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Second Chance For Salvation

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Tribulation Salvation

I would like to begin by stating that I am not telling people that they don't need salvation today. However, I am a realist, not an idealist. Reality dictates that after the rapture, people will be left behind because of

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their own unbelief, procrastination, or pride. The point of this article is not to reassure people that they can wait to believe in the Lord until after the Rapture happens. It is simply a look at what the scriptures have to say about salvation during the Tribulation. Those people 'lucky enough' to actually live through that time of wrath will have the opportunity to repent, but they also need to know that they will likely be martyred for their faith. It will be a long, hard road.

The foundation of our relationship with the Lord is faith, not proof. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The Lord asks us to have faith in Him, and to trust Him by faith alone. It is my belief that, by rapturing the church as He said He would, God is making one last attempt to prove His deity to those who resisted. God's purpose is ALWAYS redemption. While He IS removing the church to protect them from His wrath, He is also reaching out to a lost and dying world"

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As described by Jesus in the book of Matthew, the Tribulation will be a time that has never been seen by this world and never will be seen again (24:21). The rapture, in itself, will be a major calamity unlike anything the world has ever seen. There is no guarantee that those who are unsaved at the time of that great event will live through it long enough to repent!

Lately, I have seen some differing opinions on the issue of salvation during the Tribulation. Some people believe that only the Jews in general will be saved. Others believe that only the 144,000 Jews mentioned in Revelation will be saved. Still others believe that no one will be saved during the Tribulation, however, I cannot find scriptural support for those positions and during my study on this topic, what I did find actually disproved all of these ideas.

Let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about this issue. (All following emphases are mine.)

1. What does God want?

Malachi 3:6a For I [am] the LORD, I change not

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God is not an ever-changing God. He is now as He was and as He will be. It is His desire that all men come to salvation. These verses prove that His purpose is to redeem the lost. We can trust that does not change because of the rapture, but, rather, the rapture is because of that purpose.

2. Can people repent during the Tribulation?

Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

Revelation 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

From these passages, we can see that mankind will be given the opportunity to repent during the Tribulation. These are but a few of the references found in Revelation that show repentance and the lack thereof during the Tribulation period. Therefore, we can be confident that God's offer of salvation and forgiveness will still be available.

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3. Who are the Tribulation Saints?

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Revelation 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? 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.

The people who repent and turn to God during the Tribulation are called the Tribulation Saints. First we see that they are a multitude from all nations, of all peoples and tongues. Therefore the Tribulation saints will not be limited to only the Jews or the 144,000. In addition, they will come out of the Great Tribulation, therefore they can not be the Old Testament saints or the Church. It is simply logical to believe that “the multitude that no man can number” are the people who turned to the Lord during the Tribulation.”

4. What is the purpose of the two witnesses?

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

The purpose of the two witnesses is to preach the gospel to all the world during the Tribulation. The fact that the Lord has seen fit to send these two men to accomplish this further clarifies that there is the opportunity for repentance and salvation during the Tribulation.

5. Is there a point of no return?

Revelation 13:16-17 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: 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.

Revelation 14:9-10 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

During the Tribulation, all people will be faced with a destiny-sealing choice. This is what is referred to as the “mark of the beast”. Scripture indicates that it is tied to the economy, as no man will be able to buy or sell unless he accepts this mark. Additionally we can see that the mark represents the

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worship of the Antichrist and the acceptance of his reign on earth. Much speculation abounds about what this mark will be—ranging from a tattoo to a computer chip—but truth be told, until it is instituted, no one will know for sure what it will be. What is important to note here is that the acceptance of the mark will be a willful action and direct rejection of the Lord. The wrath of God will be poured out on those who accept this mark. This passage indicates that it will be hell on earth for those who accept this mark.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

This passage states that the Tribulation Saints who will be martyred for proclaiming the name of Christ will live and reign throughout the millennium. It also states that those who have taken the mark will not be a part of this group—their fate is determined as well. The distinction that the Lord is making here is that the mark will be a defining moment—the point of no return. Once this decision is made, fate is sealed for eternity.

