

## Who will survive Armageddon? - comments

(from P / 04-16-2020)

You have brought new light to my mind, I agree on all you have said. thank you for your insight.

So the goats are the wicked, and the sheep are the righteous. What does it mean to be wicked? Wickedness does not merely mean sinning, otherwise we would all be defined as wicked and rejected as unsuitable since we are all sinners. Even the righteous are sinners since there are none who are one hundred percent righteous (without sin) in this system of things.

This opened my eyes that wickedness does not merely mean sinning. Although I knew that none were a hundred percent righteous, I always felt a sin kept me wicked, even a bad thought. Thanks to your writing I no longer feel this way and I am not so terrified.

That verse lists only one thing that makes one eligible for being marked for survival: a heart condition that causes one to sigh and groan over detestable things. It does not describe people reacting favorably to the preaching work, getting baptized, supporting the anointed, or being pure.

I agree with this 100%. That is what it says in the Bible, it is like bricks taken off my shoulders. I do sigh and groan over detestable things, the world of people these days is so crazy and dangerous. And so very hard to find someone you can trust. Unfortunately even in the truth. I hate to say that but it is true and all the more comforting that we all sin, but not to the point of wickedness.

(Genesis 22:12) Then he said: "Do not harm the boy, and do not do anything at all to him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing because you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."

Abraham himself didn't even know. We may say that we would do something difficult, but until the time actually came for us to perform the deed we do not truly know if we would be able to carry it out, no matter how strongly we felt about it.

That Jehovah did not know and Abraham did not know. I thought Jehovah knew Abraham would be faithful! Another thing I learn from you is to really meditate on what I am reading, Thank you again Dave.

Many in the world think they are being a good kind Christian by giving money to beggars and vagrants who use it to buy cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. But we know what 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says, so we don't support those sorts of people.

**(2 Thessalonians 3:10)** In fact, when we were with you, we used to give you this order: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat."

I have always been confused on this and you made this clear to me,

I love reading your articles, and thank you so much for writing them, and I tell you I will pay more attention when I am reading the Bible, because I see now that I was mostly reading words and being brain dead. However I did remember the scriptures but the meaning did not penetrate my brain.

Thank you Dave.

P

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Hi P

I know exactly how you feel.

Being raised a Witness i lived with constant fear and guilt.

Fear, because i thought that every little sin made me unworthy to live through Armageddon, and guilt for not spending enough time in field service.

The truth truly does set you free. (John 8:32)

Thank you for sharing your thoughts!

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Dave

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(From D / 05-09-2020)

Hi Dave

That's a great email. I like that P mentioned specific points and what P got out of it that was different from P's previous understanding. It surprises me, in a sad way, that this is another person who has thought that being sinful was equal to being wicked and therefore P felt ineligible for making it through Armageddon. That seems to be a somewhat widespread but mistaken impression among Witnesses and I'm not sure why some have that idea so entrenched and others, like me, have always known the distinction between being unrighteous as opposed to being wicked, as in deliberately and willfully practicing sin. Maybe it is, as P wrote, being brain-dead, reading the words but not really meditating on them so as to get the correct understanding.

I also agree with another point P wrote, about how hard it is to find trustworthy people these days, even among those in the truth. That, to me, is another sign of how close we are getting to the end. "The love of the greater number will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12) has gone through my mind numerous times in the last few years and almost daily in the last few months.

Regarding Matthew 28:19, 20, I just can't get past what was said in the January 2020 study article (studied March 8th) about who the command was given to, to go and make disciples.

**(Matthew 28:19, 20)** Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."

Matt 28:16 says that the eleven went into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them. Back in Matt 26:32, Jesus said "But after I have been raised up, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." At this time, he was speaking to the apostles and it was at the last supper that he said that to them. So to me, this is confirming Matt 28:16—Jesus made a prior arrangement for the faithful 11 to meet him in Galilee. The 11 were there when he said that at the Passover dinner and the same 11 were there when he gave the command to make disciples.

Paragraph 4 in the study article says that we know others "must also have been present" because the women who came to tend to Jesus' body on the 3rd day were told by the angel "**You** will see him [in Galilee]" (emphasis in article) and that Paul also said that he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time. The article then asks the question "Where?"

I don't have a problem with accepting that the apostles saw him in Galilee, the women saw him in Galilee and the 500+ saw him in Galilee. But my question would not be "Where?" but 'When?' And I've found several scriptures that indicate to me that Jesus' appearances to the women and to the 500 at one time are separate events from the time the command to preach was given to only the 11 and occurred after that first appearance to only the 11.

Acts 1:2, 3 indicates that Luke was planning to write an account of the things Jesus was doing and teaching "until the day that he was taken up, after he had given commandment through holy spirit to the apostles whom he chose" and the pre-2013 Bible—the black Bible—cross-references Matt 28:20! The silver Bible references John 15:16 which focuses on the apostles being the ones whom he had chosen, not the command to preach or when this command was given.

