

Revival or Persecution? Unmasking What Revelation Tells Us About the End Times

One of the most precious promises in the Bible is Acts 2:17, that “In the last days it shall be,” says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh” (Acts 2:17). We understand this to be a promise of a world-wide revival in the end times. (Yeshua also said that the “harvest is the end of the world” (Matt. 13:39)).

Some people do not believe in such a revival in the end times. They point to the prophecies about persecution and tribulation and the Antichrist in the end times, and conclude (reasonably enough) that there could be no widespread revival.

So which is it? Revival or persecution? Victory or tribulation? The answer of course is both. There is revival in the midst of persecution; victory in the midst of tribulation.

One way to see this balance is by an overview of the book of Revelation. There we see a clear description of the evil empire of the Antichrist and the massive murder of true believers around the world (Rev. 12, 13, 15).

On the other hand, there is no book in the Bible that teaches more about victory and overcoming. Every single one of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 are enjoined to “overcome.” Presumably, this spiritual encouragement to be an overcomer is relevant to all of us as believers in Yeshua even today.

Yeshua is the Lion of Judah who overcomes: Revelation 5:5

The saints are sealed by the Holy Spirit as protection from the judgments of God: Revelation 7:4, 9.

Our prayers will have power (Rev. 8:3-5); biblical prophecies

will challenge the nations (Rev. 10:11); the community of faith will be glorified like a mother giving birth yet attacked by a dragon (Rev. 12:1-4); we overcome by the blood of Yeshua (Rev. 12:10); there is a harvest of both good and evil in the end (Rev. 14); praise overcomes the evil power of the beast (Rev. 15::2-3).

The book of Revelation, as the last book of the Bible, describes a period of great moral darkness, yet a people of glory and purity in the midst of that darkness (Isa. 60:1-3). It is not all dark; and certainly not all light. The light becomes purer; the darkness becomes more evil. Both occur at the same time. Therefore the book of Revelation has more passages about victory and more passages about persecution than any other.

This truth or balance can be missed on either side. When Yeshua returns, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of God (Rev. 11:15). There is not total dominion before that time. Goodness will grow inside the people of God until it finally fills the earth. But that fullness does not come until Yeshua's return.

In this age, there is a beautiful progress in the kingdom of God. We come into unity of faith (John 17); the church comes to her fullness (Rom. 11:25); Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26); the "bride" will be made ready (Rev. 19:7).

The fact that the book of Revelation speaks so much about both "victory" and about "persecution" shows that the two seeming contradictory aspects happen at the same time. Let's maintain such a balanced view. {eoa}

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