

SALVATION IN THE TRIBULATION – PART B

What we will be doing in this study is trying to look at all of the various kinds of signs of the outworking of God during the Tribulation. It seems that we can actually group them into three distinct areas.

The first area would be signs that give evidence of the **grace of God at work**. There is the proclamation of the gospel to all of the nations and at the end of the Great Tribulation at the Second Coming there is the salvation of Israel. Obviously, these are tremendous measures of God's grace that are being extended to people without Christ.

The second area would be those signs indicating **opposition to God**. These would be during the actual period of the Tribulation / Great Tribulation when this opposition is occurring. There is a continuing work of apostasy, as well as the rule of the Antichrist and the False Prophet with the corresponding mark of the Beast at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

The third area would be those signs that clearly indicate **divine judgment**. There are the seven seal judgments, the seven trumpet judgments, and the seven bowl judgments. There will be wars, famines, earthquakes, and unbelievable ecological upheavals as never seen before. Then to make it worse, these twenty one judgments become sequentially worse in their severity as they are unfolded by God on the earth and on its inhabitants. No one who is alive will be able to escape the impact of these horrific judgments on their lives.

So, what we see in all of this is both the grace of God and the judgment of God. Today, we primarily see the grace of God at work. I believe that God is judging the world in some sense by simply giving people over to do what they want to do. However, there is no major global work of judgment occurring on the earth today unless you wanted to say that the Covid virus may be one. So, during the Tribulation there is still opportunity for salvation, but there is also impending judgment that is occurring during the continued offer of grace. As long as salvation is available to people, the grace of God is still at work. The grace of God and the judgments of God are working hand in hand to accomplish God's purpose of bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles and the salvation of Israel.

Now, we want to look specifically at the first area of God's grace being extended. Look specifically at [**Matthew 24:14**](#),

Mt 24:14 (NKJV) And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

This was what Jesus taught during the Olivet Discourse about the end times, and specifically the Tribulation / Great Tribulation. He taught that the gospel must be preached before the Second Coming as "**a witness to all the nations**", and that uniquely happens by a divinely sent angel who is sent around the earth preaching the gospel. [**Revelation 14:6**](#) describes some of this event when it says,

Rev 14:6 (NKJV) Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--

I want you to fully appreciate that throughout Revelation that there are multiple angels who are warning people of what is to come in terms of judgment. Just as an example, [**Revelation 8:13**](#) says,

Rev 8:13 (NKJV) And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

My favorite is in [Revelation 14:9-11](#) when angel warns everyone on the planet not to take the mark of the beast.

Rev 14:9 (NKJV) Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

This is nothing more than the grace of God at work in bringing people to Himself, but the vast majority of people will take the mark of the beast and be condemned.

Because of the ministry of the angel proclaiming the gospel, I am of the personal opinion that everyone on the planet will actually hear the gospel. This angel is an incredibly powerful source and is not like the airplane that flies over a stadium during some football game dragging an announcement through the air, but the word that Jesus uses to describe what he is doing in [v14](#) is “**preached**”. It is the Greek word “*kerusso*” and it means that the angel is not only preaching the gospel in a very powerful way, but he is also urging and challenging those who hear the gospel to receive the message and be saved. We could say that he is both preaching and giving an invitation at the same time.

What Jesus is saying is that the gospel must be preached during the Tribulation throughout the world as a “**witness**” (or testimony) to all the nations. God always leaves a witness. The idea embedded in the term “**witness**” is a very strong term. It implies that the gospel will become a very powerful force that has to be reckoned with during the Tribulation. Even during the Tribulation, God is still giving people an incredible chance to be saved. This “**witness**” will call for people to make a decision regarding Christ, and that the decision cannot be ignored. This is simply the grace of God being offered to people who have previously rejected the gospel.

It is my understanding that between the witness of the 144,000 Jews who have been sealed by God, the two witnesses who preach for 3 ½ years, those who are martyred for their faith, and the angel circling the earth proclaiming the gospel, that the gospel message will be extremely powerful. It will be an incredibly strong end-time witness – maybe as strong as at any other time in the history of the world. Every nation will be presented with the gospel and with its claims, and people will be forced to make a decision. Unfortunately, even this powerful witness seems to actually infuriate people even more, and rather than accepting the gospel of grace, they adamantly refuse it and rebel against God with deep anger and resentment. Listen to these three verses in [Revelation 16:9, 16:11, and 16:21](#).

Rev 16:9 (NKJV) And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Rev 16:11 (NKJV) **They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.**

Rev 16:21 (NKJV) **And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.**

You would think by this time in the Tribulation that people would be greatly inclined to come to Christ, but that simply is not the picture that we are given. I say this reverently, but it seems that there is not much more that God can actually do.

