

TRIBULATION .... DO YOU THINK YOU WILL ESCAPE IT ?

.... OR .... ARE YOU PREPARED IF YOU HAVE TO ENDURE IT ?

God gave Israel a 'talking to' through Moses. He gave them both warnings and promises long ago, even about **tribulation in the last days**:

**Deut 4:30-31** When **thou art in tribulation**, and all these things are come upon thee, even **in the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;)

he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee,  
nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

**Tribulation** means pressure, oppression, affliction, distress, dire straits.

The word occurs 22 times in the KJV: 3 in the Old Testament, 19 in the New.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus told of folks, who for a while, believe, but 'when the going gets tough' .... because of **tribulation or persecution** .... rather than 'the tough get going' .... they bail out:

**Matt 13:20-21** But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while:  
for when **tribulation** or **persecution** ariseth because of the word,  
by and by he is offended.

Jesus spoke of a '**falling away**' .... **in time of tribulation**:

**Luke 8:13** They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away**.

The apostle Paul identified 'when' the falling away would occur ....

**in the last days .... before the day of Christ comes**:

**2 Thess 2:1-3** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (... **the day of Christ**)

(2 Thess): 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand.

3 **Let no man deceive you by any means:**

for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**

That passage makes it clear that believers will not be 'pre-tribulation' 'raptured' out of here .... before the day of Christ. Paul confirmed it again that 'we' saints will be on earth until the day of Christ comes (Phil 1:9-10).

An old song sings, "This world is not my home .... I'm just a-passing through...." Jesus' disciples were already advised of persecution, too.

They knew to expect it from the world:

**John 15:18-21** If the world hate you,  
ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own:  
but because ye are not of the world,  
but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 **Remember the word that I said unto you,** Page 3

**The servant is not greater than his lord.**

**If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;**

if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But **all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**

Paul experienced this, and lived to write about it, with good cheer:

**2 Cor 12:9-10** And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee:** for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore **I take pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, **in persecutions,** in distresses **for Christ's sake:** for when I am weak, then am I strong.

When Jesus was near the time of His death and ascension, He told His disciples that He would be leaving them soon and He cautioned them again

what this corrupt world system would do to them, because of Him .... but

He also told them not to despair. He is greater than the world (1 John 4:4):

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken unto you,  
that **in me ye might have peace.**

**In the world ye shall have tribulation:**  
but be of **good cheer**; I have overcome the world.

Likewise, the apostle Paul also taught that believers have God's peace in Christ .... and that we can rejoice during tribulations .... because we know 'the end of the story':

**Rom 5:1-5** Therefore being justified by faith,  
**we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but **we glory in tribulations also:**  
**knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

As Jesus linked **tribulation** and **persecution** in Matt 13:21, so also it is associated together in this next context. Believers must **endure** tribulation and persecution .... with a good attitude and words of kindness:

**Rom 12:12** Rejoicing in hope; **patient in tribulation;**  
continuing instant in prayer;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 **Bless them which persecute you:** bless, and curse not.

Jesus asked His Father to forgive those who persecuted Him (Luke 23:34).

He did the very same thing .... that He instructed His disciples to do:

**Matt 5:44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies,  
bless them that curse you,

do good to them that hate you,  
and pray for them which despitefully use you, and **persecute you;**

Jesus was the perfect example:

**Isa 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Paul taught the same principal, as Jesus did, and as Isaiah prophesied.

.... and Paul applied that same doctrine to us:

**Rom 8:35-37** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

**shall tribulation**, or distress, **or persecution**, or famine,  
or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 **As it is written**, For thy sake **we are killed all the day long**;

**we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** (quoting Psa 44:22)

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Peter also taught this same thing .... with Christ as a pattern for believers:

**1 Peter 2:21-23** For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps**:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

The fact that the church must endure the persecutions and tribulations from the unbelieving world .... is but a **SURE SIGN** that God will repay the wicked for how they mistreat His saints. The ones who trouble believers have been dishing it out .... but one day (the day of Christ) .... they're going to take it .... **GOD is going to get them back. Payday someday:**

**2 Thess 1:4-10** So that we ourselves glory in you

**in the churches of God for your patience and faith**

**in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:**

5 **Which is a manifest token** of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be **counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:**

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to **recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;**

When will that happen? That was the question of the martyrs asked in **Rev 6:9-11**). It will be in the day of Christ .... 'when' the Lord comes .... at the end of the 70th week of Daniel .... at the last trump:

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

**8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:**

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When Jesus descends from heaven, it will be to judge and make war (Rev 19:11-16), and to resurrect His saints (1 Cor 15:51-54, 1 Thess 4:14-18):

10 **When he shall come to be glorified in his saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (FYI, that passage is all in ONE sentence.)

To **persecute** is to harass, punish, or harm in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict; to cause to suffer because of belief.

To live godly is a matter of **personal choice**, but it will cost being pursued .... chased after .... for the purpose of stopping the witness:

**2 Tim 3:10-17** But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, **patience**,

11 **Persecutions**, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; **what persecutions I endured:**

but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 **Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Remember, let no man deceive YOU by any means (2 Thes 2:3).

