

Who will survive Armageddon?

To answer that question many would point to scriptures like 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Or do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God's Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit God's Kingdom. (see also 1Co 6:9-11)

But such scriptures are describing those who *"will not inherit God's Kingdom,"* that is to say, those who will not be allowed to live forever under that Kingdom's rule after Armageddon. Only a few scriptures actually deal with who will be destroyed at Armageddon. Matthew 25:32, 33 is one such example:

(Matthew 25:32-33) All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

What does it mean to be a sheep or a goat? Let's look at Matthew 13:47-50 to get a little more insight into the separating process.

(Matthew 13:47-50) "Again the Kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet let down into the sea and gathering fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, they hauled it up onto the beach, and sitting down, they collected the fine ones into containers, but the unsuitable they threw away. ⁴⁹ That is how it will be in the conclusion of the system of things. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous ⁵⁰ and will cast them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be.

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. (Ec 7:20) So what does it mean to be wicked, or to be righteous?

The Reasoning book defines wickedness as: *"That which is very bad morally. It often denotes that which is injurious, malevolent, or destructive in influence."* Satan is even called *"the wicked one."* (Jn 17:15)

So the wicked are the worst of sinners and are happily so. (Pr 21:10; Isa 26:10; Ro 1:29, 2Pe 2:13; Re 9:20, 21) In contrast, when a righteous person sins (commits a wicked act) they feel shame and regret, or at least can be moved to feel shame and regret. (Eze 33:14-16; Lu 15:7; 1Co 6:5; 1Co 15:34; Ro 13:11-14)

Current Teaching

What is the current JW teaching on who will survive Armageddon and who won't? Paragraph 17 on page 178 of the Pure Worship book sums up the current teaching on this topic:

¹⁷ To survive the coming destruction,.... They need to react favorably to the preaching work that is being done today, to continue putting on a Christlike personality, to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah, and to support Christ's brothers loyally. (Ezek. 9:4; Matt. 25:34-40; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:21) Only those who pursue such a course now—and who enter the great tribulation as pure worshippers—will be in a position to be marked for survival.

Let's look at the referenced scriptures used to back up the statements made in that paragraph. The first one is Ezekiel 9:4.

(Ezekiel 9:4) Jehovah said to him: "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the city."

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.

The next set of referenced scriptures is Matthew 25:34-40. (and the next few verses too.)

(Matthew 25:34-40) "Then the King will say to those on his right: 'Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. ³⁵ For I became hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you received me hospitably; ³⁶ naked and you clothed me. I fell sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous ones will answer him with the words: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and receive you hospitably, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ In reply the King will say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left: 'Go away from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. ⁴² For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.' ⁴⁴ Then they too will answer with the words: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying: 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life."

Those scriptures do not talk about "*support(ing) Christ's brothers loyally.*" They are not about obedience or submission. They speak of performing sympathetic or compassionate deeds. Why? Because those deeds reveal one's true heart condition, which is the whole point. Even the anointed were told to "*give gifts of mercy.*" (Lu 12:33; Ac 10:31; Lu 11:41)

But who are those referred to as "*the least of these my brothers*" and "*these least ones*" in those verses? Are they the "*chosen ones*"? (Mt 24:31) I sincerely hope not, for my own sake and for the sake of many of you. Why do I say that? Well how many of you have ever even met someone who claims to be anointed? And even if you have, did you perform any of those listed acts of kindness upon them? If not, and if those scriptures are referring to the anointed, then that would exclude you (and me) from survival through Armageddon.

So who are "*the least of these my brothers*" and "*these least ones*"? Consider what James tells us in his letter:

(James 2:14-16) Of what benefit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he does not have works? That faith cannot save him, can it? ¹⁵ If any brothers or sisters are lacking clothing and enough food for the day, ¹⁶ yet one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but you do not give them what they need for their body, of what benefit is it?

