

Hidden in the Day of the Lord

*“Seek ye the LORD,
all ye meek of the
earth, which have
wrought his
judgment; seek
righteousness, seek
meekness: it may
be ye shall be hid
in the day of the
LORD’s anger.”
—Zephaniah 2:3*

THE SCRIPTURES INDICATE that the present “time of trouble” and “great tribulation,” affecting all aspects of the world in which we live, are accomplishing a great cleansing work in the earth. (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21) Jesus prophesied concerning the destruction of this present order: “Except those days [of trouble] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved,” but then assures, “those days shall be shortened.” (Matt. 24:22) The words of our opening text further indicate that some will be “hid” during the time of this severe trouble.

The foregoing testimony of the Scriptures intimates that all flesh will not die in the destruction associated with this great time of trouble. Some will be permitted to pass over into the new dispensation of Messiah’s kingdom. This will be the glad day when the curse of death is to be lifted, and the

blessings of everlasting life offered to all the willing and obedient of mankind.

The question may arise with some as to whether it is necessary that every member of the human family physically die before experiencing the power and blessings of Christ's kingdom. We answer that, as concerns the world of mankind, it is not necessary that they should all go first into the tomb before participating in the "resurrection" work of the next age.

From God's standpoint, mankind has been reckoned as dead ever since the condemnation came upon Adam because of disobedience. The Bible speaks of all people as "prisoners," shackled, in a sense, with mental, physical and moral weakness. There are different wards in this prison condition, but those whom men call alive, God says are "appointed to death," being dead in trespasses and sins, and under divine sentence. (Ps. 102:20; Eph. 2:1) These are, so to speak, still walking in the prison yard and have not yet been shut up in their cells—the tomb. Yet they are in prison, and none of them can escape.

If the order for release of all inmates were sent to a prison-keeper, we would understand it to apply not only to those who were locked up in their cells, but to all who were in any sense of the word incarcerated within the prison walls. Thus it is with death, the great jailer. It has committed billions of the race to the tomb, and other billions are still at partial liberty in the prison yard, but firmly and securely kept and doing service with groaning and travailing, waiting for their deliverance.—Isa. 42:7; 49:9

In order for the opening of this prison to occur, Jesus, the great restorer and life giver, is represented

as having two keys to unlock “Death and *Hades*.” (Rev. 1:18, *English Standard Version*) It would seem that the key of Death will be used first—divine power being exercised upon those who will survive the great tribulation, though still under the sentence of death. Second, the key of “*Hades*” [“Grave:” *Thayer’s Greek Definitions*] will come into operation—a symbol of Messiah’s power and authority to unlock the prison house of the tomb, and set at liberty all of its captives.—Isa. 61:1

The Scriptures assure us that some will be carried through the symbolic “fire” of trouble, and to these God will turn a “pure language,” the pure message of the Gospel—“good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” (Zeph. 3:8,9; Luke 2:10) However, this blessing of being among those “hid in the day of the LORD’s anger” is conditional. Our text refers to those who are looking to the Lord—who “seek righteousness” and “seek meekness.” The word “seek” in this verse has the meaning both “to search out” as well as “to strive after.”

There have been many among mankind throughout the ages who have made some progress toward God and righteousness, even as there are today. All of these will be better off when the Messianic kingdom is established. They will be glad to give their hearts to the Lord and make rapid progress over the “highway” that leads to holiness, to God, and to perfect life.—Isa. 35:8-10 ■

We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.
Hebrews 3:14