasoning, is this: the setting aside of Israel resulted in the birth of the church. The adoption of Israel therefore means the removal of the church.

In other words, the 70th year-week of Daniel was postponed to build first the church. When the 70th year-week begins the church is complete and they will be removed of the earth.

The adoption of Israel is nothing but life from the dead - the caught up of the church.

So far the reasoning used.

There's a lot of truth in this story, but the conclusion that it is proved that at the beginning of the seventieth year-week the church is complete and removed from the earth is not correct.

The whole story, quoted from Romans 11, is also true if it is assumed that the church is caught up after the great tribulation, that is at the end of the seventieth year-week, when Israel is again adopted when the Lord establishes his kingdom of peace in Jerusalem.

The last sentence says that the adoption of Israel is nothing but life from the dead. That is, of course quite correct, because that is also in the Bible. But to have the "rapture of the church" to equate this event is not correct. If Israel again is adopted, then this is for them "life from the dead".

As for us was when we were born again from the dead.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
(1 Peter 1:3, NIV).

Of course we also will be literally resurrected from the dead, at least if we are deceased at that time, otherwise we will be changed. But we are already now spiritually raised from the dead. We are born again. In the same way Israel will be resurrected, if they also accept the Lord. Then it will be for them also 'life from the dead'.

This whole issue doesn't make clear what we are discussing: is the church going through the great tribulation?

There is however an interesting point in Romans 11, that, in combination with other Scriptures, give clarity in this case. These texts are 25-32.

25 "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full

number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:
 "The deliverer will come from Zion;
 he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
 27 And this is my covenant with them"
 (Romans 11:25-27, NIV).

The wickedness of Jacob will be removed by the Lord when He will be in Zion.

In Jeremiah 3 the Lord say:

14 "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD,
 "for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.
 15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, ... 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem
 The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather
 in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No
 longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil
 hearts. ... (Jeremiah 3:14-17, NIV).

But before that, before the Lord the wickedness of Jacob (= Israel) turns away ...

3 the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem,... 5b Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.
 (Zechariah 14:3-5, NIV).

Then He will pay back trouble to those who trouble them and to them who were oppressed, and are oppressed, refreshment ...

" This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."
 (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 NIV.)

On that day we, and all who have come to faith, will look to Him with amazement. (2 Thessalonians 1:10 NIV.)

This is the day our Lord will come and we will be united with Him.

This is the beginning of the Lord's day.

And when all resistance is overcome and the Redeemer has entered Zion He will turn away the wickedness of Jacob (Israel) .

At his death he has partially hardened Israel. But that will be taken away when the fullness of the Gentiles, believers from the nations, has entered into the Kingdom of God.

Numerous texts show that the wickedness of Jacob no earlier than that Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the Lord " is taken away.

From the foregoing therefore it shows that the believers, the church, will not enter the kingdom of God before the day of Jesus' arrival on the Mount of Olives. Unfortunately, that will only happen after the great tribulation. I say unfortunately because I'm not happy, as a human, with the thought of tribulation. But I also know that God is able to give strength. As He did in the first centuries of Christianity, so will He do in the last days.