

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Long, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Rogers (Ashely Law's Granmother), Mr. Winns.
Out of town: Jared, Angela, and Constance Law

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Tribulation

By Derek Long

Many Christians in America have lived their lives serving God in relative peace and tranquility. Most Christians I know in America have never been put in prison for their faith. Most Christians I know in America have never been physically harmed for their faith. Most Christians I have known in America have not faced physical death for their faith. As a result, most Christians I know in America, including myself, have very little firsthand experience dealing with tribulation. For some of us the concept of suffering tribulation seems like a strange thing (1 Peter 4:12).

While Christians in America may not presently face the same type of tribulation faced by Christians in the first century, we still must deal with persecution of various sorts (2 Timothy 3:12). Our persecution normally involves ostracism, ridicule, etc. (Luke 6:22-23). These forms of persecution may not seem too severe but they can still hurt tremendously and create challenges to our faithfulness if we are not careful.

What are some things the Bible teaches us about tribulation as servants of God?

- **Tribulation can cause one to stumble.** When Jesus gave the parable of the sower, He spoke of seed falling on stony ground which sprang up quickly but did not endure when tribulation or persecution arose (Matthew 13:20-21; Mark 4:16-17). Tribulation tests our commitment to the Lord. Tribulation can show a lack of commitment if it leads us to abandon the Lord. Being able to handle tribulation correctly is a sign of spiritual maturity.
- **Tribulation will come upon the earth while the righteous are upon the earth.** Recently I was part of a discussion where someone was thinking about problems which might face America in the future. They thought they were in no danger because they felt the righteous would be removed from the earth before any major tribulation. God does not promise to remove the righteous from the earth before bad calamities occur. Bad things laid in store for the city of Jerusalem and yet Jesus did not say the righteous would be taken from the earth before Jerusalem fell. Jesus warned the disciples to leave the area when they saw certain signs because it would be bad when Jerusalem fell (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20). Jesus even says the tribulation would be shortened for the elect's sake. Jesus does not teach the righteous will be removed from tribulation upon the earth but rather they will face calamities like everyone else.
- **Tribulation can produce spiritual strength.** In Romans 5:3-4, we read of how the righteous glory in tribulations. The text says, "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

and perseverance, character; and character, hope." If we continue to serve God faithfully while undergoing tribulation, it can produce qualities the Christian needs. Tribulations do not have to separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35). We can continue to be the type of Christians we need to be while undergoing tribulation. The crucial part is we must be "patient in tribulation" (Romans 12:12).

- **Tribulation can help us trust in the comfort God can provide us with.** Paul faced tribulation but it led him to have a deeper appreciation of the comfort God provided during the tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). The comfort we receive from God during a tribulation in our life can later help us comfort others who face similar tribulations later on.
- **Tribulation may come now but a reward comes afterward.** When Paul spoke of the tribulations the Thessalonians were facing, he reminded them God would "repay with tribulation those who trouble you" (2 Thessalonians 1:4-9). I would rather suffer tribulation from others now than be repaid with tribulation by God. The church at Smyrna was facing tribulation (Revelation 2:9). They were reminded tribulation would last a short while ("ten days") but if they were faithful they would receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Tribulation is not pleasant at the moment but can lead to a great reward in the future.

Let's be people who "through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22)!