Also consider what Matthew himself writes in a previous verse:

(Matthew 10:42) And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward."

Are the "*chosen ones*" (Mt 24:31) among those receiving help at Matthew 25:40, 45? Yes of course. But James shows that it is not just to those that we give needed assistance, but any 'brother or sister.' Note also that Matthew defines the "*little ones*" as a mere disciple, and not as "*chosen ones*".

When we pray, we pray to our Father in heaven. (Mt 6:6, 9; 12:50) Yes, all humans are God's children, as Christ is, making him our brother and we his brothers and sisters. Carrying out a merciful act on any of our Christian brothers or sisters who are in need shows our true heart condition.

Yes, it is our heart condition (shown to be good by such actions as listed in Matthew) that makes us worthy of the mark on our forehead, not our ability to locate one of the remaining chosen ones on earth who is in need and perform an act of kindness upon them, to the exclusion of anyone else who may be in need. Those verses are **not** about who is helped, but are about those doing the helping; whether or not they have a compassionate heart and perform compassionate deeds. A sheep-like one does, a goat-like one does not. That is why those verses begin with the words: "Then the King will say to those on his right," because the illustration is a continuation of Jesus' explanation of the separating process of the sheep from the goats. (Mt 25:31-33)

The next referenced scriptures are in Ephesians.

(Ephesians 4:22-24) You were taught to put away the old personality that conforms to your former course of conduct and that is being corrupted according to its deceptive desires.²³ And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude,²⁴ and should put on the new personality that was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty.

Those verses describe ones who were "*taught*" to put away the old personality and put on the new, which they did, showing that they did indeed react favorably to Jesus' teachings. But those verses do **not** say that if you learned about Jesus' teachings, took them to heart, and changed your ways, that it didn't count and you are still doomed if you didn't learn them from Jehovah's Witnesses. No, those verses do not say that. Nor do those verses in Ephesians mention any of the other requirements listed in that paragraph in the Pure Worship book.

The last referenced scripture is 1 Peter 3:21.

(1 Peter 3:21) Baptism, which corresponds to this, is also now saving you (not by the removing of the filth of the flesh, but by the request to God for a good conscience), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That scripture does not say that baptism is a requirement to survive Armageddon. It says that baptism is saving them, yes, but Peter even explains that the baptism was a "*request to God for a good conscience*." The baptism showed that they were repentant. Compare what Peter said at Acts 2:38 to what he said at Acts 3:19.

(Acts 2:38) "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit.

(Acts 3:19) "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from Jehovah himself

And later in Acts Peter said this:

(Acts 10:43) To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone putting faith in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Ananias told Paul:

(Acts 22:16) And now why are you delaying? Rise, get baptized, and wash your sins away by your calling on his name.'

Though Ananias told Paul to get baptized, it was the "*calling on his name*" that washed away his sins.

It is repentance and faith in Christ that blots out sin and provides forgiveness, and it is that which saves us. Baptism is just a symbol (public display) of our repentance and our belief. If baptism itself held power then an unrepentant non-believer could get baptized and be saved.

Note that Cornelius and his household were anointed with holy spirit **before they got baptized** (Ac 10:44-48) showing that it is not baptism, but it is the heart condition that counts. Baptism is just a public display of that heart condition.

Have you ever wondered who the first person was to be baptized as a Christian, and who baptized them? Jesus never baptized anyone (Jn 4:2), so it wasn't him, which means that they were baptized by someone who was not baptized as a Christian. Did the 12 apostles become his apostles without ever being baptized? There is no record of them ever being baptized, so perhaps they weren't, which means that all of those people that they baptized were baptized by someone who was never baptized as a Christian. So it would seem that baptism is not that critical. Am i saying that getting baptized is not important? **No, of course not!** (Mt 28:19) I'm just trying to provide a little perspective.

