

"God So Loved The World" Bible Study

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #23: The Remnant and the 144,000

Before God will bring this wicked world to an end, Jesus prophesied that "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached into all the world for a witness" (Matthew 24:14). When this prophecy is fulfilled every person on this earth who has reached the age of accountability will have made up his or her ultimate choice, either for Christ or against Him.

At this time the whole world will be polarized into only two camps. The Bible describes these two groups, the believers and the unbelievers, in many different ways — the sheep and the goats; those who build their houses on the Rock Jesus Christ and those who build their houses on the sands of their own self-righteousness; those who receive the mark of the beast and those who are sealed with the seal of God, etc.

As a result of this polarization, the closing events of this world's history will culminate with the final showdown in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. As pointed out in an earlier study, this controversy began in heaven when Lucifer, the highest angelic being, rebelled against Christ, the second person of the Godhead (see Revelation 12:7-9).

In this final showdown, which the book of Revelation describes as the war of Armageddon or "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (see Revelation 16:12-16), the conflict will actually be between God's people, the last generation of Christians who are living under the banner of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and Satan's people, those who have deliberately and ultimately rejected Christ and have chosen to be under the banner of Satan, the enemy of the gospel.

At this time the faith of these last generation of Christians will be tried and tested to the utmost and in a way that no other generation of believers have ever been tested. This final test is described in the Bible as the great tribulation or the time of trouble. It will take place just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

This final generation of believers, who will endure this great time of trouble and will triumph over the full force of Satan's attacks, are described in the Bible as the Remnant. In the book of Revelation they are referred to as the 144,000, those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and who loved not their lives unto death (Revelation 12:11).

According to Bible prophecy, we are presently living in the Day of Atonement, the closing events of this earth's history. Therefore, it is God's purpose that every believer living in these last days be a part of that last generation of Christians who will vindicate Him in this final showdown between God and Satan. In this study we will examine what the Bible has

to say about the Remnant, those who will vindicate the full power of the gospel.

1. What did Jesus say will take place before the end of the world?

Matthew 24:14 _____

Note: According to Scripture, God does not want anyone to be lost (see 2 Peter 3:9). That is why He will not bring this sin cursed world of ours to an end until He gives everyone a chance to accept His gift of salvation in Christ.

2. How is the gospel of the kingdom described in the book of Revelation?

Revelation 14:6 _____

Note: The reason why this final message is called “the everlasting gospel” is because it is the only message that offers everlasting hope to mankind and that will be able to carry the last generation of Christians through the great time of trouble.

3. Who gets angry when the everlasting gospel is proclaimed and why?

Revelation 12:12 _____

Note: The devil hates the everlasting gospel because it is the only power he cannot defeat. He will therefore do his utmost to destroy anyone who proclaims this message and anyone who receives it.

4. How does the Bible describe the last generation of Christians and what does the dragon do to them?

Revelation 12:17 _____

Note: The last generation of Christians is described as “the remnant of her seed” (KJV). The word “remnant” in the Bible refers to God’s people who remain faithful to Him no matter what happens or whose faith endures to the end in spite of apostasy or persecution (see Romans 11:2-5).

5. According to the prophet Isaiah, who only will be saved?

Romans 9:27 _____

Note: To experience ultimate salvation it is not enough to believe in Christ, that faith must endure unto the end (see Matthew 10:22). In the last days the Christians who endure the time of trouble and remain faithful to Christ unto the end are called the remnant.

6. What question does Jesus raise regarding His second coming?

Luke 18:8 _____

7. What similar question does John the revelator ask?

Revelation 6:15-17 _____

Note: Judging from what is described in verse 15 and 16 it seems that no one will be able to stand the second coming of Christ. But in Revelation 7, John does describe the remnant who will be able to stand.

8. What must happen before the great tribulation takes place?

Revelation 7:2, 3 _____

Note: Before God allows Satan to test the remnant, the faith of the believers has to be sealed. This means their faith in Christ must become unshakable no matter what Satan and the wicked do to them.

9. How many of the last generation of believers will be sealed?

Revelation 7:4 _____

Note: Is this 144,000 of God's sealed saints a literal number or is it symbolic? This is a question often asked by many sincere Christians. Several factors must be kept in mind in answering this question.

- (i) The language of Revelation is highly symbolic.
- (ii) In verse 4, John does not see the 144,000 but only hears their number.
- (iii) The 144,000 are "from all the tribes of Israel." If this is to be taken literally then the 144,000 must all be Jews.
- (iv) In verse 9, John does see an innumerable great multitude. These must be the 144,000 as they are described as coming out of the great tribulation (see verses 13, 14).

10. What will the 144,000 sing in heaven which no other saint can sing?

Revelation 14:2, 3 _____

11. What makes these 144,000 so special in God's eyes?

Revelation 14:4 _____

Note: The reason why the 144,000 will be given special privileges in heaven is because their faith endured the great tribulation and in doing so they vindicated God in the final showdown between Christ and Satan.

12. How does the prophet Daniel describe the great tribulation?

Daniel 12:1 _____

Note: The great tribulation will be a time of trouble that has not been experienced by any previous generation. The prophet Jeremiah gives a similar description (see Jeremiah 30:7). But both prophets indicate that God's sealed people, the remnant, will ultimately be saved.

13. What will make the time of trouble so terrible for the Remnant?

Note: The issue in the great tribulation will be similar to what Christ faced on the cross when He felt forsaken of God (Matthew 27:46). In this great tribulation God will produce a people who will manifest the faith of Jesus even though they feel forsaken of God (Revelation 14:12). This is the faith Christ manifested on the cross and which will be reproduced in the remnant.

14. What must the Remnant be rooted and grounded in for their faith to become unshakable?

Ephesians 3:16-19 _____

Note: The ground of the believers' salvation is the unconditional *agape* love of God we studied in Lesson #2. It is faith in this love that is able to keep us from falling in the great tribulation.

15. What should all Christians be convinced of regarding God's love?

Romans 8:38 _____

Note: When we are rooted and grounded in God's *agape* love, we will know that nothing on earth or in heaven can ever separate us from God's love, which was manifested to mankind in Christ (see Romans 6:5-10).

16. How does the prophet Jeremiah describe God's love?

Jeremiah 31:3 _____

Note: There will never come a time when God will stop loving us. We may fail Him and we do many times; but He will never fail or forsake us. Even though we will feel forsaken of God in the time of trouble, by faith we will know better and this is what will win in the great tribulation.

17. According to the apostle Paul, Who is the source of our power in Christian living?

2 Corinthians 4:7 _____

18. How does Paul describe the Christian battle between faith and feeling?

2 Corinthians 4:8, 9 _____

Note: We must never confuse faith with feelings. The two may be in harmony when all is well, but under distress or persecution the two will part company. Our feelings will then tell us that God does not love us or that we are not good enough to be saved. In contrast, our faith will convince us that we have been accepted in Christ and God will never stop loving us or forsake us. This is the kind of faith the last generation of Christians must develop in order to be sealed by God and be part of the Remnant.

19. What principle did Jesus use to describe solid unshakable faith?

Matthew 7:24-27 _____

Note: Our faith must be established on the rock Jesus Christ if we are to withstand the coming storm. We believe from Scripture that this storm is soon to come. It is our sincere hope and prayer that you, dear reader, will be rooted and grounded in the *agape* love of God and that His faith may become your faith to prepare you for the soon coming crisis. May this be your experience.

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