

Left Behind

So it finally happened. People had been talking about the return of Jesus for a long time – in fact, it had been a topic of intense interest from the very day Jesus ascended back into Heaven. Throughout the centuries countless people had warned that His Return was near, and dozens claimed to know exactly when it would take place. Yet, all of these predicted dates came and went and nothing happened. In fact, Jesus tarried for so long that many people started to believe that He would never come back at all. “It’s all a hoax,” they said – just a bunch of crazy people spouting apocalyptic nonsense. And yet, despite all that, it still happened. Jesus really did come back and take His Church – and you were left behind.

But the Rapture didn’t happen the way everyone expected. For example, there are billions of professing Christians in the world, and yet very few of them were taken. Even in churches only handfuls of believers are missing. Countless lay members, Sunday School teachers, deacons, preachers, and missionaries are all still here. On top of that, millions of *children* are still here too. How is that possible? If the Rapture really did just happen then what is going on? What does it all mean?

Unfortunately, it means that the faith of billions of people was actually not genuine. If you were left behind then *you are not saved*. Period. All genuine believers in Christ were taken. It doesn’t matter if they were struggling with sin and addiction, and it doesn’t matter if they had fallen into trouble and been disgraced. God did not take all of the “good” Christians and leave the bad ones behind. Instead, God took *all of them*. He even raised the dead ones back to life – that’s what all the commotion in the graveyards was about. The righteous dead have been raised and every last Christian on the planet is gone. Everyone who is left behind is an unbeliever.

The truth is that many people who claimed to know Christ never knew him at all. You may have been a pastor, an elder, or a Sunday School teacher, but that doesn’t make you a Christian. Being baptized and joining a church doesn’t make you one either. In order to be saved Jesus must be your Savior *and* Lord. There are many people who tried to earn their salvation by being good people. That is why Catholics were not taken to Heaven: they categorically denied the doctrine of “salvation by grace alone through faith alone.” They believed that Jesus was not enough, and taught that in order to be saved you had to add your own good works to the mix. That heresy was condemned throughout the New Testament, especially in the book of Galatians. This heresy has now been exposed on a global scale, as they have been left behind.

There are others who wanted Jesus to bring them to Heaven but who refused to submit themselves to His authority. Their “saving prayer” consisted of “Lord, bring me to Heaven, but in the meantime don’t you dare tell me what to do.” That prayer is incapable of saving anybody, as they now know. Those who refused to make Jesus their Lord and who rejected His Word have now discovered that Jesus was not their Savior either. It is a package deal. If you will not make Jesus your King, and give Him absolute authority over your life, then He will not save you. Salvation requires total and unconditional surrender.

Then there are the cults. Mormons claimed to know Jesus, but their Jesus was a false one. A false Jesus cannot save you, as they have now discovered. Jehovah’s Witnesses have also been rebuked. They claimed to be the true way to God, but God left them behind. Their faith was in a false god, and a false god cannot save anybody.

People all over the world said that there were many ways to God. They mocked the idea that Jesus was the only way – and Jesus has now mocked them. His words were faithful and true. He was right all along, but people did not believe him. As a result, they have been left behind.

The reason so few church members were taken is because of the rank apostasy in churches. Christ warned us that when the time of His Return drew near there would be a great falling away from the truth. Many people abandoned true Christianity long ago, and as a result when Christ finally *did* return they were caught holding onto a phony belief system that had no power to save. It turns out that the truth really does matter. A lie cannot save you.

