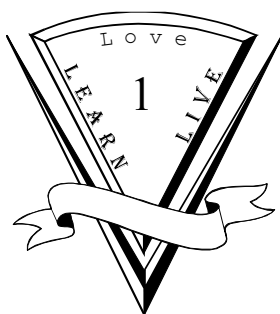


**THE CHURCH:
IS IT ABOUT
TO GO THROUGH
THE GREAT TRIBULATION?**



SAMUEL RICE

**THE CHURCH:
IS IT
ABOUT
TO GO THROUGH
THE GREAT TRIBULATION?**



by Samuel Rice

2nd Edition

Rice, Samuel O. St. E., 1954-

**The Church: Is it about to go through the Great
Tribulation?**

Series: “Learn, Love, Live” No. 1.

ISBN 976 - 8077 - 90 - 5

2nd Edition, 2000

© 2000 Samuel O. St. E. Rice, All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or storage in any information retrieval system, without written permission from: The Bible House, Gateway Mall, Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies.

**The Church:
Is it about to go through the great tribulation?**

FOREWORD

This book comes at a time when all eyes are focused on what has been termed “the new millennium,” the year 2000.

Much confusion abounds in Christendom about the true nature of the 2nd coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before this book, I have read no work that captures so succinctly and with such insight, the return of our Lord and its relationship to the tribulation period, giving at the same time encouragement to believers and heartfelt, timely appeals to the unsaved to turn to the Lord before his imminent return.

The Lord promises:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------|
| The Crown Incorruptible | – 1 Cor. 9:25 | For runners |
| The Crown of Rejoicing | – 1 Thes 2:19 | For soul winners |
| The Crown of Life | – James 1:12 | For faithful ones |
| The Crown of Glory | – 1 Peter 5:4 | For true pastors |
| The Crown of Righteousness | – 2 Tim. 4:8 | <u>For lovers of His
Appearing</u> |

I recommend this book to every believer and everyone seeking to learn more of Christ.

David Rice.

*In appreciation of my parents,
Ulver and Winifred Rice,
who taught me the Scriptures
from my youth, and
inspired a love for the same.*

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it... Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7-8.

God’s grace is always rich toward us. This is seen in many ways. Special mention is made of this grace in relation to the overwhelming response to the 1st edition of this book. reviews of the book have all been very encouraging. In producing this book, our main aim is to share spiritual **gems** that turn our hearts to Christ, and not just to present an argument. We also hope that as many persons as possible benefit from it.

This volume is about the same size as the original and we have continued to be as **brief** as possible. Added attention has been given to clarity, accuracy, and the avoidance of very minor issues of contention. Additional headings have been added to a number of paragraphs for easy reference. A few chapters have therefore seen some significant editing. Of necessity there exists, in any document of this type, some measure of repetition.

The major points presented in this book are based on several scriptural arguments. A lack of appreciation for any one of these arguments, should therefore not lead to the rejection of the main truths. We trust that every scripture be read and that we all have the same positive spirit as the Bereans.

“These were more **noble** than those in Thessalonica, in that they **received the word with all readiness of mind,** and **searched the scriptures** daily, **whether those things were so.**” Acts 17:11.

In committing these meditations to the Lord it is our desire that we will experience His blessing and joy as we keep His word, while we await His coming for us. Rev 1:3.

PREFACE

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb 10:35-37.

Several years ago, I had the privilege of sharing some of these thoughts at a Young People’s Meeting, in Barbados, my homeland. Their sweetness and freshness still remain.

Many of us may soon experience the call to glory without dying. We should be ready and walk with this in mind. Many events have occurred and are occurring in such a vivid way, that we may lose sight of the Son and look for signs. Our need

is to: “Behold the Bridegroom” Mat 25:6.

No effort has been made to be exhaustive or to oversimplify. It is “to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance” and to encourage us to grow deeper in the scriptures. We trust that something written, would be of great help to you, in some way.

