

## THE BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on HUMAN TRADITION..." (Colossians 2:8) Church tradition and popular teaching tells us that all Born-again believers will be going when the Rapture takes place. But what if this teaching is wrong? What if it is merely human tradition and the Bible really teaches us something else? Remember, the Bible admonishes us:

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, RIGHTLY dividing the Word of Truth." (II Timothy 2:15)*

God also warns His people in Hosea 4:6:

*"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee..."*

### **BLESSED HOPE or PRE-WRATH?**

Back in 1991, I had just written my first book on prophecy entitled: THE BLESSED HOPE. About the same time, the Lord led us to a church in Orlando where Marvin Rosenthal was also a member. Marvin had just come up with an entirely new theory on when Christians will be Raptured in his book: THE PRE-WRATH RAPTURE.

Marvin is a very knowledgeable and scholarly Bible student. His new theory challenged me to search the Scripture to find out what the truth is - as the Bereans did with Paul's teachings:

*"...they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11)*

In so doing, the Lord helped me shed a great deal of human tradition, and He led me to write: THE COMING SPIRITUAL EARTHQUAKE. In it, the Lord showed me new insight as to when Christians will be Raptured.

### **ESCAPE POSSIBLE**

First, let's look into the Old Testament to see what it says about escaping the period known as the Day of the Lord. The Prophet Zephaniah saw the Day of the Lord and how terrible it was going to be. In verse 4 or Chapter 1, he begins a list of those God will "cut off". Included in this list are those described in Zephaniah 1:6:

*"those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him."*

In modern day terms he was referring to what we call "backsliders". Backsliders are those who once walked with the Lord, but turned back to follow their flesh and the evils of this dying world. Through the Prophet Zephaniah, God warns that they will be "cut off".

In God's great mercy, He has Zephaniah give one final word of warning and encouragement:

*"Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the Day of the Lord's anger come upon you." (Zephaniah 2:2)*

*"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it MAY BE (PERHAPS) ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zephaniah 2:3)*

Here God reveals that it may be possible for some to escape the period known as the DAY OF THE LORD. Notice that he says, "it MAY BE" or "PERHAPS" you will be hid from that period. This indicates escape is possible, but not something that is guaranteed or assured. Remember, we are NOT talking about salvation here. We are talking about escaping the Tribulation Period.

## **PRAY TO ESCAPE**

The New Testament confirms this teaching. In speaking to His Disciples, Jesus gives us very important instructions on escaping the Tribulation Period:

*"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. WATCH ye therefore, and PRAY always that ye MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."* (Luke 21:34-36)

Jesus was telling us the same thing the Prophet Zephaniah recorded for us over 2,500 years ago. The Tribulation period is coming upon the whole earth, but it is POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE. Notice, however, that both the Old and the New Testaments indicate that ESCAPING is CONDITIONAL, and not something that is assured or guaranteed.

How does a person escape the terrible time of Tribulation that is coming? Jesus says, "WATCH" and "PRAY". Pray what? "PRAY that ye MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE..."

## **KEPT FROM THE TRIBULATION**

The book of Revelation describes 7 different churches. All are Christians, but only two of the seven have members who will escape the Tribulation period. The first Church with the wonderful promise of escaping is the Philadelphian Church:

*"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also WILL KEEP THEE FROM the HOUR OF TEMPTATION which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* (Revelation 3:10)

The Philadelphian Church members will escape the Tribulation period because of obedience. Because they have KEPT God's Word, God will also keep them from the time of testing. But not all Christians keep God's Word. For example: The Word says you should be Baptized. Many Christians have not been Baptized. The Word says you should Tithe. Many Christians do not Tithe. The Word of God says you should teach "Sound Doctrine." Many have departed from the Sound Doctrines of the Bible.

The above are only a few examples of how Christians fail to KEEP God's Word. There are, of course, many more; but the point is obedience is important to God. Those wise and faithful Christians who are obedient to the Word are given the wonderful promise that they WILL be KEPT FROM the Tribulation.

The second Church with members that will be able to escape is the Church of Sardis:

*"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: FOR THEY ARE WORTHY."* (Revelation 3:4)

Here we see what Jesus was referring to when he told us to pray we are found worthy of escape. Undeclared garments are a picture of the Christian who has not gotten caught up with the cares of this world. Their walk is one of purity and holiness before God.

## **NOT WORTHY**

These few faithful believers found in the Church of Sardis are in stark contrast to those found not worthy. In describing the Lord's return, both Matthew and Luke record a description of the vast majority of the church today:

*"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.."(v.2)*

*"But they MADE LIGHT OF IT (NIV: PAID NO ATTENTION TO IT) and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:" (v.5)*

*"Then he said to his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come (KJ: were NOT WORTHY)". (v.8) (Matthew 22:2, 5, 8)*

Luke records a parallel account in the 14th chapter of his Gospel. In verses 16-24, he describes how the people made excuses on why they could not come to the wedding banquet. One had to purchase land, one had to buy some oxen, and another had to get married. In and of themselves, there is nothing wrong with these activities. The problem becomes when these earthly pursuits and the cares of this life overshadow the return of the Lord. Because these Christians are too caught up with the things of this world, they will be considered NOT WORTHY.

