

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Tribulation is promised for the saints, *2Timothy 3:12* and *John 16:33* being examples. For Christians, tribulation is the norm. The word for tribulation, **θλιψις**, *thlip'-sis*, appears 37 times in the Greek New Testament manuscripts. In all but a couple, *thlip'-sis* is to and for God's children.

During the last couple of decades, over 2,500,000 Sudanese Christians and Animists have been murdered by Islamic jihadists. It's hard to get accurate figures from the remote areas.

Today, in Darfor and in the rest of the sub-Sahara, armed Muslim militia attack the little Christian villages. These jihadists go into each hut, taking what they will and killing whom they wish. If they find a Christian woman with a baby at her breast, they hack off the woman's breasts. The woman sits there crying, unable to feed her hungry child - soon to die of starvation. Their cattle have already been stolen, so they have no cows or goats to milk. There are no Supermarkets where they can go to buy baby food, nor any money to buy it with if there were. Oh yes, and if the jihadists happen upon a Christian pastor, they crucify him. But none of the above is bad enough to be classified as "the great tribulation" is it? No, of course not.

Millions more have been martyred in other 3rd world countries, but I guess they're not bad enough to be classified as "the great tribulation," either.

In the old USSR, up to 8,000,000 Christians were murdered by communists in labor camps on the Gulag Archipelago. Between 1933 and 1945 about 2,000,000 Christians and 6,000,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis. But THE great tribulation? No way, those mass murders certainly weren't bad enough to qualify.

In the killing fields of Cambodia, the communist Khmer Rouge killed over 1,500,000 Christians in unimaginable atrocities, making mountains of their skulls - some grizzly

piles remaining still. But great tribulation? Not a chance, it's gotta get much worse than that.

In China and North Korea, untold millions have died for the name of Jesus. In fact, right now worldwide, about 30,000 Christians a week are being killed because they refused to deny Jesus as Lord. In Saudi Arabia, if the religious police find you a Christian, they'll behead you. In many Islamic countries, when you turn to the Lord your own family will stone you to death.

We know an evangelist in Nigeria, Mustafa by name, who has seen it all many times. The Muslims killed over 5000 Christians in his little town and burned their churches. The jihadists tried to kill Mustafa, too, but the Lord hid him. I haven't heard from Mustafa for a couple of years so I guess they finally got him.

And you think because God has spared the church in this country that "the great tribulation" is still in the future? While I was visiting Columbia Bible College, I met an East African man who was being led of the Lord to return to his country to start a Christian orphanage. "I know I won't last more than a couple of years before the Muslims kill me," he said, but he's going anyway.

Don't you realize it's just the mercy of God that THE great tribulation hasn't come here yet? We should weep over the American church's ignorance and lethargy. Do a billion saints have to die for the Lord in this era before we recognize that they are in "the great tribulation"?

If it was you being tortured to death or your family being burned at the stake, wouldn't that be "the great tribulation" to you? Nah, the rest of the church would just close it's eyes to your persecution and keep on singing, "Happy, happy, happy, when the REAL great tribulation gets here, we'll all be raptured out because we pew-warmers know that time of trouble isn't for us. It's for the wicked while we're at a magnificent marriage supper of the Lamb." Such hubris, may God forgive our willful blindness.

If we Christians aren't suffering persecution, it's because we've done nothing to deserve it!

2Timothy 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

The above doesn't preach in most American churches, but we might change our view of what great tribulation really is if our country falls to Islam. If it's our own wives who have their breasts cut off and it's our own babies who starve to death as a result.

NOTE: Scripture doesn't say the wicked will be persecuted, they are "appointed unto wrath" instead.