Scripture quotations have been taken from the King James Version. Square brackets [] where added, offer an explanation or appropriate translation. We use the word “church” to refer to believers, not a building.

Please feel free to write or email us at tri-us@caribsurf.com.

We now commit this volume to the Lord for His use. All glory be to Him who has brought it to pass. May our ready response be: “Our Lord comes;” “Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

*Samuel Rice
December, 1999*

Contents

Foreword	3
Preface to Second Edition	5
Preface	6
Contents	7
Acknowledgement	8
Promise of the Saviour	9
Pattern in the Saints	13
Proper Setting of the Tribulation	17
Perfection of our Salvation	21
Principle of the Second Coming	25
Prophetic Symbols	29
Presence of the Spirit	33
Pictures in the Scriptures	39
Pattern in the Skies	43
Pilgrims and Strangers	47
Prospect of the Saints	51
Passion for His Presence of Splendour	55
Peaceful and Sovereign Reign	61
Pointing Signs	67
Positive Sayings	71
Further Reading	75
Appendix	76

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who helped to make this little booklet possible. Special mention must be made of my wife Gloria, without whose support, the task would hardly have been undertaken.

Mention must be made of all those who offered suggestions, proofread, and in any other way assisted with the formatting, compilation and production. Heartfelt thanks are expressed to David and Peter Rice (my brothers), to Gregory Mayhew, Lincoln Nelson and G. McFarrel Howard who all gave of their invaluable time and offered their candid opinions. Final responsibility for the contents of the finished product, rests with the author.

The cover photograph is with the kind permission of Corel Corporation. The Desktop Publishing was done by Trius Productions Inc.

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”

1

PROMISE OF THE SAVIOUR

We desire to examine and enjoy some scriptures as they relate to a very relevant truth at this time. We immediately state that the **word of God** is our only authority and the **Holy Spirit** our only Guide, Jude 3, Jn 16:26.

We also assert at once, that the word of God clearly shows that the church will **not** go through **the great tribulation**. It will instead experience a **glorious translation** to heaven, at the coming of Christ for it.

We further state that the next event expected, is the coming of Christ for His church at any moment. This event rests solely in the hands of God the Father, and is independent of any signs. There is no need for date setting, clock watching or sign seeking, but simply the waiting for the Lord from heaven.

In the book of Revelation, God has promised a **special blessing** to all who desire and care enough to examine and keep the prophetic teachings of scripture. There is no word like the Lord's, and no blessing and happiness like what He gives. May this **happiness** be ours now as we pursue this study.

“Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.” Rev 1:3.

Paul, Peter, John and other apostles were led by God the Holy Spirit to write letters to several churches and individuals. The principles, promises and practices in these letters were not meant solely for those churches or individuals at the time of the writing.

The messages they contain are for all believers who form the church throughout its entire existence on earth.

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, **with all that in every place** call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” 1 Cor 1:2.

The Church: Is it about to go through the great tribulation?

We must also see the seven letters to seven **local** churches in Revelation ch 2 and 3, as a message to the church for all time. To deny this would (a) suggest that the Lord had **only** those 7 local churches and **only** 7 ‘angels’ in His hands and (b) ignore the fact that the message to these is **expressly** said to be for **all** the church in its entire existence: “... he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.” seven times. The number 7 is often used **representatively** in the book of Revelation, and indicates **completeness, totality** and often **perfection**. Thus the church is addressed in its completeness, either at any one time or throughout its existence.

The seven churches (local) are thus **also** associated with seven **characteristic** periods of the church’s (corporate) history. The church in Philadelphia, one of the last, was weak, yet special commendation was given to it, because of simply keeping the Lord’s word and not denying His name. Let us examine His **promise** to them and us, the churches, in Rev 3:10.

“... for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth [earth dwellers].” Rev 3:8, 10.

“**Kept the word of my patience.**” The weakest believer simply **holding on** to the word of God with special emphasis on patience as to **Christ’s coming**, can claim this precious promise. Let us hold on to this word as we study it.

