

Second Chance after the Rapture 2 Thes. 2 v 1 – 12

Chance is a word we associated with man but not with God. All things are under divine control and only happen according to His will. In scripture the word is found but often to describe man e.g. in the parable of the good samaritan we read that the priest came upon the man “by chance” Luke 10 v 31.

We commence our study from the basic principle that “God is love” 1 John 4 v 8. Scripture bears testimony to the fact that God is also gracious.

Job 33 v 14 “ God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not”
11 Peter 3 v 9 “ but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish”. Peter will give the example in his first letter “the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah” ch. 3 v 20.

Scripture gives examples of where individuals were given a second chance.

Jonah 3 v 1 “the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time”

Luke 15 the parable of the prodigal teaches that the errant son is given a second chance.

Peter having denied the Lord Jesus is later challenged “lovest thou me” John 21 v 15.

John Mark having returned from the first missionary journey is later described by Paul as “profitable to me for the ministry” 11 Tim. 4 v 11.

But in all this the Bible God does declare a warning

Gen. 6 v 3 “My spirit shall not always strive with man”

How long does God strive? It may have been up to 120 years in Gen. 6 but we are now cautioned “boast not thyself of tomorrow” Prov. 27 v 1.

During the public ministry of the Lord Jesus there came points where he moved away from particular areas or peoples e.g. Luke 4 v 31 “came down to Capernaum” indicates a move away from Nazareth. Luke 19 v 1 “entered and passed through Jericho” indicates a brief visit as he was moving to Jerusalem at that time. In Acts 13 v 46 we have indication that the focus of Paul’s ministry was changing “lo we turn to the Gentiles”.

We do well to note also the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

John 3 v 18 “he that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is **condemned already**” v 36 “he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God **abideth on him**” also in ch 12 v 48 “he that rejected me and receiveth not my word hath one that **judgeth him**”. The Lord does not appear to indicate that this wrath or judgement is necessarily only in the future or after death. In the redemption hymnbook at hymn 230 “Over the deadline tonight” there is a quote “I was brought up to honour God and I have ended up by hating him. I have blasphemed his name and resisted his spirit until I can no longer repent or believe, if there is a dead line to God’s grace I have drifted over it and am lost”. What a thought! Is this what is meant by “**condemned already**” John 3 v 18.

God’s Prophetic programme is laid out for us in scripture. Key events are

1. Rapture of every believer from Pentecost – 1 Thess. 4 v 13 – 18
2. Seven years of Tribulation – Events recorded Rev. v 6 – 19
3. Christ’s Manifestation in Glory – 2 Thess. 1 v 7
4. Satan bound / Millennial Kingdom – Rev. 20 v 2 - 4
5. Satan loosed / Final destruction – Rev. 20 v 7 – 9

6. Great White Throne judgment – Rev. 20 v 11
7. Eternal state – Rev. 21

Many other scriptures refer to these events.

The period following the rapture which we have described as a time of tribulation will be something that is unparalleled in human history see Matt. 24 v 21.

Will people be saved during this time? Yes.

Rev. 6 v 9 tells of those martyred for their faith and this must have taken place during the early days of the tribulation period.

Rev. 20 v 4 tells of those martyred during the second half of the tribulation period. We describe this as the Great Tribulation.

Will all people repent? Sadly no. As it was in Egypt at the time of the plagues there was a hardening of the heart so it will be during the tribulation. See Rev. 9 v 20 and 16 v 9 & 11.

Who will preach? Revelation speaks of 144000 witnesses in ch. 7 v 4 and two witnesses in ch. 11 v 3. No doubt also those who are saved in this period will also witness and see others converted.

Will they be successful? Yes they will.

Rev. 7 v 9 “great multitude which no man could number”. Only Jews? No “of all nations”

How are they saved?

Joel 2 v 32 “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” is how Joel prophesied that salvation would come. This is the message of Peter in Acts 2 and also of Paul in Romans 10. It is clearly on the basis of Calvary because they have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb” Rev. 7 v 14. It will be not be without cost as the Lord Jesus also declared “he that shall endure unto the end shall be saved” Matt. 24 v 13.

What about those who heard in the day of grace but rejected? Remember the Lord Jesus said “condemned already” John 3 v 18. Logically one might presume that they would be immediately awakened to what has happened with the rapture and turn for salvation to the Lord Jesus. This is the basis for the Left Behind series of books. Logic is a dangerous basis to work on. The rich man in Luke 16 was immediately awakened one moment into eternity but too late. Logic would say “why should he not get a second chance if someone alive after the rapture does”.

Our reading in 2 Thess. 2 v 11 gives the scriptural answer “God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a (the) lie”. Satan is the author of “the lie” and he is described as “a liar and the father of it” John 8 v 44.

Whatever the lie is coupled with the “strong delusion” from God the writer’s opinion is that there will be no “second chance”. The verses either side seem to add weight v 10 “they **received not** the love of the truth” v 12 “who **believed not** the truth”. We recall that the Lord Jesus said “I am the way the truth and the life” John 14 v 6. People who have had the privilege to believe “the truth” but refused will believe “the lie” and be among those in Rev. 21 v who are “cast into the lake of fire”.

How urgent we need to be in our preaching the message today and how important to teach the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the severity for any who refuse God’s invitation in the gospel.