

Revival or Apostasy in the Last Days: What Side Will *You* be on?

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Many proponents of the Pretribulation Rapture view teach that the final seven years will hold the greatest revival this earth will ever see. The rate at which people will come to know the truth, and follow Christ, will exceed any other time in history.

The Pretrib view holds that every believer (from every nation, tribe, people and tongue) will be raptured off the earth just prior to the seven year “tribulation period”. However, something must account for the “tribulation saints” that are martyred (Rev. 6), and come from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue (Rev. 7:9) only just a few years after the rapture.

This begs the question...if it has taken two thousand years for the Church to spread Christianity to every nation, tribe, people, and tongue, how is it, that once the rapture removes all those believers, we again see martyrs from every nation, tribe, people and tongue only a few years later?

The Pretrib answer is...there MUST be a huge REVIVAL!

But does the Bible teach there will be a revival during this time?

This is a VERY IMPORTANT question...

A religious revival can be seen as people making decisions towards what they believe to be the truth, and an apostasy can be seen as people leaving behind and turning away from what they used to believe. However, what may look like a revival to some, could appear as apostasy to others.

Consider the Old Testament account of Elijah (1 Kings 18), who went head to head with the prophets of Baal to prove whose God was real. The test was to see whose God could send down fire from heaven to burn a sacrifice that had been placed on an altar. After hours of praying, the prophets of Baal could not get their god to send down fire. Then it was Elijah’s turn. Elijah prayed to the only living God, the God of Israel. God responded by sending fire down from heaven. It burned up the sacrifice, the altar, the dirt, and all the water that had been poured over the altar. It must have been an amazing and awesome sight. It must have been a life changing moment. It’s the type of event that could change your entire world view in an instant.

Understandably, the people who witnessed this event immediately bowed and worshiped Elijah’s God saying, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!” The result of the test, authenticated the God of Israel, it authenticated Elijah and his ministry, and it authenticated the TRUTH!

In that moment, among those who were witnesses, there was a type of revival. Based on what they experienced, they were compelled to leave and turn away from what they thought was true about Baal, and turn to the one true God.

But...

What would have happened if the results of the test were reversed? What if the prophets of Baal had been successful, and it was their god that sent down fire from heaven, and Elijah's God was silent. How would the people have responded? How would Elijah have responded? How would YOU have responded?

Would you be compelled to leave and turn away from the God of Israel, the God of the Bible, and join the revival to the god who, before your very eyes, appeared to authenticate himself as the truth?

Listen! This is not a hypothetical question. IT IS GOING TO HAPPEN!

Paul, warns believers that *the coming of the lawless one* [the Antichrist] is **according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception...**(2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; emphasis and clarification mine)

Just as Jesus Christ performed signs and miracles to authenticate his message and his ministry, the Antichrist will be empowered through Satan to perform signs and wonders for the purpose of authentication, but it will be a lie. It will be deception!

This deception will be so compelling that Jesus warns believers "... if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For **false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.**" (Matthew 24:23-26; emphasis mine)

The Book of Revelation provides insight and warns of the activities of the False Prophet who will endorse the Antichrist:

...He [the False Prophet] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. (Revelation 13:11-14; emphasis and clarification mine)

Elijah was a prophet of the Living True God, and it was proven by God sending fire down from heaven. The False Prophet will use this exact same test of sending fire from heaven, as well as other signs and wonders, to prove the Antichrist is worthy of worship and to authenticate his false message.

What will the world's response be when they see these amazing and awesome sights? What effect will it have on their world view? The results of the deception during the "tribulation period" are clearly described in Scripture:

And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

And...

It was granted to him [the Antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:3-4 & 7-8; emphasis and clarification mine)

Not only is all the world going to follow after the Antichrist, but true believers who recognize the deception will be overcome and martyred in great numbers from every tribe, tongue, and nation. During this time the number of true believers alive on the earth will be decreasing, not increasing.

So, does the Bible teach there will be a revival during this time?

It depends on what side you choose. If you, along with all the world, turn toward and follow the Antichrist, then yes, you will be participating in the largest revival this earth has ever seen. You will believe you are following after what is true, but it will be a lie, you will have been deceived!

The TRUTH is, what will seem like a revival during this time, will actually be the apostasy!

Remember the words of our Great Shepherd, "See, I have told you beforehand."

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The Pretrib notion that there will be a revival during the "tribulation period" exists only to account for a flawed eschatology. In the Prewrath Rapture view, believers from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, the Church, will enter into the final seven years, and ARE the ones being martyred. While people still have opportunity to be saved during this time, no revival is necessary to account for believers spanning the whole earth.

True believers who enter into the final seven years can be encouraged knowing, that through their endurance and perseverance, it is they who will ultimately overcome and share in Christ's victory!

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Revelation 12:11)