

THE CHURCH DURING THE TRIBULATION

Tonight we're going to consider the question, "If the Church has been raptured to glory before the Tribulation, what will we be doing during the period of tribulation on the earth?"

- I. The JUDGMENT SEAT (*Bema*) of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10, 12; 1 Cor. 3:9-15)
 - A. Timing—Immediately FOLLOWING the RAPTURE
 - B. Place—In the PRESENCE of the LORD
 - C. Subjects—Only BELIEVERS in CHRIST
 - D. BASIS of the Examination—To determine the ACCEPTABILITY or WORTHLESSNESS of each believer's WORKS
 - E. PURPOSE of the Examination
 - 1. To REWARD believers for SERVICE to the LORD
 - 2. To prepare the church to be the SPOTLESS BRIDE of Christ (Eph. 5:26-27)
 - 3. To GLORIFY GOD by demonstrating His righteousness IN US (Eph. 2:4-10)
 - F. RESULTS of the Examination
 - 1. Rewards GAINED and LOST due to a "trial by FIRE"
 - 2. Testing the MOTIVE for each act
 - G. Distribution of REWARDS
 - 1. The NATURE of the rewards is not specified in detail
 - 2. They are described as CROWNS

- a. An IMPERISHABLE/INCORRUPTIBLE Crown for those who MASTER the OLD NATURE (1 Cor. 9:25)
- b. A Crown of EXULTATION/REJOICING for those who LEAD people to CHRIST (1 Thess. 2:19)
- c. A Crown of LIFE for those who successfully ENDURE TRIALS (James 1:12)
- d. A Crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS for those who LOVE His APPEARING (2 Tim. 4:8)
- e. A Crown of GLORY for those who faithfully SHEPHERD the FLOCK of God (1 Pet. 5:2-4)

II. The MARRIAGE of the LAMB (John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-33; Rev. 19:7-8; 21:1 – 22:7)

A. Timing—AFTER the Judgment Seat and BEFORE the Second Advent of Christ

B. Place—In HEAVEN (Rev. 19:14; cf. Phil. 3:20)

C. Participants—Only CHRIST and the CHURCH

D. The Distinctions from the MARRIAGE SUPPER (or FEAST)

1. Marriage SUPPER involves ISRAEL and occurs on EARTH (Matt. 25:1-13)

a. During the Tribulation, Israel is INVITED

b. Many will ACCEPT and be RECEIVED IN

c. Many will REFUSE and be CAST OUT

2. Israel awaits the return of the GROOM and His BRIDE (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24)

a. He's coming from the WEDDING to invite them to the SUPPER

b. He will introduce His BRIDE to His FRIENDS