6. Who will populate the Millennium?

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

At the end of the Tribulation when Christ returns to set up His millennial reign, the earth will be populated by those who believe in Him and survived the Tribulation.

7. Who is the restrainer?

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 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; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

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2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

This scripture shows that the Antichrist cannot rise to power or be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way. One prevalent theory holds that the Holy Spirit is the restrainer that will be taken away, thereby making salvation impossible. However, reading from the book of Joel, that theory is not acceptable.

Joel 2:28-29 And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Joel 2:32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

This passage shows us not that only will the Holy Spirit remain on the earth, but also that the Lord is now and will be willing then to forgive those who repent. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent and will remain with the believers throughout the Tribulation. Without His influence, no one would be able to be saved! The restrainer referred to by Paul in this letter to the Thessalonians is the workings of the Holy Spirit in the church.

8. What about the great delusion?

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 [Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Wow! Now there's some scary stuff. Paul is saying here that the Lord will send a great delusion to those who rejected His truth so that they will believe the lies of the Antichrist. Will those whose hearts are hardened to the message of salvation today still be hardened to it tomorrow? Romans 1:28 tells us that God is patient but He has his limits—He will turn over a stubborn person to a debased mind.

The big question here is, what truth did they receive? In other words, what did they know?

Let's take a look at five distinct representatives of society.

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Case 1: This is an Orthodox Jew with an MBA from Yeshiva University (Jewish College). He knows all about Jesus, but from a historical perspective. He believes that Jesus was just a man that the Gentiles elevated to God status. Out of the blue, I asked him one day what he would think if the Messiah came and it turns out to have been Jesus all along. His response? "If he shows up with holes in his hands, I'm not buying it."

Case 2: This is a devout Muslim. He knows about Jesus, as Islam teaches that Jesus was one in a line of great prophets. Islam also teaches that Jesus (not Mohammed) will return at the end-of-days and gather the faithful to Allah. He also believes that Jesus was not God but, rather, just a man.

Case 3: This person knows the story as well. She is a scientist and rejects the need for God in her life. She can see the benefit for others, just not for herself.

Case 4: A former co-worker of mine is a self-proclaimed Druid. He outwardly rejects the notion of God altogether. He says he wants nothing to do with a God that will allow bad things to happen. Case closed; end of discussion. When his wife went into the hospital for surgery, he was asked priest or rabbi by the admitting nurse. He told her to, "bring me a bush to hug".

Case 5: This is the all paths to God person. This person believes that, just as the Lord confused the tongues at the tower of Babel, He also sent different messengers to different people at different times. Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed are all a part of the Godhead as well as the coming Jewish Messiah, whose role it will be to wrap it all up into a nice neat little package. Two years ago, this described me. Sadly, this is also the fastest growing "religion" on the planet today, and is sweeping college campuses like a storm under the name Baha'i.

Assuming these cases are symbolic of the prevalent mentalities in the world today, and representative of people who do not come to repentance prior to the Tribulation, are they all damned? That sure is a lot of people now, isn't it?

No one knows what God's litmus test is regarding the "what did you really know about the gospel" question. During the Tribulation, He will send a deluding influence which will allow people to be tricked, but only if their hearts are hardened to the truth.

If you are reading this and the Rapture has already happened, do not be fooled! Earnestly pray and ask the Lord to show you the truth. Keep your heart open to the answer. If you honestly want to know, just ask Him and He'll tell you. Hereis some additional information that will explain in greater detail.

So what's the bottom line?

This is why it is so important to come to faith in Jesus now. Better to be safe than sorry!

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Trust me on this one—hedging your bet by waiting on the Rapture is a risky position to be in. I can assure you that you don't want to be driving down the highway being followed by an 18-wheeler driven by a born-again Christian when the Rapture happens. By the time you realize what hit you, it will be too late.

Are you really willing to gamble on the odds that you will live long enough to get a second chance?

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