1 Peter 3:21 does not rule out any unbaptized ones who make it through Armageddon from getting baptized after Armageddon along with the resurrected and those born after Armageddon who choose to get baptized. Baptism is important, but even Paul said: *"For Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to declare the good news."* (1Co 1:17) Christ didn't even baptize anyone. (Jn 4:2)

Nowhere does the Bible say that non-Jehovah's Witnesses, or non-Christians, or un-baptized persons would be destroyed at Armageddon. All that is required by Jesus is for you to be sheep-like. Any un-baptized ones could merely be taught and get baptized after Armageddon. The Bible even tells us that people will be taught after Armageddon.

(Isaiah 11:9) They will not cause any harm Or any ruin in all my holy mountain, Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah As the waters cover the sea.

(Isaiah 54:13) And all your sons will be taught by Jehovah, And the peace of your sons will be abundant.

(Jeremiah 31:33, 34) "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Jehovah. "I will put my law within them, and in their heart I will write it. And I will become their God, and they will become my people." ³⁴ "And they will no longer teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know Jehovah!' for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them," declares Jehovah. "For I will forgive their error, and I will no longer remember their sin."

For those right-hearted ones of *"the house of Israel"* who do not know Jehovah, and for whom Jehovah is not their God, they will be taught by Jehovah Himself after Armageddon. If Baptism would still be required after Armageddon then that is when they would get baptized, because baptism follows the knowledge gained for one to choose to be a disciple. (Ro 10:17)

Yes, good right-hearted ones who do not even know the scriptures will make it through.

(Romans 2:14, 15) For when people of the nations, who do not have law, do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. ¹⁵ They are the very

ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.

Only Jehovah's Witnesses

Regarding the statement in the Pure Worship book about reacting "*favorably to the preaching work that is being done today*," that implies that any who do not listen to Jehovah's Witnesses, regardless of how good of a person they are, are doomed.

Jesus' parable of the sower helps us understand his viewpoint on this matter.

(Matthew 13:23) As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one 100 times more, that one 60, the other 30."

(Mark 4:20) Finally, the ones that were sown on the fine soil are those who listen to the word and favorably receive it and bear fruit—30, 60, and 100 times more."

(Luke 8:15) As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance.

Jesus described right-hearted ones who had not even heard "*the good news of the kingdom*" as "*fine soil*" and as having "*a fine and good heart*." At John 10:16 Jesus calls these ones his sheep. Even though they had not yet heard his message their heart condition was such that they would "*listen to (his) voice*." (see my article "Other Sheep")

(John 10:16) "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those too I must bring in, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.

So to say that Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones who will live through Armageddon is to say that Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones who are sheep-like and have the right heart condition. That is just not the case. There are many other meek people out there who have the right heart condition, and Jesus surrendered his life in behalf of all the right-hearted (Jn 10:11, 15) whether they are Jehovah's Witnesses, or in Christendom, or even non-Christian. (Lu 8:15)

Being a Jehovah's Witness is not a scriptural requirement to make it through Armageddon. John 10:16 does not say that those other sheep must join the flock of Jehovah's Witness to live.

Does being a member of a church in Christendom prevent someone from surviving Armageddon? Not if they think the church they are going to is the true religion. All Christians who think they are doing the right thing, and if they have the right heart condition, are his people (Re 18:4), whether they follow true shepherds or the hired men of Christendom. (Jn 10:12) How do we know this is true? Consider these scriptures:

(Romans 14:5) One man judges one day as above another; another judges one day the same as all others; let each one be fully convinced in his own mind.

(Romans 14:14) I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; only where a man considers something to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

(Romans 14:23) But if he has doubts, he is already condemned if he eats, because he does not eat based on faith. Indeed, everything that is not based on faith is sin.

[w72 9/15 p. 564 ¶ 11] The Christian who acts according to faith has a clean conscience; but if he acts without faith that what he is doing is proper, then his conscience is not clean, for, though feeling that the act is contrary to God's will, he does it anyway.—Rom. 14:5, 14, 23.