“**Hour of trial.**” This singles out a **specific period which is clearly identifiable**. It is a special time that is coming, and spoken of in the prophetic word. It cannot be the same as that expressed in “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye [all believers] shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. The hour of trial is a **distinct** period in the world’s history and not **all** the time of the believer’s life. This hour is the last week of seven (7) years of Daniel 9, called the tribula-

The Church: Is it about to go through the great tribulation?

tion. The first 3½ years is the beginning of sorrows, and the last 3½ years is the great tribulation. Mat 24:8, 21.

“Which shall come.” It is a **future** hour of suffering.

The hour of trial is spoken of as **future** relative to this message to Philadelphia, a message that is ever relevant to **present** church experiences. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Rev 3:13. There was and always will be suffering in the church but this is not the suffering of the great tribulation. The Lord Jesus had already addressed the church of Smyrna which **was suffering** and would have continued to **suffer severely**.

“I know thy works, and **tribulation**, and poverty, ... Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: and **ye shall have tribulation** ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev 2:9, 10.

Nevertheless, the **hour of trial** had not yet come and was still future. All of the apostles wrote of **present** trial in which all believers share, but they never equated it with the great tribulation. (See 1 Pet 1, James 1, Rom. 5 and 1 Thes). In Revelation 1:9, John was also passing through tribulation which was quite different from what he later described in chapters 6-19.

habitant of the earth, not one earth dweller, will escape this hour of trial. All persons living on earth will be affected. It is not a selective christian experience as suffering for Christ.

“I also will keep thee from.” The promise of the Saviour is not simply to be kept “from” but literally to be kept “out of” the future hour of trial that is going to come upon all the inhabitants of the earth. They will not be kept in or through it, but from it altogether. If the hour of trial comes on those who dwell on earth, then in order to be kept out of it, the church must no longer be existing on earth at the time of the tribulation. In some way the church must be removed before it comes.

The Church: Is it about to go through the great tribulation?

The promise of being kept from the tribulation period is followed by the **means** of being kept from it, in the next verse.

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.” Rev 3:11 - 12.

He comes quickly and translates them from earth to heaven. They are thus encouraged to hold these **truths** fast so that no one rob them of rewards to be given to them when He comes. There, they are made pillars of the heavenly and divine temple and form part of the heavenly city which is seen later coming out of heaven and from God, Rev 21:10. To come out from heaven, we must first have gone in. Let us remember that this word of comfort to the seven local churches is a word not only for those at the time of John’s writing, but is a present word for us, along with all the other new testament writings to the church.

Dear reader, we trust that you are truly born again into the one true church. If not, when Christ comes for the church, you will be left behind to face, not only an eternity of judgement, but also the great tribulation on earth. You can become a child of God by calling on the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith.

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa 55:6-7.

Let us, who are born again, take with gratitude, the Lord Jesus’ promise to His **waiting** church. We, the church, are never seen as earth dwellers, but **pilgrims**, (see ch 10). As such, we will never pass through the tribulation period, but will be kept altogether from it. **This is the promise of the Saviour.**

THE CHURCH: IS IT ABOUT TO GO THROUGH THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

About 2000 years have passed and many wonder what is next on God's prophetic calendar. Some scoff "... saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet 3:4. Many, however, fear the worst as man grapples with problems in technology. Is the great tribulation about to begin? Does God's word give any light as to when it will happen and who it will affect?

A new millennium is before us. Is there a link with it and the greatest millennium of all times as predicted in the scriptures? When will the latter happen and who will enjoy it? Surely we do want to know what is God's will for us now in the light of these and similar questions.

In chapter 14, you will find an interesting series of questions like this. DID YOU KNOW THAT ... the Bible predicted sensational, live coverage and instant, visual, worldwide broadcasting? We trust that you will find God's help and guidance in this little volume, "as ye see the day approaching." Heb 10:25. A diligent and honest study, will surely be

A BIBLE HOUSE PUBLICATION
GATEWAY MALL, BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS, W.I.
Printed in Barbados