But don't fall away .... instead .... hang on:

(2 Tim 3): 14 But **continue** thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church of God and wasted it (Gal 1:13, 1 Cor 15:9). After his conversion, Paul pulled through many persecutions (2 Cor 6:4-5, 2 Cor 11:23-30). He encouraged believers to **persevere**:

**Acts 14:22** Confirming the souls of the disciples, and **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and that **we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**.

Saints throughout all ages have experienced **tribulations and persecutions**. But **in the LAST days** .... there will be an intensity of it. When the abomination that maketh desolate is set up (Matt 24:15) .... then will come a time of **great tribulation** like the world has never seen before:

**Matt 24:21-22** For **then shall be great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

We know by verses that the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy will be a period of 7 years. **Great tribulation** will begin in the middle of Daniel's 70th week .... (thus, 3-1/2 years into the covenant Israel will make with the man of sin) .... but **great tribulation will end before the end of the week**.

In **Rev 13**, details of this time, the last 3-1/2 years, are prophesied.

The 'beast' will be killed by a sword and resurrected (Rev 13:3, 12, 14).

He will blaspheme God (Rev 13:6) .... and kill the Lord's people:

**Rev 13:7** And it was given unto him  
**to make war with the saints, and to overcome them:**  
 and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

What will bring about **great tribulation?**

Personally, I believe the mark of the beast will bring on **great tribulation,**

because, people will have to **either take it or die:**

**Rev 13:14-18** And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And **he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:**

17 **And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

During that time, believers should not assume it is safe to be out in the market-place. If they get captured .... it will likely be their death:

**James 4:13-15** Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, **and buy and sell, and get gain:**

14 **Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.**

**For what is your life?** It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye ought to say, **If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.**

Next we will read **James 5:6** in its context to see that, in the last days, the righteous will not withstand against their own murders:

**James 5:1-11** Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. (Matt 19:23-24, Jer 9:23-24)

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; (Ezek 7:19, Hag 2:8)

and the rust of them shall be a witness against you,  
and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.

Ye have heaped treasure together for **the last days**. (Prov 11:4)

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields,  
which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth:

and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears  
of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton;

ye have nourished your hearts, as in **a day of slaughter**. (Jer 12:3)

6 **Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.** (Keep this verse in mind when we read the next passage.)

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto **the coming of the Lord**.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth,  
and hath **long patience** for it,

until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 **Be ye also patient;** stablish your hearts:

for **the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned:

behold, **the judge standeth before the door**.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets,

who have spoken in the name of the Lord,

for **an example of suffering affliction, and of patience**.

11 Behold, **we count them happy which endure**.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job,

and **have seen the end of the Lord;**

that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Jesus taught the same principal of 'non-violence' against the oppressors:

**Matt 5:38-39** Ye have heard that it hath been said,

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, **That ye resist not evil:**

**but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek,  
turn to him the other also.**

Jesus told His followers not to fear those who kill them:

**Luke 12:4** And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that **kill the body**, and after that have no more that they can do. (Matt 10:28)

The way of the religious world will be such ....

that to kill Christians .... will feel like they're doing God a favor:

**John 16:2** They shall put you out of the synagogues:  
yea, **the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**

Remember **Rom 8:36** (quoting Psa 44:22) about the murder of the saints .... and consider Paul's encouragement in that light:

**2 Tim 1:7-8** For **God hath not given us the spirit of fear;**  
but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.  
**8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,**  
nor of me his prisoner: but **be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel** according to the power of God;

There is coming a time of great tribulation .... when it will be costly to stand up for the Lord .... not with money .... but with one's physical life:

**Matt 10:33** But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (Luke 12:9)

Paul also wrote about the same thing, in the context of the resurrection:

**2 Tim 2:12** If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:  
if we deny him, he also will deny us:

During that time (the last days), it will be dangerous to have church meetings. But they will need support groups .... as the day of Christ nears:

**Heb 10:23-25** Let us **hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;** (for he is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,**  
as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another:  
and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching.**

John wrote to the angel of the church in Smyrna about the last days, when the saints will be convicted and killed:

**Rev 2:9-10** I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:** behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and **ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**

Jesus' disciples questioned Him about the timing of the end of the world, and His coming. He told them signs that are the beginning of sorrows:

**Matt 24:9** Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and **shall kill you:** and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

In **Rev 6:9-11**, the martyrs cried to God to judge and avenge their blood .... but they were told to rest for a little season .... until their fellow-servants are killed as they were:

**Rev 7:13-14** And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Peter's prophecy will help believers get through great tribulation:

**1 Pet 3:14-15** But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

**1 Pet 4:19** Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Paul wanted believers who have experienced God's comfort during sufferings .... to comfort others .... during tribulation:

**2 Cor 1:3-5** Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and **the God of all comfort;**

**4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**

**5** For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

So .... TRIBULATION .... Do you think you will escape it ?

.... or .... Are you prepared if you have to endure it ?

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*

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