Doing something you think is wrong is sinning, whether the act is truly wrong or not. But having an inaccurate understanding about any given topic in the Bible is not sinning, otherwise we are all sinning in this manner since the light is continuing to get brighter and our understanding will not be without flaws this side of Armageddon. (1Co 13:8-12)

(1 Corinthians 13:9-12) For we have partial knowledge and we prophesy partially, ¹⁰ but when what is complete comes, what is partial will be done away with. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, to think as a child, to reason as a child; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a child. ¹² For now we see in hazy outline (indistinctly) by means of a metal mirror, but then it will be face-to-face. At present I know partially, but **then** I will know accurately, just as I am accurately known.

Regardless of what religion a person is part of, a good, God-fearing person is still that, despite what beliefs they hold. (Ro 14:1-4) The sheep which are following the hired men in Christendom are still in his sheepfold and are still his sheep. (Jn 10:16) (see my article "Other Sheep")

Jesus does not say that he will be separating Jehovah's Witnesses from everybody else. He says he will be separating the sheep from the goats. (Mt 25:32, 33) It is not a particular religion that qualifies you to live through Armageddon, but a heart condition backed up by actions. And just being a Jehovah's Witness does not give you an automatic pass if you are goat-like. Jesus will not be separating one religion from another, or one belief from another. Accurate understanding of the Bible is not listed as a criteria for his separating process.

Though it is our actions that show whether we are a sheep or a goat, we may not see all that a person does, like the two children at Matthew 21:28-32. Just because someone seems to be nice and good on the outside does not mean that they are, and vice-versa. (Mt 6:1-4) Even if they outwardly seem to be doing and saying the right things they may be hiding who they truly are. That is why Jesus will look into the heart to see who genuinely is sheep-like and worthy of that mark on the forehead. (Mt 7:22, 23) He will not rely solely on observable actions to do the separating. (see my article "The Separating Process")

So none of the referenced scriptures from that paragraph in the Pure Worship book say that to survive Armageddon one must react favorably to the preaching work done by Jehovah's Witnesses, get baptized, "support Christ's brothers", or be a pure worshipper.

[re p. 6 par. 5] God's Word gives the happy assurance that only wicked opposers of God will be destroyed—by forces under God's control.

Preaching

What about the preaching work? Is that not also a requirement? Does not Ezekiel 3:18 say that if we do not warn others, that we will be killed?

(Ezekiel 3:17-21) “Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman to the house of Israel; and when you hear a word from my mouth, you must warn them from me. ¹⁸ When I say to someone wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ but you do not warn him, and you fail to speak in order to warn the wicked one to turn from his wicked course so that he may stay alive, he will die for his error because he is wicked, but I will ask his blood back from you. ¹⁹ But if you warn someone wicked and he does not turn back from his wickedness and from his wicked course, he will die for his error, but you will certainly save your own life. ²⁰ But when someone righteous abandons his righteousness and does what is wrong, I will put a stumbling block before him and he will die. If you did not warn him, he will die for his sin and his righteous acts will not be remembered, but I will ask his blood back from you. ²¹ But if you have warned the righteous one not to sin, and he does not sin, he will surely keep alive because he was warned, and you will have saved your own life.”

Those scriptures were directed at Ezekiel. It is the Ezekiel class, which are the “*chosen ones*” (Mt 24:31), who have been given the task of warning others. Yes, the appointment to preach falls squarely at *their* feet. (Ac 10:41, 42; Col 1:25) (See my article “The Preaching Work”) Notice that verse 21 does not say that the righteous one who does not sin, must in turn warn others not to sin if he wishes to be saved. Ezekiel speaks of two groups that are saved: 1) the ones who do the warning, and 2) those who heed that warning. Paul tells Timothy (one of the anointed) the same thing.

