2 Thessalonians - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Plain Papers on the Second Coming of Christ, Second Coming of Christ, Plain Papers on the: Part 2

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The Lord Jesus now foretells the condition of Christendom during His absence, and at His coming. The kingdom on earth, during the time (he King is in heaven. As to the Jews, He had shown, first, the unmeasured period of their scattering and persecution. Then, what would mark the time of the end—the setting up the abomination of desolation; the last half-week, or three years and a half of Daniel's prophetic period, the time of unparalleled tribulation; immediately after which the Son of man shall come again. And then, before describing the judgment of the living nations at His coming, He now, in these verses, describes the state of Christendom.

The order and divisions of this scripture are very striking. First, the similitude of the days of Noah; secondly, the parable of the ten virgins; and thirdly, the traveler into a far country. In all three there is striking contrast with the former part of the prophecy as to the Jews, whilst the three parts are in harmony with the addresses to Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, in Rev. 2; 3, as to Christendom.

In the illustration of Noah, there is eating and drinking; in the ten virgins, slumbering and sleeping; and in the last, luke-warmness and slothfulness.

Let us remember these are the words of Him who cannot be deceived—whose eyes are as a flame of fire. He says, " As the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." To them it was not a time of tribulation, but of utter carelessness and unbelief. They were eating and drinking, &c., " and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Then the most solemn warnings: " Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Is it not most sad that the whole force and meaning of these plain words of our Lord should be entirely set aside, by misquoting them, as though they referred to death? Take the death of the unsaved, as described by our Lord in Luke 16: " He died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." Is that the coming of the Son of man? Then take the death, or falling asleep of the believer: it is to " be absent from the body, present with the Lord"! No, if our readers will carefully examine these words of our Lord, they will not find one thought of death in them. Blessed Lord, thou couldst not have given more solemn, or plainer, warnings of that sudden destruction, so near; but men will not believe Thee! If our readers will turn to 1 Thess. 5:1-10, they will find the same delusion foretold: " For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh," &c. And see that destruction fully described in 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

Now, with the plainest possible teaching in the word of God, both from the lips of Jesus, and the inspired apostles, is it not a fact that, at this moment, the cry of peace and safety, a good time coming, is the delusion of Christendom, exactly as thus foretold? Is not our Lord's teaching rejected, just as was Noah's preaching? Saying in the heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," was the beginning of declension, and of smiting the fellow-servants. The Lord gives this as the mark of the evil servant, whose portion shall be with the hypocrites. It is exceedingly solemn that thus, not only in our day, the world rejects the warnings of the Lord, just as they did the warnings of Noah; but also many, who profess to be the very servants of Christ, are saying in their hearts, " My Lord delayeth his coining." What a question for the reader: Are you waiting for the Lord; or saying in your heart, 44 My Lord delayeth his coining?"

The apostle Peter says, " Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" Thus the very long-suffering of God is used for unbelief. And the children of God are warned to " beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Pet. 3) What is this error of the wicked? Is it not saying, " Where is the promise of his coming?"

Let us now listen to the Lord in the parable of the ten virgins. What a correct description of the history of Christendom. No one who reads the epistles can question but that, in the beginning, the whole professing body of Christians " went forth" to meet Christ. It was the hope and expectation of the church. But now, as to the coming of the Lord, during the dark history of so many centuries, did not the church return, in spirit and ways, to the world? and "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Yes, all, wise and foolish, the saved and unsaved. All? all slumbered and slept. Fathers, schoolmen, commentators, all, all slumbered and slept. Does not this account for the dreamy writings and confused ideas of the commentators, when they attempt to speak of the Lord's coming?

Dispensational truth, the true order of events, yea, the distinction between the church and the world, and the church and the hopes of Israel, all lost in dreamy confusion. Yes, "all slumbered and slept."

And what has taken place in these last few years? " And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." The whole church of God is being awoke; Christ, " the Morning Star," is being revealed, and about to come, and call His bride away. Can anyone deny that there is a stir among both the wise and foolish—such as have the Holy Ghost, and such as have only the lamp of profession? And is it not found that there is as great need now to go out of the camp of a worldly Christendom to meet the Bridegroom, as there was in the beginning to go outside the camp of Judaism to meet the heavenly Bridegroom? And surely this is equally true as to the world at enmity with God.

Does not this word come home to your heart and mine, " Go ye out to meet him?" The Lord apply it, with divine power, to our souls! Many own that their lamps are gone out. They dare not say they have salvation. See them hurrying off to them that sell!—ever buying, never getting. As God's free gift in grace they will not have it. Well, hurry on, be in earnest—try, buy. But mark, the Bridegroom is coming, and the door will be shut—yes, shut forever. If not salvation now, then never. "I know you not" is the everlasting sentence. Oh, be not deceived by them that sell! If you do not believe God in the gift of His Son, then do, we beg, be in earnest—there is no time to lose; go and see if those who sell can give you oil in your vessel. Give your pence, and give your penance, give all they ask, only be quite sure that you get salvation.

