

In These Days of End-Times Challenge, Don't Compromise Your Commitment

Well, Super Tuesday has come and gone, along with the typical self-congratulatory State of the Union address by our president. Now, we have only eight more months of rancorous remarks and judicial decisions until our general elections.

Scripture calls for believers to submit "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet 2:13b). The late Pastor Jack Hayford commented: "All rightful authority is derived from God; therefore, to submit to authority honors God."

He explained further, "Submission is an act of faith, establishing God as the ultimate authority over the relationship, be it connected with government, church, employment or home. The higher the authority, the greater the accountability to God."

Critical Decisions and Future Judgments

Scripture tells us that one day, we will all stand before King Jesus for evaluation and judgment. Ultimately, no one will be exempt. But there will be two different and separate judgments—one for believers and one for nonbelievers.

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John's Gospel explains it simply: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17; NIV).

Exposing Nonbelievers

John continued his summary of eternal evaluations in verses 18-20: "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed."

In Chapter 13 of the book of Revelation, we are introduced to two "beasts": the beast out of the sea and the beast from the earth. The beast from the sea is later identified as the Antichrist of prior prophecies. He is noted as articulate and arrogant and one that opens its mouth to "blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven" (Rev. 13:6b).

We are told this Antichrist will be given authority to make war with the saints, who apparently had not yet been rescued by the rapture. They appropriated the finished work of Christ by their determined public confession of their faith and patient endurance, even at the prospect of martyrdom (Rev. 13:10, 20:4-6).

The Unrighteous Will Be Judged

The major climactic judgment of nonbelievers comes after the tribulation period and the treacherous actions of the beast and false prophet. It follows Jesus' gathering of His saints (both living and dead), the terrible events of God's wrath on those yet on the earth, and King Jesus' victory at Armageddon. It also follows Christ's thousand-year (millennial) reign on earth and is described in Revelation 20:11-15 as the great white throne judgment.

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Judge Jesus specifically identifies those who will be condemned in that great white throne judgment: the “cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur” (Rev. 21:8a). “Magic arts” is thought to relate to the practiced use of “black magic” and/or addictive pharmaceuticals.

This terrible event is for the unrighteous of all the ages whose names are not written in the book of life. They are judged according to their deeds (Rev. 21:13, 15) and for their rejection of Almighty God (Gen. 1) and His Son Jesus, the promised Messiah and Savior of our world. The result of this final judgment is eternal separation from their Creator, “who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Rev. 14:7b).

Determine to Never Compromise Your Commitment

John the Revelator uses the familiar warning, “This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people” (Rev. 13:10). He repeats the warning in the next chapter but adds that these saints must “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt. 6:13). Later, Jesus prayed to the Father that He would not take them out of the world “but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15b). James urges us to keep ourselves “from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27c).

A key to our kingdom-living success lies in our unwavering commitment. With God’s protection and our faithful devotion to serving Him, we can become overcomers (see Rev. 12:11, NKJV) and reign with Him for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4-6).{eoa}

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