### **LUKEWARM BELIEVERS**

This teaching is also confirmed in the book of Revelation. The Church of Laodicea is the lukewarm church which is described as being cast into the Tribulation (Revelation 3:15-16):

*"I know your DEEDS, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm -- neither hot nor cold -- I am about to spit you out of my mouth."*

These lukewarm Christians are pictured going into the Tribulation (spued out of Christ's mouth) because their DEEDS were found lacking. Many will try to tell you that it does not matter how you live after you are saved. This one verse tends to refute this false teaching, because deeds are very important.

### **RIGHTEOUS DEEDS**

For further proof that our deeds after salvation are important, let's look at the Bride of Christ in Revelation 19:7 & 8:

*"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)."*

Some will argue the King James translation says the fine linen is the "righteousness" that believers receive upon conversion. This is one case where the King James Version is in error. Turning to the original Greek, it says, "the righteous DEEDS of the saints." The Bride of Christ makes herself ready by her righteous acts or deeds after salvation. This same teaching is confirmed in the story of the ten virgins:

*"The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet" (Matt. 25:10).*

Only the 5 wise virgins were ready and able to go into the wedding. They were ready because of their actions. They took along an extra measure of oil in jars along with their lamps (see Matthew 25:1-10). The 5 wise virgins extra oil shows they were obedient to God's word and they were "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), while the 5 foolish virgins were not. The 5 wise and faithful virgins allowed the Holy Spirit to direct and control their life, and when the Bridegroom came, they were ready.

The righteous deeds of the saints and the extra measure of oil the 5 wise virgins carried, distinguish the Bride from the rest of the Church. Because of righteous living, the Bride of Christ has made herself ready.

### **WORKS VS. GRACE**

But, you will argue, "You are talking about a "works salvation" and we are saved by the grace of God." The Apostle Paul knew very well that we are saved by grace and not works:

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8 & 9)*

Paul knew that salvation is a free gift, and nothing can be done to earn it. Works do not play any part in one's salvation. And yet, Paul also knew that there is more to the Christian life after Salvation. Paul knew there was even a higher calling that requires effort as taught in Philippians:

*"IF by any means I MIGHT attain unto the resurrection (GK: OUT) of the dead." (Phil. 3:11)  
Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before," (V. 13)  
"I press toward the mark for the PRIZE OF THE HIGH calling of God..." (V.14)*

Paul knew that salvation is a GIFT, but here he is talking about a PRIZE. A gift is given freely, but a prize is earned. This higher calling is the prize all Christians should be striving for - it is God's reward for faithfulness. Even though Paul was one of the greatest of the Apostles, he was even concerned that he might not measure up for the prize. He was concerned that he might not obtain it:

*"...so that after I have preached to other, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*  
(1 Corinthians 9:27)

### **WHOLE POINT OF PROPHECY**

The main point of studying prophecy should be to prepare believers to WATCH AND BE READY for the return of the Lord. Its whole aim should be to motivate the Christian to live a holy and blameless life that will be found worthy in the sight of God. SATAN DOES NOT WANT CHRISTIANS SO PREPARED!!! For proof that he will succeed to a certain degree, we can find a great multitude of Believers coming out of the Tribulation:

*"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" (V.9) "...These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have WASHED their robes, and MADE THEM white in the blood of the Lamb." (V.14) (Rev.7)*

Here we see a large number of Christians coming out of the Great Tribulation. Notice they had robes before it began because they are seen washing their robes in order to make them white again. They had soiled their garments and needed to wash them. They were not as careful as the few found in the Church of Sardis:

*"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." (Revelation 3:4)*

From this, we can see there is going to be a great separation among believers. A large multitude will go into the Tribulation, and a small group will be taken in the Rapture. The 5 wise virgins are making themselves ready, as a Bride prepares for her Bridegroom; while the 5 foolish virgins are the unprepared, lukewarm believers who will be left behind to be tried in the Tribulation.

Marvin Rosenthal's "Pre-Wrath" Rapture is going to take place for the majority of the Church, but there will also be a "Pre-Trib" Rapture of those wise and faithful believers found worthy of escape. Those found walking the blameless and holy life looking for the Blessed Hope will be taken to be with Jesus before the Great Tribulation begins.

### **WATCH AND GET READY**

Are your robes defiled today? Are you really ready to meet Jesus? The message of the hour is to get ready before it is too late! The message of prophecy is to purify yourself NOW so you won't be ashamed when the Bridegroom arrives. I John 3:2 says, *"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure."* Remember our Lord's instructions: "

*"Watch ye therefore, and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36*

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This newsletter was the basis for Jim Harman's presentation at Ray Brubaker's 1996 International Prophecy Conference. To view that 30 minute video please go to the "**Bride Tab**" at: [www.ProphecyCountdown.com](http://www.ProphecyCountdown.com)