



RAPTURE FORENSICS: PROOFS THAT THE MARTYRS TELL – PART I

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A recent article here, entitled “Checklist: Why the Rapture Is Not a New Delirium,” triggered an outsized number of responses. Most were from pro-Rapture believers. That would not be surprising, given MCM’s primary audience. However, one frequent query we encountered was in reaction to the claim that ALL tribulational Christians—these being those that come to recognize Christ as Lord and Savior after the Rapture—would be sure to perish.

We hold to that view, and will here present our reasons.

We even ask: Why would any Christian want to survive through the Tribulation in the first place? Though tribulational Christians do not have the special position of raptured Christians, they nevertheless are promised a reward at the start of the Millennium, as the Bible clearly states. They will experience the First Resurrection at that point.

As we will show, a literal reading of the Bible clearly and plainly supports the understanding that there will be no Christians that will physically survive the Tribulation period.

But, readers may well ask: Why even concern ourselves with this point? Is it not true that Christians will be removed from the earth (the Rapture) before the time of God’s wrath begins? And if so, why would we even care about the

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course of prophesied earthly developments after that point?

Answer: All Scripture is profitable for teaching (2 Timothy 3:16), and this Biblical issue is no exception. As it turns out, the question regarding the fate of Christians during the Tribulation is a critical one in the defense of the Rapture Doctrine, as we will show.

Perhaps only a minority of Christians today believe in the Pretribulational Rapture Doctrine. They believe that Christians will go through the Tribulation ... presuming that any apocalyptic Scriptures are believed at all. Also, numerous inventive variations of Rapture teachings have emerged—Pre-Wrath, Mid- and Post-tribulational ... etc.

The tales that the Christian dead tell us in Scripture, in this respect refute all these other beliefs regarding the Rap-

ture. If ALL Christians indeed die in the Tribulation, then some glaring inconsistencies are exposed in these variant views, thus giving credence to the Rapture Doctrine.

Positional Differences of Pre- and Post-Rapture Christians

Do all Christians die in the Apocalypse ... and can we prove it? To answer, we must begin by noting the positional distinctions between ALL tribulational Christians, and those of the pre-Tribulation period who are ALL raptured. During the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit is no longer an unction upon earth as during the Church Age. The Comforter has been removed along with the Church, and the Antichrist has been revealed. Those who come to Christ during the Tribulation are not spared suffering and



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physical death (the First Death), as are the raptured saints (who are alive at the time).

Pre-tribulational Christians of the Church Age are translated (physically changed for eternity, this the Rapture) to be in Christ’s presence. Tribulational Christians are not translated to new eternal bodies ... at least, not until after the Millennium. The raptured Christians do not experience the First Death; the latter group do. Tribulational Christians ALL must face a physical death. ALL are certain to become martyrs. Graciously, tribulational Christians are promised the First Resurrection at the start of the Millennium.

While both groups of Christians are given eternal life and share a common eternal fate after the Millennium (neither experience the Second Death), their paths, experiences and positions are very different.

Christians During the Time of Wrath

Without a doubt, people will become believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during the Tribulation Period. As the terror of this time erupts, earth dwellers will come to the recognition that Jesus Christ was who He said He was—the Messiah ... the Savior ... the Son of God. The state of evil in the world, as well as the appearance of the Antichrist, will be obvious to all. The timing of remaining prophetic events is then no longer entirely speculative. These are clearly seen to be unfolding.

By the time of the 6th seal (this the most apocalyptic and shaking to that time), it will be clearly obvious to all

that the world is facing God’s wrath. In fact, they openly acknowledge this fact, saying, “The great day of their wrath has come” (Revelation 6:17).

As such, many people do become Christians during the Tribulation. In fact, there are so many that the Bible calls them a “great multitude” (Revelation 7:9).

However, we may be getting ahead of ourselves. Where does this “multitude” of saints come from, and what is their fate?

The Great Winnowing

The great winnowing of tribulational Christians from earth is described in Revelation 13:11-17. The False Prophet (the Second Beast) orders all to worship an image of the First Beast, and presses all to take upon themselves the mark of the First Beast, so that they can buy and sell. Those that DO worship the image of the beast and take this mark will be eternally damned (Revelation 14:11).