So what happens now? The bad news is that you are facing a long and difficult road. The good news is that it is still possible for you to be saved. The way you become saved has not changed – it is still through faith in Jesus Christ. However, you must believe in the *real* Jesus – not the Mormon Jesus, who was just a man who rose to become God; not the Jehovah Witnesses' Jesus, who never really rose from the dead; and not the Islamic Jesus, who was just a prophet and was never God at all. You must believe in the *Biblical* Jesus – the eternal God, part of the Trinity, who became a man, lived a perfect life, died on the cross to take upon Himself the punishment we deserved for our sins, and then rose from the dead on the third day and is now in Heaven interceding for us. That is the Jesus you must believe in. In order to be saved you must believe that His death on the cross – and *nothing else* – paid the full penalty for all of your sins. He took on Himself the punishment that you deserved. He died in your place, and that is why you can be forgiven. Your debt has been paid by Him. That is why salvation comes only through Him. That is also why so many people were left behind: they were looking elsewhere for salvation.

Second, you must repent of your sins. You have to let go of the idea that your own good deeds play any role in your salvation. God detests your efforts to save yourself by being a good person. It is doomed to failure. You have broken the law of God in countless ways. God commanded us to not lie, to not steal, to not lust, to not covet, to not profane His name, and to worship Him with every fiber of our being. Those who sin even one time – and we have *all* sinned – are guilty and worthy of death. God has warned us that those who die in their sins will be thrown alive into the Lake of Fire, where they will be tormented day and night for all of eternity.

The only way to escape this and find forgiveness for our sins is to run to Christ and beg for forgiveness. There is no salvation apart from repentance. You *must* repent. You must admit that God, not you, is the ultimate authority. God makes the rules and you have failed to follow them. You have broken His commands. You have disdained His holy law. In order to be saved you must ask for His forgiveness and put yourself under His authority. That is what it means when people talk about giving your life to Christ. It means your life does not belong to you anymore. It means that God is your master, that God calls the shots, and that you are bound to do what God wants (and to believe the things He says).

Jesus will save all who go to Him. He will cast out no one:

Matthew 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

There are a great many other things that you need to know. A lot of important events are about to take place: the rise of the antichrist, the seven-year tribulation, the appearance of the Mark of the Beast, and many others. The two witnesses will soon appear and will preach the gospel from Jerusalem – you should listen to them. 144,000 Jews will become passionate missionaries and will go all over the world to preach the gospel to every creature – you should listen to them too. Rough times are ahead. If you place your faith in Christ, the chances are very good that you will be hunted down and executed. Countless millions of people will be saved in the years to come – and countless millions of people will be martyred. Being a Christian will be very difficult. In fact, this is what Christ had to say about it:

Matthew 10:22: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

In other words, your faith in Christ will cause everyone to hate you. You will be hunted down and, in all likelihood, beheaded. It will be horrific. However, in order to be saved you *must* endure to the end. That is your only hope. If you do not endure to the end then you will not be saved.

During the Church Age it was not possible to lose one's salvation. The Holy Spirit sealed the Bride of Christ until the day of redemption. When the Rapture happened, though, that changed. Those who were left behind are still saved by grace through faith, but you must demonstrate that faith by holding onto it. If you take the Mark of the Beast then you *will* be damned:

Revelation 14:9: “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,

10 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:

11 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.”

The Bible is quite clear about this. If you want to be saved then you *must not worship the beast or his image*. You must not take the Mark. If you do then you will be utterly lost, as it is impossible to repent of this. It is an unforgivable sin. Once you cross that line – no matter what you had done before – there is no going back. You *will* be “tormented with fire and brimstone” in the presence of God, day and night, forever and ever without end.

Living for God during the years ahead will not be easy, but with Christ all things are possible. Millions will find salvation and will go on to inherit eternal life – and billions will take the Mark and be damned forever. That is the choice that lies ahead of you. There is no way to be neutral: you must either side with God or side with the devil. Those who side with God will suffer, but will be saved; those who side with the devil will be tormented by God during the tribulation and will then suffer eternally in the Lake of Fire. “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

There are many other things that you need to know, but I cannot possibly include them all here. My suggestion to you is to read the Bible (especially Revelation, which is now being fulfilled all around you) and ask God for wisdom:

James 1:5: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

That is how I came to understand the Bible – I asked the Lord for wisdom, and He graciously gave it to me. He can do the same for you. All you have to do is ask.