

The Tribulation Proves the Unsearchable Depths of God's Love

Rev. 6 - 12

INTRODUCTION: A week before the hurricane I was counseling at the Benevolence Center of the Center of Hope. I was talking with a man who quickly identified himself as an atheist. He told me that hell was on this earth in broken relationships and in the trials and tragedies of the world.

As kindly as I knew how, I told the man he was wrong. That as bad as things can get in this world and as much as some things cause us grief and pain, that pain and sorrow was small compared to hell.

I told him Jesus described a man who went to hell in Luke 16, and that man stood in the midst of fire, very much awake and conscious, and very, very much in torment and excruciating pain.

In the aftermath of destruction we have experienced, overlaid by tempers getting short, disappointments from strangers and sometimes from those we love, things sometimes going from bad to worse, it is tempting to say, "We must be in the tribulation like I'm reading about in the book of Revelation.

But my friend, we are not. As bad as things are or even if they get much worse, this is not the tribulation.

Jesus said of the tribulation,

Mt. 24:21-22 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Jesus said the tribulation would be worse than anything the earth ever experienced.

In fact, Jesus said that it will be so bad that if God did not shorten it, nobody would live through it. Our entire reading in Revelation this week takes place during this terrible, horrible, no good, very bad time that will take place in the future on planet earth.

And you may be wondering why God would have orchestrated our Bible reading this week to be about this horrific time to come. Isn't what we are dealing with now bad enough? Well, my brother, my dear sister, I believe God has a message of hope and help for us in the midst of reading about the tribulation. In fact, the title of my sermon is **The Tribulation Proves the Unsearchable Depths of God's Love.**

How could such a terrible time demonstrate the love of God?

I. THE TRIBULATION SHOWS THE LOVE OF GOD IN THAT BELIEVERS WILL BE RAPTURED BEFORE THE TRIBULATION BEGINS.

Back up to the end of last week's reading in Rev. 6. Even the first part of the tribulation is horrible. War followed by severe famine, followed by the death of one-fourth of the population of the earth. It is so terrible that we read at the end of chapter 6

Rev. 6:15-17 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Even in the beginning of the tribulation, God's wrath has begun to fall upon the earth.

But God promises that His children, those who have trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord, will not experience the wrath of God.

1 Thess. 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

And to the true believers, Christ promised as we read last week in

Rev. 3:10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Dear fellow believer, God loves us. The tribulation is a time when God's wrath is poured upon the earth. It is not for us. God takes us to be with Him before this terrible, terrible time begins.

1 Thess. 4:16-18 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So, only the lost enter the tribulation. Yet still God demonstrates His great love during the tribulation.

II. THE TRIBULATION SHOWS THE LOVE OF GOD IN THAT GOD OFFERS SALVATION TO THE LOST DURING THE TRIBULATION.

- A. God sends two witnesses to preach in front of the Temple in Jerusalem to declare God's Word and prove His power.
- B. God saves 144,000 Jews and sends them around the world proclaiming the gospel.
- C. God even sends 3 angels, declaring the gospel as they fly around the earth, warning men and women to turn in faith to Jesus Christ.

The result of all God does is the salvation of a great multitude, some from every people group of the world.

Rev. 7:14, 16-17 ... “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

CONCLUSION: Folks, the primary thing I want you to see today is the magnitude of God’s love.

- If the Tribulation demonstrates the love of God, how incomprehensibly grand it must be!
- No wonder Paul wrote

Romans 8:31-32, 35, 38-39 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.