Luke also goes on to say in verse 3 that he (Jesus) showed himself alive after he had suffered, "being seen by them throughout forty days" and telling them more things. More on that in a minute.

In Acts 10:40-42, Peter tells those assembled with Cornelius:

"God raised this One up on the third day and granted him to become manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead. Also he ordered us to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness that this is the One decreed by God to be judge..."

The cross-reference in both Bibles for the phrase "he ordered us to preach" is Matt 28:19, 20.

1 Cor. 15:6 is cited as support for the statement that Jesus appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, and it does say that. The article wants us to think that that event was what was taking place at Matt 28:19, 20 when the command to preach was given (paragraph 5). But if you go back to 1 Cor. 15:4, 5, Paul states that Jesus was raised up on the third day and he appeared to Cephas, *then* to the twelve and *after that* he appeared to upward of 500. When phrases like "first" this happened, "then" that happened and "after" this, that happened, to me that is a chronology of the order of when these appearances took place.

So based on the scriptural accounts of Jesus giving the command to preach and the numerous appearances he made to the apostles, the women and the 500+ brothers was a sequence of separate events that took place "throughout the forty days." It was not one event where a bunch of people were gathered, as depicted on the cover of the Watchtower, where all of them heard that command.

It was brought out in a comment by our COBE that Matt 28:17 proves that others had to be there because it says "some doubted" and according to the COBE, we know that none of Jesus' apostles ever doubted. Pardon me for thinking but has he never heard of "Doubting Thomas", an expression that can be used of anyone who is skeptical, not only in a religious context? Yes, he was one of the faithful 11, and John 20:24-29 contains the conversation in which Thomas somewhat defiantly said to the other 10 when they told him that they'd seen the Lord, "I'm not going to believe it's really him until I can see and feel his wounds for myself." And I find it interesting that Jesus did not chastise him for his "doubt" but willingly invited Thomas to put his hand into the wounds so he would be satisfied that this really was the resurrected Jesus.

I think the fear of regular—that is, non-anointed—publishers stepping back from the ministry if they realize they are not obligated to preach is the real reason this article was written. And I'm not saying the preaching work isn't important but I think it would have been made explicitly clear in the scriptures that every baptized minister was given the command to preach, not just the anointed. For me personally, I can't discount the other writers making it very clear that the command was given only to those whom he had chosen and made arrangements with ahead of time. Other scriptures are much more clear about when and to whom Jesus appeared, even setting out a chronological order of events. Why would that be so explicit yet the verses in Matt 28 need to have more added to them so we understand that this (supposedly) applies to everyone?

I call cherry-picking.

(D)

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(from me)

Hi D

You brought out some great points and scripture references! I only touched on this topic a little on page 8 of the article.

When Jesus saw those 11 men whom he had arranged to meet on that mountain what did he do? Did he teach them new things and then instruct them to spread this new information to others? No. Jesus was not meeting them there to continue his preaching work. That part of his earthly course was over. Here is what the scriptures say happened:

**(Matthew 28:16-20)** <sup>16</sup> However, the 11 disciples went to Gal'i-lee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them to meet. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they did obeisance, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. <sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."

He commanded them to go make disciples of people of the nations (pagans). He told them to baptize those disciples, and to teach them all of the things that he had already previously taught them.

So that meeting on the mountain did not include women and children as the cover picture for that study Watchtower shows. Jesus would not have given the command to preach to non-anointed ones, such as children and new ones. Nor would he have given the command to baptize to any other than congregation leaders. (see my article)

Was Jesus appearing to the more than 500 brothers at the same time as he appeared to his 11 apostles? Not according to Paul. As you point out D, Paul tells us that Jesus appeared to the more than 500, then, after appearing to them he then appeared to James. Then, after appearing to James, he then appeared to his 11 apostles.

**(1 Corinthians 15:6, 7)** After that he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still with us, though some have fallen asleep in death. <sup>7</sup> After that he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

On a side note: i don't see how we can return to door-to-door witnessing after this contrived COVID-19 panic is over. Yes, this new strain of flu virus is real, but the extreme reaction was designed and implemented for political gain in an attempt to manipulate the population with fear. If you make the people afraid enough they will turn over their freedom and rights for what they perceive to be a governmental solution. And if you take away the people's means to support themselves with stay-at-home orders you force them to rely on the government and accept its control just to survive. Dictatorial governments have successfully used those tactics in the past.

As much as the people were annoyed and upset at our knocking on their doors before, we will probably be even more unwelcome in the future. And from my experience and from what i have seen and heard, our door-to-door preaching work in first world countries has not been 'making disciples' for a long, long time. So i also think that the end to door-to-door witnessing is long overdue. Our work is supposed to draw others to Jehovah and His people, not anger them and make them hate us for intruding on them at their doorstep. These days, with all of the daytime crime going on, people are very appropriately disconcerted (to put it mildly) when an unwanted and uninvited person knocks on their door. That is typically how home invasions start, with a knock at the door.

75 years ago we might have been invited in and offered a glass of iced tea while we discussed what we were there for. But those days are long gone.

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Dave

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