What happens to those who DO NOT take the mark of the False Prophet and refuse to worship the image of the beast? The good news: They are redeemed and therefore will not be condemned to the lake of fire. Nevertheless, they will not be spared suffering. These Christians will be killed.

The Bible clearly says that “[...] all those who refused to worship the image [will] be killed” (Revelation 13:15). Revelation 20:4 confirms this, saying: “[...] I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the

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Two Phases of Slain Saints

We place the aforementioned events shown in Revelation 13, as occurring sometime between/during the fifth and sixth seals. Events that the Bible describes during these seal judgments closely align with the Great Winnowing.

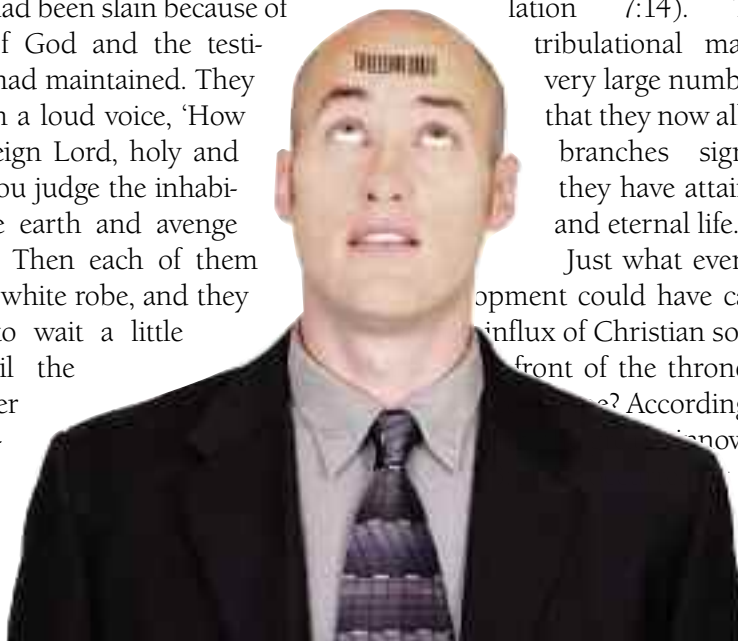
To be sure, Christians are already being slain before the fifth seal. We see these first tribulational Christians that are killed shown in Revelation 6:9-11. The Bible says: “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow ser-

vants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.”

Presented here are the souls of the Christians who have been slaughtered between the Rapture and the time of the 5th seal. They are shown under the altar in heaven and are told to stay there “until the full number of their fellow servants” (Revelation 6:11) are killed as they had been. These earlier Christians are waiting until the rest of the martyrs arrive.

A little later (at the time of the sixth seal), we now see that the “full number” has arrived. As already mentioned, there are so many martyrs at this point that they are called a “great multitude.” John the Revelator says “[...] there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). These souls are identified as coming out of the “tribulation” (Revelation 7:14). They are tribulational martyrs ... a very large number. The fact that they now all hold palm branches signifies that they have attained victory and eternal life.

Just what event or development could have caused such an influx of Christian souls, to have them stand in front of the throne in such a multitude? According to our understanding of Revelation, the final





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“dividing line,” we think. A large number of earth dwellers have refused to take the “mark” and are martyred. By the end of the 6th seal, these souls end up in front of the throne.

Envisioning both phases of the slain saints, says the Bible of them: “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’” (Revelation 14:12-13).

Why Christian Dead Tell Tales

The view that all tribulational Christians will be martyred is problematic for many. For one, it nullifies the case for a Rapture occurring any other time than before the Tribulation. If, for example, there were no Christians alive on earth as of the early stages of the second half of the Tribulation, there could be no Mid- or Post-tribulational Rapture. What would be the point? There is no one—or perhaps only an insignificant number—to be raptured.

Or, let’s assume that the Rapture naysayers are right in that there is no Rapture of any kind. To take this position means that All Christians will go into the Tribulation period. And, more Christians may be added to their number through conversions during the earlier stages of the Tribulation (though this is immaterial to the issue here). However, the question then arises: Why would God allow that ALL Christians in the world be killed during the Tribulation?

Critically, why would God allows some non-Christians and Jews to survive ... but no Christians?

(In Part II, we will present more proofs for the Pre-tribulational Rapture, from the tales of Martyred Christians.) (MC)