(1 Timothy 4:16) Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

At Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus arranged to meet with the 11 apostles privately where he gave them this command:

(Matthew 28:19) 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,

He gave the command to preach to them, not to the whole congregation. This was not when Jesus met with the “*500 brothers*” (1Co 15:6), as has been suggested. The preaching work was assigned only to the “*chosen ones*”. (Mt 24:31) (See my article “The Preaching Work”)

No scripture lists the participation of the non-anointed in the field ministry as a deciding factor on whether or not they survive Armageddon. Warning others of what is to come is the responsibility of the Ezekiel class (chosen ones). And Ezekiel does not say that you must join him in his warning of others or else you won't survive.

Am i saying that you should not take part in teaching others? *Not at all*. If you wish to assist them in their evangelizing work you can. Just don't expect a greater reward for doing so. (Mt 20:13, 14) We

would not want to be like those at Mt 20:8-16 and complain that our reward should be more than those who do not evangelize, or that they should receive no reward at all. (see my article "First will be Last and the Last First")

Even if they said that it was their calling and that you could not help since you are not one of them, Revelation 22:17 says "let anyone hearing say, 'Come!' and let anyone thirsting come; let anyone who wishes take life's water free." The ones who hear are not being commanded to say "Come!" any more than the thirsty ones are being commanded to drink. As the verse continues, it is up to anyone who "wishes". So whether you are merely a thirsty one who wishes to drink, or you wish to also say "Come!", you are allowed to help. But it is a voluntary thing, not a requirement for surviving Armageddon. Though we should all strive to do what we can, some are just not up to the task.

(1 Corinthians 12:29, 31) Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? ³¹ But keep striving for the greater gifts.

Even Paul confirms that only some would engage in the preaching work:

(Ephesians 4:11) And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers,

Though we are not required to participate in the evangelizing work, we do not keep our belief a secret, or only speak of it in whispers behind closed doors. Though it was Paul and the other apostles that were doing the preaching work (Ro 1:1, 5), for the disciple who heard and had the right heart, "the word" was also in their mouth. (The "we" are the apostles, and the "you" are the disciples.)

(Romans 10:8-10) But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart"; that is, "the word" of faith, which we are preaching. ⁹ For if you publicly declare (confess) with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration (confession) for salvation.

The original Greek (homologeó) translated as "*publicly declare*" and "*public declaration*" mean to publicly confess, which means to admit or acknowledge something when confronted about it, typically against one's inclination. So publicly declaring "*that Jesus is Lord*" is not evangelizing. It is merely the opposite of being ashamed of and hiding or **disowning** (denying) your faith when challenged by disapproving non-believers. (Mr 8:38) The same Greek word is translated here as "acknowledge":

(Matthew 10:32-33) "Everyone, then, who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens. ³³ **But** whoever disowns me before men, I will also disown him before my Father who is in the heavens. (Lu 12:8-9)

(Revelation 3:5) The one who conquers will thus be dressed in white garments, and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life, but I will acknowledge his name before my Father and before his angels.

In Revelation, as in Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8, Michael is not evangelizing about them to Jehovah. He is merely acknowledging them.

When we publicly acknowledging our belief in Jesus we may then be asked to explain why we believe what we believe. So we must also study and know the Bible well enough to always be ready and able to defend our faith. (Titus 1:16)

(1 Peter 3:15) But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

The Bible gives us an example of "*public declaration*." Luke 3:15 tells us this:

(Luke 3:15) Now the people were in expectation and all of them were reasoning in their hearts about John, "May he perhaps be the Christ?"

The priests and Levites too were wondering if John was the Christ, so they sent men to ask him. John's response:

(John 1:20) And he admitted it and did not deny it, saying: "I am not the Christ."

The original Greek word that John used was *hōmologēsen*, basically the same Greek word used at Romans 10:9 (*homologēsēs*). One meaning confess, the other confession.

