

The Tribulation – Part 7

We've been studying the great tribulation. In II Timothy 3:1, it says, *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

And then in Jeremiah 30:7, it says, *Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.*

Jacob's name was changed to Israel, so we know that Israel will go through the tribulation. We've seen that and we've looked at that as we have studied the tribulation, and we've also looked at the fact that the people of the church, just before the tribulation begins, will be raptured out of this place. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 talks about that.

We also read that in I Thessalonians 4:16. It says, *¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Why should we talk about the rapture of the church or the catching away? Once again, I remind you that the word "rapture" is not found in the Bible, but the catching away, the calling up of the saints of God, of the church, will take place and that is where we get the word "rapture" from, *harpazo*, the catching away. This will take place.

Why do we teach that? If you keep reading the scriptures, you'll find it says that we do that to comfort one another. We need comfort in this day and time that we live in right now, but

more so looking to the future when we see the great tribulation. Comfort one another in knowing that you're not going to go through that if you've trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior. You will go up to be with Him when He says, "Come up hither," when Christ descends in the clouds and He says, "Come up hither."

The people of the church after the rapture... you say, they just go up there and they go to sleep. No, no. We don't go up there and just go to sleep. There are several things that take place during this period of time as the tribulation starts and during the tribulation.

Individually, the church, the people of God today who have trusted Him, individually, we are already gone now. We're with Jesus Christ. Individually, the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place, according to II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10. The Judgment Seat will take place individually and then we see that collectively for the people of the church, the ones who have trusted Jesus during this time that we live, the Marriage of the Lamb will take place. The church becomes the bride or the wife of Christ.

It says in Revelation 19:7, *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* The wife, that's the church, that's collectively, we will be considered the wife of Christ. Now, I don't understand all of this. I simply know what the Bible says, and we will be considered, we will be close with Jesus Christ. We will be considered, this is the church as a whole, as the wife of Christ at that time of the Marriage of the Lamb. The Marriage Supper takes place following the Marriage of the Lamb.

I believe during the tribulation after the marriage, the Lamb and His bride will celebrate their marriage with the grandest supper that has ever taken place. Revelation 19:9 says, *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

We should never doubt God's Word. We should just listen to God and take Him for what He says. And once again, I go over these things so that our hearts, your heart could be comforted during this specific time that we live in today. Looking forward to that blessed hope that we will be with Jesus Christ. Comfort each other. Comfort that person with you. Comfort those people around you by letting them know that, once they receive Jesus as Savior, we're not going to be here during the time that's coming on this world.

During the tribulation will there be any good news? Will there be any gospel? Even though this time of tribulation will be a time when God will judge sinful men, it will also be a time when people will be saved. Even in the midst of judgment, God's grace can be seen. Even at the darkest hour of human history there will be a ray of light. God will reach down in love and save people by grace. Remember, God will even use an angel to carry good news to those who dwell on the Earth.

In Matthew 24:14 it says, *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

And then Revelation 14:6-7 says: *⁶And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give*

glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Yes, in the midst of all this great turmoil and time of difficulty and all the things that we can't even imagine that are coming into this world and upon this world and upon the people, there still will be the grace of God at work. He still wants to save people. Some of the people found in the tribulation, and we spoke of this in a previous study, we've seen that there will be a great multitude of Gentiles that will be in the tribulation, according to Revelation 7:9 and 11:9.

We also found that Jacob, or Israel, is one of the people groups found in the tribulation. Genesis 35:10 says, *And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.*

In Jeremiah 30:7, it says: *Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.* This, of course, is speaking of the last three and a half years of the tribulation, or the great tribulation.

In Daniel 12:1, it says, *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* And I made notice the last time that "written in the book," the book of life, trusting Jesus Christ as Savior. The Jews at that time will receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah, as their King, and also as the Savior. They must receive Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that it's by the shedding of blood. Remember all the sacrifices that we read of in the Old Testament that the Jewish people performed. That was only a covering. It looked forward to the time when Jesus Christ would shed His own blood, and that blood of Jesus Christ not only covers, it removes. It does not cover; it removes sin when we trust Him as our Savior. That's the only way anyone goes to Heaven; it's by trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Second Timothy 2:10 says: *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

We spoke of this before. If the elect spoken of in II Timothy 2:10 are Christians, then why should Paul say he endured all things that they could obtain salvation. Aren't Christians already saved? This salvation is in Christ Jesus, Paul says, and there is no other means of salvation other than that of Jesus Christ. And since Christians are already saved and not in need of salvation, then the elect of II Timothy 2:10 must be from Paul's natural lineage, the Jews.

I believe Paul is speaking of Israel in II Timothy 2:10 as he was in Romans 9:3. He says: *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.* According to the flesh? Israel, the Jewish people.

And in Matthew 24:22, it says: *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

There are many things we could look at under that subject, and we look at this as knowing that, even in time of turmoil, that God's grace will abound and people will be saved, not only the Jews but Gentiles, as well.

You may be thinking, "Oh, I'll just wait till all this takes place." Well, let me say this, that the Holy Spirit, His ministry will change at that time. We're still saved the same way, but you will go through a difficult time, not discounting the fact that, if you get saved during the tribulation period, you're still going to suffer. But you don't have to. You can get saved now and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and you don't have to worry about going through the tribulation. God wants to save you right now.

By the way, when we say it's very easy to get saved today, it's a gift. God wants to give you a free gift today by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior. That gift is eternal life. Why wait and, we might say, take a chance? There are no chances with God. He gives you an opportunity and your opportunity to know Him as Savior is today. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time when you need to come to Jesus Christ.

The elect spoken of during the tribulation cannot be the church, those saved now, because the church will be with the Lord. And once again, I Thessalonians Chapter 4 speaks of the rapture of the church, and Chapter 5 of I Thessalonians speaks of the tribulation. The church is gone, according to I Thessalonians 4, before the tribulation.

We want to look at something else now as we think about the tribulation period, the great tribulation. Remember, the first three and a half years are not the great tribulation. It's tribulation. People will say the Bible says peace and safety and then sudden destruction. Peace and safety will be in those first three and a half years, and then sudden destruction comes when the beast, the Antichrist, finally lets people know who he really is. He's the servant of the devil, and he starts killing people. He starts killing Jews. He desecrates the temple and so many things take place during that last

three and a half years that it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, and we've read about that.

Next time, we want to look at the beast, and we want to see who the beast is. Now, I'm not going to name the beast. I don't know who he is, but I want to look at some of the characteristics that we find that the beast has. These characteristics are important to understand that even today, we see people with some of these same characteristics.

May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.

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