Okay, secondly, we want to look specifically at just a few of the definitive signs that indicate opposition to God during the Tribulation. There are the actual events of the Tribulation - persecution, worldwide rebellion against God, and there is a general apostasy, as well as the Antichrist and the False Prophet. There is simply a strong opposition to the kingdom of God. [Jeremiah 30:7](#) speaking of this time of Tribulation, says,

Jer 30:7 (NKJV) **Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.**

[Daniel 12:1](#) speaking of the same, says,

Da 12:1 (NKJV) **"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, *even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.**

The “**time of trouble**” that is mentioned here deals specifically with Israel, but obviously the tribulation spills over into all the world. For instance, people cannot buy or sell without the mark of the Beast. [Matthew 24:9](#), speaking of the followers of Christ, declares,

Mt 24:9 (NKJV) **Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.**

We know that there will be a great apostasy, or falling away during this time. [Matthew 24:10-12](#) says,

Mt 24:10 (NKJV) **And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**

What we know from other passages in the New Testament is that there has always been apostasy within the church. [Hebrews 6:6, Hebrews 10:29, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 2 Peter 2:20, and 1 John 2:19](#) – just to mention a few – speak of an ongoing apostasy. It appears that in the absence of the true church that the overall apostasy during the Tribulation will be greatly increased. The picture given in [Matthew 24](#) is that during the Tribulation that there will arise many false prophets and many antichrists that will continue to draw men even further away from the truth. With the true church removed, there will be a great spiritual vacuum and people will believe almost anything that someone teaches. Everyone will be looking for explanations to help them cope with the end time events, and Satan will surely be there to give them answers. In simple terms, apostasy is a falling away, and in relation to the end time

events it refers specifically to a continued rebellion against Christ and the Christian faith during the time of the Tribulation and Great Tribulation.

Today, it seems that the Christian faith is simply being **tolerated**, and that there is a deep seated global progression of animosity, hatred, and adamant resistance to Christ and Christian values. Many European countries today, countries that previously have known and taught the gospel, stay away from the church in droves and intently deny the cardinal teachings of Scripture that they once use to proclaim. The great Reformation came out of Europe.

We can just imagine what it will be like when the church is removed, false teaching abounding, and the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit removed. Men simply will not have any resistance to their flesh and their fleshly desires. If we think that indulgence in sin is prevalent today, there is probably no understanding of how great it will be during the Tribulation. With that indulgence will be the desire and corresponding effort to remove and eliminate anything Christian, and that includes people saved during the Tribulation period. The hatred will be incredibly pronounced and distinct. Most likely there will be worldwide rulers that make Hitler look like a saint. We know that in the very last days of the Tribulation that the entire world will want to completely annihilate Israel – annihilate an entire nation!

Another of the great signs of opposition to God during the Tribulation is the person and work of the Antichrist. Based on [Matthew 24:23-24](#) we know that there will be many antichrists during the Tribulation period and that they will perform many kinds of so-called miraculous acts.

Mt 24:23 (NKJV) Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

We know from [2 Thessalonians 2:9-10](#) that the actual Antichrist will do the same,

2Th 2:9 (NKJV) The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

So the very purpose of these miraculous signs by the Antichrist and the antichrists during the Tribulation time is to deceive. The antichrists are both rivals of Christ and fierce opponents of Christ, and they have always existed since His first coming. So, the two primary tools of the Antichrist's effort during the Tribulation, and specifically with a multiplied effect, are (1) deceptive miracles, and (2) false teaching.

Since the time of Christ, there has always been a spirit of antichrist in the world. There have always been and always will be manifestations of antichristian hatred and animosity and subsequent actions against the church. However, during this final Tribulation period, there will be a major intensification of hatred for Christ and true believers through the entire seven years of Tribulation.

Thirdly, there will be many signs of divine judgment during the Tribulation. Obviously, the book of [Revelation](#) is the explanation of these events. [Matthew 24:6-8](#) says that there will be wars, earthquakes, and famines. There will be signs in the heavens, cosmic disturbances, pestilences, and intense heat. Parts of the sea and the waters will be turned to blood. There will be loathsome sores on men, darkness, and gnawing pain. Demon angels will be released from the bottomless pit. All of these and much more are described in [Revelation](#) in what are called the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. I have collected

just a few of the verses that deal with these judgments and the angels that administer them in judgment. Just listen as I read some of these to you.

Rev 8:5 (NKJV) Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

Rev 8:7 (NKJV) The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Rev 8:8 (NKJV) Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.

Rev 8:10 (NKJV) Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

Rev 8:12 (NKJV) Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Rev 8:13 (NKJV) And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Rev 14:18 (NKJV) And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."

Rev 16:3 (NKJV) Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man*; and every living creature in the sea died.

Rev 16:4 (NKJV) Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

Rev 16:8 (NKJV) Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

Rev 16:10 (NKJV) Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

The intensity and the strength of these judgments simply cannot be imagined. Literally, billions of people will be killed during this 7 year period – billions. So, what is the simple message to you? Be sure that you are ready. What if our eschatology is wrong and we actually go through the Tribulation or just the first half of the Tribulation? The answer is still the same. Be sure that you are ready to meet Christ.