

GOODNEWS LETTER

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TRIBULATION FEAR

"...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself"—*Franklin D. Roosevelt.*

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave his inaugural address to America in 1933, our nation was in an economic depression. In presenting the message, Roosevelt stated the famous line: **"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."**

President Roosevelt also defined what he meant by fear. (Fear is) **"Nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance,"**

According to this president, "Fear paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance." Fear causes people to retreat!

Concerning fear, the Beloved John, knew something about it; but, on a much higher level. He wrote that is was like a child with alongside his father. **"Perfect love casteth out fear," I Jn 4:18.**

But, Christians are looking for any way to escape tribulation; in all forms. Certainly, it's natural and acceptable to avoid pain, but the **perfect love** that John writes about is a **'trusting love;'** no matter what.

Perfect love completely relies on what Jesus taught. This **"Trusting Love"** casts away our fear by **advancing** toward its consummation. Love then, keeps us walking in the faith in Jesus. **There is no retreat in love.**

When the Apostle Paul answered Agabus in Acts 21:10, we are given an **"eye opener"** that shows us how to deal with tribulation of any kind. After Paul was told that he would be bound when he went to Jerusalem, he replied, **"...for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," Acts 21:13.** (That's: "To die, as in the tribulation). To Jerusalem, Paul went. From then on, He was under some kind of arrest till he died.

Our title of the *GoodNews Letter*: **TRIBULATION FEAR**, isn't primarily about experiencing the **Great Tribulation**; although, we understand that the thought of going through it cannot be easily dismissed, either.

We mean that **Tribulation Fear** is to be read in the same idea and framework of fear that President Roosevelt dealt with in his day. People had to put away fear if they were to advance the cause of the New Deal and the renewal that was to follow.

That's what Christians must do, today! Fear has to go! We have to trust the Lord and realize that, in the final analysis, tribulation will come when God says it will. Not a second before or, a second later. Clear-minded Biblical thinkers know that tribulation-timing is out of their hands. That was so with their forefathers. Fear had to be put out of their minds. They served God, come what may.

This doesn't mean that we don't study the subject. Without placing the **Great Tribulation** within the **End-Times** setting and within the words of Jesus, we could easily be influenced by a false hope, kind of rapture.

Our approach is to study the Great Tribulation, along with every other doctrine. If we must go through it, so be it. If God chooses for us to by-pass it, Amen! And, while it's easy to say, '**trust the Lord always - in every time period,**' we know that it's quite another thing to implement that kind of thinking and action. But, with God, all things are possible.

We understand that Christians are no different than anyone else. When it comes to pain, we look for any way not to have to experience it; especially, when it come to the Great Tribulation.

Yet, when conviction sets in the heart, Christians take whatever comes from the consequences of their faith. They always have, as chronicled in the account of the Three Hebrew Children of Daniel 3:17-18.

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (for today; they would not follow false teaching).

But, life looks different in this day of falling away. It takes a trained eye to see what is really going on. It's a time when men forget what Jesus taught on conviction. We hear way too many excuses of "**why**" we can't do this or, do that, for the Lord.

Christian leaders come to the rescue and offer a much easier way of service. The masses are listening up. They are all ears when it comes to the Second Coming; especially, if they expect to view it from on high, up in heaven when its going on.

These people love to hear about the tribulation in the same view as **D. N. Darby** of the 1800's and the **Scofield Bible** of the 1900's; which, has painted a rosy picture for all the saved in Christ.

D. N. Darby is noted in the theological world as the father of **dispensationalism**. Darby popularized the "**secret rapture**" theory wherein Christ will suddenly remove His bride, the Church, from this world before the judgments of the tribulation (See Wikipedia). As a universalist, Darby placed all the saved in the church bride. Rosy, indeed!

Then, '**Scofield's Reference Bible**' picked up Darby's new teaching and printed it in its commentary-like, foot notes. The 1900's saw the '**secret rapture**' preached by every student coming out of the Seminaries. It became so popular that it caught on like wild fire. And, today, it's odd not to believe the 'secret rapture' theory.

