

## Going Through the Great Tribulation

**Author:** Larry W. Wilson

Dear Wake Up America:

After looking over your website, I have to say out of Christian love and duty that your views on God and the Great Tribulation are totally wrong. A God of love will not permit His children to suffer persecution and death during the Great Tribulation. Start reading your Bible and stop distributing this garbage. Yes, a great tribulation is coming upon the world, but it won't touch God's people. They will be taken to Heaven before it begins. Tell Larry Wilson to read Luke 21:36 and get a life. The people who deserve God's wrath are evil people, not the saints. Yikes!

---

Hello Friend:

Let me begin by saying you are free to believe whatever you want to believe about the Great Tribulation. However, I hope you do not overlook this truth: Prophetic beliefs, no matter how sincere and dogmatic they may be, may not necessarily align with reality.

For example, do you remember that almost the entire world's population refused to believe that a flood was coming in Noah's day? What effect did their disbelief have on the event? Zero. Therefore, we must be careful to align our prophetic beliefs with all that God has said on a given topic. As I read it, the Bible indicates that God will permit His children to suffer persecution and even death during the Great Tribulation, but it is reassuring to know that God's children will not have to face their adversaries with human strength.

God will pour out His Spirit on His people and this will empower His children to deal with the conflict that is coming. Even more, through their response to the persecution and their personal testimony, God will be glorified. I may not be able to change your view or attitude on this topic, but I may be able to help someone who is also struggling with this question. So, here's a short response to your comments. Please consider the following six points:

1. - Just before His death, Jesus told His disciples: **"All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you."** (John 16:1-4, emphasis mine)

The words of Jesus are perfectly clear and a casual survey of Church history leaves no wiggle room. Early Christians, such as Stephen, **boldly** stood for the cause of Christ and they suffered to the point of death for their faith in Jesus. (Acts 6) History indicates that nine of the twelve disciples were martyrs for their faith.

So, we should not be surprised that Jesus allowed His disciples to die as martyrs. Jesus said,

**"All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."** (Mark 13:13) **"Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. . . ."** (John 15:20)

2. - The book of Revelation plainly states who will be persecuted during the Great Tribulation. **"The [composite] beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. . . . He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation."** (Revelation 13:5,7, insertion and emphasis mine)

Jesus knows the future. He knows what will befall each saint during the Great Tribulation and He tells His children not to worry about it. He said, **"If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This [suffering] calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints."** (Revelation 13:8) So, the book of Revelation leaves no wiggle room. The saints are going to be persecuted during the Great Tribulation.

3. - Some people say that it is not fair that God should put the final generation through the Great Tribulation when many Christians have lived and died without having to endure persecution and torture for their faith. This argument only arises when history is not consulted.

If we go back and review the past 2,000 years of Christian history, we find that only a very small segment of Christians have escaped persecution and torture for their faith. This small segment appeared after 1776 and they were fortunate enough to live in a nation that was founded on the principle of a separation between church and state.

However, prior to the formation of the United States and the establishment of religious freedom, Protestants in Europe were persecuted and tortured for 1,260 years by the Catholic Church, and prior to the authority of the church at Rome, Christians were constantly persecuted and tortured throughout the Roman empire.

From the time of Christ to the present day, freedom from persecution for Christians is an anomaly. Actually, the question of fairness should be inverted. We should be asking, "Why should a large percentage of Christians today be free of persecution and torture when history says that Christians have been objects of hatred for nearly 2,000 years?" This question is addressed in my book, *A Study on the Seven Seals and The 144,000*. Please see Chapter 4. [www.wake-up.org/Revelation/RevSeg4.htm](http://www.wake-up.org/Revelation/RevSeg4.htm)

4. - Some people use Luke 21:36 to prove that God's children will escape the Great Tribulation. Jesus said, **"Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."** This verse requires some explanation because the intended meaning is often distorted.

When we review all of Luke 21, we find that Jesus was talking to His disciples about (a) the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and (b) His return at the end of the world. Consider these words concerning the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem: **"For this is the time**

**of punishment** [predicted to befall Jerusalem] **in fulfillment of all that has been written** [about this evil city]. **How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers** [because mother and child will perish together]! **There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people** [the Jews]. **They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be** [in ruins] **trampled on by the Gentiles until** [the very end of the world, when] **the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**" (Luke 21:22-24, insertions mine)

Now, consider Jesus' words concerning His return at the end of the world: **"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."** (Luke 21:25-28)

So, Jesus discussed the end of Jerusalem and the end of the world within the same context because there are ominous parallels. Jesus closed His remarks with a parable. **". . . Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near.**

**Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.**" (Luke 21:29-31) Then He said, **"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.**

**For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.**" (Luke 21:34-36) Jesus is not indicating that Christians can escape the Great Tribulation. No, the end of the world will affect everyone living on the face of the whole Earth! No one will be able to escape it. So, Jesus is telling His disciples to consider themselves blessed if they live at any other time than when these things events impact the whole world.

Consider this verse: **"Since you** [the church at Philadelphia] **have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from** [through] **the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.**" (Revelation 3:10)

Some people read this verse and they conclude that the church at Philadelphia (whoever that is) will not have to go through the Great Tribulation because the Greek preposition 'ek can be translated in various ways, including "from" and "through." But, using the word "from" in this verse makes no sense since the other six churches will have to endure the Great Tribulation. Consider these words directed to the church at Smyrna: **"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."** (Revelation 2:10)

Why would Jesus tell the believers at Smyrna to be faithful to the point of death and then tell the believers in Philadelphia they will escape the Great Tribulation? This is a rhetorical question because the premise is false. Jesus does not favor one church above the other. Basically, Jesus encourages the church in Philadelphia and the church in Smyrna with the same message: Stand firm in your faith, even to the point of death, and I will give you eternal life.

5. - Jesus knew that His disciples would suffer persecution and death. Jesus' request to the Father occurred just before His crucifixion: **"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."** (John 17:14-16)

6. - Jesus warned His disciples, **"Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.'** " (Matthew 10:17-22)

In closing, the Great Tribulation will be Christianity's finest hour. The fires of persecution and martyrdom will purge the Christian movement of much dross, and after the refiners fire has accomplished this purification, this dark world will be able to clearly see the difference between those who love righteousness and truth versus those who love evil, lust and lies.

God has predetermined that good and evil will be clearly presented during the Great Tribulation. By putting the whole world in a position of suffering, many who are now blinded by prejudice, lies, ignorance, and hatred will see the light. They will repent and choose salvation through Jesus Christ. In other words, God will first clean house and then He will use the faithfulness of genuine saints to save millions of people who at the present time have nothing but contempt for Christianity. Now, that's what I call a God of love!