

Is the Church IN the Tribulation?

By: David A. Sargent

The question arises about WHEN the "rapture" will take place. And there are three main views of the "rapture" of the Church (the body of Christ or the Bride of Christ).

The question brings about many other questions:

Is the Church going THROUGH the Tribulation Time called "Jacob's Trouble"?

What happens if a Christian TAKES the mark of the beast? Do you Lose Your Eternal Salvation (LYES)?

Who are the "Tribulation Saints" are they "Christians"?

Now for this Study let's examine the 7 churches in Revelation to see if they "FIT" the Pauline doctrine of Eternal Security of the Believer found in Romans 8:25-39.

In the Tribulation called Jacob's Trouble they have to deal with keeping the commandments and the faith of Jesus:

Revelation 12:17, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Revelation 14:12, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

This is NOT Church Age doctrine according to Paul or John's Gospel or Epistles.

Further examination of the 7 churches in Revelation shows that these are Tribulation Saints and NOT Church Age Saints. The word "church" has more than one meaning. It is applied to born again Christians and to the Local congregation and to the actual meeting place.

What happens when you are NOT an overcomer in the Churches of Revelation?

Ephesus:

Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

If you are NOT an overcomer you do NOT get to eat from the "tree of life"???

Smyrna:

Revelation 2:11, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

If you are NOT an overcomer you WILL be hurt of the second death: which is the Lake of Fire! You Lose Your Salvation??? NO! That is NOT the Born Again Church Age!

Pergamos:

Revelation 2:14-16, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

If you do NOT Repent the Lord "...will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." That is at the Second Coming! Where is the Rapture in THAT???

Thyatira:

Revelation 2:20-23, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

If you are NOT an overcomer and repented not you will go "...into great tribulation..."??? Hmmm!

Sardis:

Revelation 3:4-5, "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. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

If you are NOT "WORTHY" or not an "overcomer" you will NOT be "...clothed in white raiment..." AND He WILL "...blot out his name out of the book of life..."!!! and as if that was NOT enough He will NOT "...confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Looks like a LOSS of Eternal Salvation if this is the Body of Christ in the Tribulation! Uh oh! Paul must have been WRONG! Um, NO! Paul wrote to the Body of Christ: who is John writing to? The CHURCHES; are they IN CHRIST? are they the BODY OF CHRIST? are they the SAINTS IN CHRIST? OR are they Local Churches LEFT behind after the RAPTURE of the BRIDE of CHRIST? Of course they are!

Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:10-12, "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. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Look at the issues in all these churches including this one. If you are NOT an overcomer the Lord will NOT "...write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new

Jerusalem..." The Church is called the BRIDE of Christ and so is THAT city! It is the other groups from the Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Saints and the Millennial Saints that are allowed to go INTO that city; but the CITY is the CHURCH. We already have a NEW Name. We are named after the Lord Jesus Christ: "Christian" is our new name! There are NO Born Again Christians in the Tribulation. The New Birth is ONLY for the Body of Christ which is His BRIDE. We don't get saved by works and we don't stay saved by works. We do not have to deal with taking any mark; but they did in the Old Testament under the law and they will have to deal with NOT taking that mark in the Tribulation. The Human Saint is NOT secure in the OT and is not secure in the Tribulation and is NOT secure in the Millennium.

Laodiceans:

Revelation 3:16, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." and Revelation 3:20-21, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Look back up at Sardis for the issue with clothing; but here if you are NOT an overcomer you get regurgitated by the Lord! How does the Body of Christ get OUT of the Lord this way? Impossible! Paul makes it very clear that we are IN HIM and He is IN US. He will NOT deny HIMSELF! This is used to teach that the Body of Christ will LOSE their robe if they don't PAY for these things! It is also used for the Body of Christ to show up naked at the Judgment Seat of Christ by misapplying this to 2 Corinthians 5:1-11; and then running this to Revelation 19:7-8, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." all the while missing the fact that it does NOT say "...for the fine linen is the righteousness of THE CHURCH AGE saints." This is a general statement to all Saints because they all get a white robe but some have to earn it. Unlike the Church which is the Bride of Christ.

Compare Revelation 1:5-6, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." with 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." now consider this passage in light of the 7 churches: Revelation 16:13-16, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Simply the 7 churches are NOT the body of Christ; the BRIDE is up in heaven going through the Judgment Seat of Christ; then the Marriage of the Lamb; and then the Marriage Supper; and returns WITH the Lord Jesus Christ in the armies of God following the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is described here: 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." There is no loss of clothing given in the passage! But there IS in Revelation 16:13-16 for the Tribulation Saint that CAN lose his salvation because it is NOT eternal salvation and contingent partly on WORKS because it is not just a spiritual salvation it is partly physical just like it was in the OT.

Christ has overcome FOR US in the Church Age and that has to do with being BORN AGAIN:

1 John 2:13-14, "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

1 John 4:4-5, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4-5, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Even John knew the difference between the Church of the Born of God and the Tribulation churches that were NOT born of God. Why isn't "born of God" in Revelation to the Churches? It was one of John's favorite expressions!

John 1:12-13, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 3:3-7, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

1 John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

1 John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

1 John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Even Peter got hold of being Born Again: 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

When you place the Church in the Tribulation you put the born again son of God that HAS eternal life in a place where if he took the mark of the beast you would Lose Your Eternal Salvation (LYES) and that makes GOD a LIAR.

The "mark of the beast" is only given here in these passages:

Revelation 13:17-18, "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. 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."

Revelation 14:9-11, "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: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

Revelation 15:2-3, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." The "song of Moses" is for the Tribulation Saint and in particular those in Jacob's Trouble when Moses and Elijah show up during the Tribulation.

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."

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."

This all is in contrast to the RAPTURE of the Church which is NOT during the Tribulation or after it!

1 Corinthians 15:51-54, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on

incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

And in:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

The issue here is that in both accounts this is an event that was a mystery to Corinth and many are ignorant of this in Thessalonica; And it is the "coming of the Lord" when we go "...to meet the Lord in the air..." which is NEVER called the Day of the Lord; this is called the Day of Christ. The Day of the Lord was KNOWN by the Thessalonians: Look at the next chapter!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

But the DAY of CHRIST is NOT the same as the DAY of the LORD:

Philippians 1:10, "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;"

Philippians 2:16, "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 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. 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."

There will be a "...falling away first..." and then "...that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition..." before "...the day of Christ..." which is defined as "...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..." and "...our gathering together unto him..." which means that we are going to know who this "...that man of sin..." IS that will be "...the son of perdition..." which is the Antichrist or the Beast of Revelation 13. You will know it is HIM because of what he will DO to set up a "league" calling for "peace":

Daniel 11:21-24, "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with

the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time."

Daniel 11:31-33, "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days."

Daniel 11:36-39, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

Daniel 8:9-14, "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Daniel 8:23-25, "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

These things deal with Daniel 9:27 but the context covers a greater time period:

Daniel 9:24-26, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall

Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Daniel 9:27, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

This is the time of Jacob's Trouble:

Jeremiah 30:7-9, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

The conclusion of the matter:

1. The Church is NOT in the Tribulation but in Heaven during that time going through the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Marriage of the Lamb as the Bride of Christ and the Marriage Feast.
2. The Tribulation is the Time of Jacob's Trouble - NOT the Church's Trouble.
3. Salvation cannot be LOST if your salvation gives you Eternal Life which only happens if you are born again. This does not apply to OT Saints, Tribulation Saints, or Millennial Saints.

The End