Further, other scholars have promoted a "**taking out**" theory that occurs before the Tribulation. "**The Late Great Planet Earth**" and the "**Left Behind**" film series have been well received in this and the last century.

But, the late **Walter Martin**, founder of the "**Bible Answer Man Program**," said the early church taught that the church would go through the tribulation; that, there was only one Second Coming. No secret or "**sneaking away**" idea was ever taught until hundreds of years elapsed.

What did Jesus say? After all, He's the great Rabbi. We must know and stay with His words. Thus, if our Lord said, "**When you shall see the abomination of desolation...stand in the holy place**" (Mt 24:15) adding, "**For then shall be great tribulation;**" (Mt 24:21), we have to accept what He said; no matter what others do, or say, or think.

In John 16, Jesus began to elevate fear. He said that His disciples would have tribulation (Jn 16:32). Here, we think of a general attitude that the world has toward Christians; one, much less than the Great Tribulation.

However, notice the remedy that Jesus gives. "**These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but BE OF GOOD CHEER; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD,**" John 16:33. Got any doubts? See John 14:27 and peace will fill your heart, casting fear away.

The correct approach to any tribulation is not with fear. Whether, facing persecution or trying to postpone it. Christ's remedy is to trust in Him, alone. Trust brings good cheer! In light of this, Paul's word of dying for Jesus become clear and we understand why; and, a little envious, too.

And so, we see that a great number of Christians have **retreated** from the idea that they might go through any Tribulation. But here, it isn't whether or not one is correct in his interpretation of the End-Times. We think that too many act merely because of the fear they have of the "Tribulation," itself.

Fear causes a response. And, **fear** of having to experience tribulation, has caused Christians to actively seek another way to look at persecution. In seeking, they have formulated explanations of relief by teaching a '**secret coming**' of **Christ**. A great many even want to fight the governments of the world - and, thereby, stave off the Antichrist, by using massive mailing campaigns.

A gross amount of emails have come to my computer screen that asks for my participation in stopping or, at least, delaying what God has decreed before the foundation of the world. If God decreed it, how can I change it?

But, I'm becoming apolitical, too. Jesus said, "**Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**" So, I'm trying to trust only Him by studying what He says about this world and its latter-day actions. I do get that tinge of patriotism rise up, now and then. Oh! I do vote on elections, too.

However, it is in the hope in Jesus that fear of persecution is subsided, at least. We live in comfortable times, today; so, there's no need to fear. Not now or, even when the Antichrist sits down and actually affects us; as he surely will. He has his seat but, God isn't going to give up His throne.

So, let's think on the words of Jesus, "**Be of good cheer"; I have overcome the world.**" What tremendously profound thoughts. How can we readily accept any other words?

For Christians, the doctrine of tribulation cannot be denied. They all know that the **Tribulation Period** is coming. But, to apply that time only to the Jews and those who are alive then, is **self-preservationism based upon fear**.

Being gone does sound great! Even, a great number of Baptists have retreated to the safety of a Pre-Tribulation rapture.

Further, many **Missionary Baptists** have made up their minds, too. They are certain they will miss the Great Tribulation; so sure, that the subject isn't even open for discussion. That's how it is down my way, anyhow.

Thus, here's what has happened. **Tribulation Fear** - the fear of going through such a terrible time - has the majority of Christians retreating.

Not many study the Great Tribulation, without slanting it toward some raptured escape. Instead of learning all we can about the **Second Coming** and what leads up to it - letting God take care of us - most have a fear-complex hanging over them.

It is my understanding that we should know all there is about any of God's word. Like, President Roosevelt said, we must **name** it, **reason it out** and **justify** why it is a necessary Biblical time period; something, not totally foreign to many of our earlier brethren of times past.

Let us take a deep spiritual breath and "**Be of good cheer.**" Let's convert **retreating** into advancing the words of Christ. It is then that our souls are illuminated with the truth that God is; as stated in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11:6.

It is then that He makes our love perfect, casting out all fear. Then, we will know of, by experiencing the fact that "**He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.**"