When John was confronted and questioned he "*admitted*", or as that word is translated at Romans 10:9, 10, he made "*public declaration*." The same Greek word at Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8 is translated as "*acknowledges*" (*homologēsei*), meaning "will confess". These other scriptures also use the same Greek words: Ac 24:14; Tit 1:16; He 13:15; 1Jo 1:9; 2:23; 4:15

So when examined carefully (Ac 17:11) the Bible explains to us the difference between evangelizing and public declaration. One is offensive, the other is defensive. Basically, evangelizers seek out others to speak to while those who make public declaration are responding to those who have sought them out, just as John did. (Jn 1:20)

Sinners

Everyone who lives through Armageddon will be a sinner and unworthy of life. It is not their purity or accurate knowledge of scripture that will get them through, but their heart condition manifest by their actions. Only the sheep-like will make it through Armageddon.

(Psalm 37:11) the meek will possess the earth,

(Matthew 5:5) "Happy are the mild-tempered, since they will inherit the earth.

[w85 2/1 p. 7] only God has the wisdom to fight a truly just war. Only he can fight a truly selective war where right-hearted individuals, wherever they may be on earth, will be preserved.

[w82 2/15 p. 21-22] when Jerusalem was about to be destroyed in 607 B.C.E., a symbolic “man” was sent out to mark the foreheads of right-hearted Israelites in order to protect them from being slaughtered. Only those few who were outraged over ‘the detestable things’ being done in the midst of what should have been God’s holy city were marked for salvation.—Ezekiel 9:1-7.

No, all those making it through Armageddon will not be without sin. Quite the contrary:

(Matthew 21:31, 32) Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said: “The first.” Jesus said to them: “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going ahead of you into the Kingdom of God.³² For John came to you in a way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. However, the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him,

(John 12:47, 48) But if anyone hears (listens/believes) my sayings and does not keep (obey/observe) them, I do not judge him; for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world.⁴⁸ Whoever disregards me and does not receive my sayings has one to judge him. The word that I have spoken is what will judge him on the last day.

Both continue to sin. One hears (accepts) his sayings and is not judged while the other disregards (rejects) them and is judged. (Jas 2:25)

(John 3:18) Whoever exercises faith in him is not to be judged. Whoever does not exercise faith has been judged already, because he has not exercised faith in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Of course those verses are not intended to give you the freedom to act outside of Bible principles. (Ga 5:13)

(1 Peter 2:16) Be as free people, using your freedom, not as a cover for doing wrong, but as slaves of God.

Consider also what the Lord told Paul while he was in Corinth. (Ac 18:1)

(Acts 18:9-11) Moreover, the Lord said to Paul in a vision by night: “Do not be afraid, but keep on speaking and do not keep silent,¹⁰ for I am with you and no man will assault you to harm you; for I have many people in this city.”¹¹ So he stayed there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Lord said to Paul: *“I have many people in this city.”* Was he talking about Christians? No, those he was talking about had not heard the good news yet. Were they all fine upstanding moral people? No. Paul tells us what kind of people some of them were at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Or do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God’s Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit God’s Kingdom.¹¹ And yet that is what some

of you were. But you have been washed clean; you have been sanctified; you have been declared righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God.

So why did the Lord refer to them as his people? Because they had the right heart condition.

Do you have the right heart condition? If so, then you are also one of his people.

Kind Acts

Let's talk about the kind acts listed in Matthew 25:34-40. Why are they said to be a requirement when other scriptures merely refer to a heart condition?

It is our heart condition that makes us worthy of the mark on our forehead. But how does our heart condition reveal itself? Through actions. Jesus listed many of those actions in Matthew. Though our works do not earn us a ticket through Armageddon (Eph 2:9) they are a result of, and show that we have, a good heart.

But cannot Jesus just read our hearts to know what sort of person we are? Consider Abraham. Jehovah knew that Abraham had a good heart, but until the knife was falling even Jehovah did not know if Abraham would actually sacrifice his son or not.

(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.

So it is our actions that prove our heart condition, as to whether we are sheep-like or goat-like. A sheep-like one will perform righteous or merciful acts, while the goat-like will not. That is why Matthew 13:49 describes the separating work as the wicked from the righteous.

(Matthew 13:49) That is how it will be in the conclusion of the system of things. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous

Yes, Jesus can read our hearts, but it is our actions that prove what sort of person we are. Good intentions are not enough. James also reminds us of that:

(James 2:16) yet one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but you do not give them what they need for their body, of what benefit is it?

Faith and works go together.

(James 2:22) You see that his faith was active along with his works and his faith was perfected by his works,

Are our acts of mercy only for our fellow Christians? No, but they do take precedence, as Paul said in his letter to the Galatians:

(Galatians 6:10) So, then, as long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all, but **especially** toward those related to us in the faith.

Here is a quote from the Insight book volume 2 that sums it up quite well:

[it-2 p. 378] When brought into judgment by God, those who have been merciful—showing pity or compassion, and giving active aid to those in need—will, in turn, be shown mercy by God, and thus their mercy will in effect triumph over any adverse judgment that might otherwise be leveled against them. As the proverb states: “He that is showing favor to the lowly one is lending to Jehovah, and his treatment He will repay to him.” (Pr 19:17)

Additional scriptures:

(James 2:13) For the one who does not practice mercy will have his judgment without mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

(Luke 7:44-48) With that he turned to the woman and said to Simon: “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet. But this woman wet my feet with her tears and wiped them off with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but this woman, from the hour that I came in, did not stop tenderly kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not pour oil on my head, but this woman poured perfumed oil on my feet. ⁴⁷ Because of this, I tell you, her sins, many though they are, are forgiven, because she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ Then he said to her: “Your sins are forgiven.”

(Matthew 5:7) “Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy.

(Matthew 6:12) and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

(New Living Translation) and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

(Matthew 18:32-35) Then his master summoned him and said to him: ‘Wicked slave, I canceled all that debt for you when you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not also have shown mercy to your fellow slave as I showed mercy to you?’ ³⁴ With that his master, provoked to wrath, handed him over to the jailers until he repaid all that he owed. ³⁵ My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.”

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.”

John 3:16

What about John 3:16? Does that verse not say that only those who are exercising their faith in Jesus will be saved?

(John 3:16) "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.

What does it mean to exercise your faith? Does it mean that we must be performing some sort of work or actions? No. Although "*faith without works is dead*", that is not what "*exercising faith*" means. (see my article "Faith Defined")

(Romans 10:9, 10) For if you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.

So "*exercising faith*" merely means that we believe in our heart. Jesus was reiterating what he had just said in the previous two verses:

(John 3:14, 15) And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone believing in him may have everlasting life.

(John 20:31) But these have been written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and because of believing, you may have life by means of his name.

But those scriptures do not say that believing is required. As Romans 2:14, 15 points out (covered earlier), even those who do not know God can make it through if their heart and actions are acceptable. It is like saying that everyone who has an invitation to the memorial can attend, but so can anyone who does not have an invitation, as long as their intentions are honorable and they are not planning to make trouble. John 3:16 does not say: "*so that (only those) exercising faith in him might not be destroyed.*"

Conclusion

After reading this article, which shows that being a Jehovah's Witness is not a requirement to survive Armageddon, do you say?: "*This cannot be!*" Why not? Because you have shared in the preaching work and they have not? Those right-hearted non-Jehovah's Witnesses have performed merciful works as well, showing that they have a sheep-like personality. You have just done "*30, 60, and 100 times more.*" (Mr 4:20) (See my article "Gleaning" in my Ramblings folder.)

(Matthew 10:42) And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward."

(1 John 3:10) The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Whoever does not practice righteousness does not originate with God, nor does the one who does not love his brother.

(Romans 10:13) For “everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”

So what do *you* think?

:^)

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Last edited 03-30-2024 (created 09-21-2019)