Oh, what words—" While they went to buy, the bridegroom came!" &c. Oh, deluded souls! can folly be more foolish than to refuse the gift of God? Yes, the moment is at hand, they that are saved shall go in, and they that are not shall be shut out. Should it come whilst you read this, where will you be—shut in, or shut out?

Must not a man be asleep to dream of the world's conversion, when the Lord shows in this parable that one half the virgins are foolish—not converted, are not saved, but shut out, having merely the lamp of profession? Oh, no, do not be thus deceived with the error of the wicked! Every scripture wrested to prove such a thought will be found to apply to quite another thing—the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth after His return.

We will not, at this time, notice further the third parable—" A man traveling into a far country,' but would earnestly press the plain teachings and warnings of our Lord, in the scriptures above, spoken three days before the foundation of all our hopes, the death of Christ; yet they fully and correctly describe the very scenes before our eyes in this day. " Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

The Coming of the Lord: As Made Known to the Assembly at Thessalonica, Coming of the Lord, The: No. 3

Since we are not of this world's darkness, let us not sleep as do others, " but let us watch and be sober." Do dwell on every word of this exhortation. Oh beware lest you are drunken with the spread of the doctrines of demons on every hand. These will be drunken, in that night of darkness such as never was before. We are of the day, let us then put on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. " For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation." Assuredly then the church will not be in the great tribulation, in that night of this world's darkness. Let us finish the sentence: " but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Thus he comforts them as to those who had fallen asleep. And the Holy Ghost well knew that they would soon need the same comfort as to those who were alive. " We should live together with him." Oh how blessed to know that every true believer, whether he has fallen asleep in Jesus or remains alive unto that moment, when He comes to take all that are His, will live together with Him: " forever with the Lord." We shall soon see the need of this comfort as to the living that remain.

Before we pass on to the second Epistle, there is one more verse we would notice in the first Epistle. " And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Chap, v. 23.) It is the God of peace. Yes, they were in God the Father, and in perfect peace with God in that endearing relationship of Father. Not a sin, not a cloud. All of the old man gone, utterly gone from the sight of God, and perfect, unclouded peace with God. Happy place! the complete justification of every babe in Christ. And, in view of the coming of Christ—to perfect the whole, in glory—he longs for the entire man, body, soul, and spirit, to be sanctified. It is complete separation from everything unsuited to that blessed event, the coming of the Lord. Men talk about sanctification, and, yet ignoring altogether the coming of the Lord, they remain identified with every evil of paganized Christendom! Such is the case, so that if a few believers, whilst in the world seek to walk as not of the world, they are pitied for their ignorance, and it is hinted they must have learned such crude notions in the dark ages.

But what is the great motive for true, real holiness of walk? Is it not that the entire man "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'? Would you like to be found doing anything worldly in that moment (perhaps the day you read this) when the Lord shall come? Is the love of money, the love of pleasure, the seeking of human applause, the grasping at the world, the love of the world, the observing of pagan festivals under Christian names, the selfishness and covetousness of this day, are these things, and many more, blameless? Do they become a child of God, waiting for the Lord from heaven? If there was need for this prayer then, is there not still greater need now? Do not be deceived, God must have reality. Are you dreaming of sinless perfection in the flesh; or do you feel your deep need of preservation? Yes, they needed and we need the God of peace to separate us entirely from this whole scene which is hastening on to judgment.

It would seem in the second epistle their peace of heart, waiting for the Lord, had been severely attacked. In whatever way, whether by a letter, as from the apostle or otherwise, they were greatly distressed, as though the day of the Lord had come—and, if so, they were evidently left behind. This attack on the young babes gives the occasion for much additional truth being brought out to us in 2 Thess. 1; 2

Let us notice the tenderness of the apostle. He does not go at once and argue with them about their mistaken distress; but he opens up again so sweetly the relation in which they stand to God OUR Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the grace and peace that thus flows to them from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he tells them how he is still bound to thank God always for them " as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." He was also so rejoiced that he gloried in them in the churches of God, for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations that they endured.

Surely this was a most blessed way of reminding them that they were not left behind in the day of the Lord. What tender love and calm assurance! This abounding fruit was a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God—that they may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered. Such ought to be also the case with us: there ought to be the same patience in bearing all the scorn and reproach of the world, yes, and persecutions also, should they be permitted.

It will thus be manifest that God is righteous in sending the tribulation on those that persecute and despise all true believers. There is a striking parallel between this present time and that. The Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, had been rejected, and His testimony to Jesus despised. Those whom He gathered to Christ were' regarded as a "sect, everywhere spoken against. (Acts 28:22.) Now during this century, immediately before the return of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Ghost who remains here, however despised and set aside, has again gathered souls to Christ, and given with great distinctness a restored testimony to Christ, as at the beginning. Now also those He has gathered to Christ are regarded as a sect everywhere spoken against, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Christ, is rejected. In the first case, the rejection of the Holy Ghost brought down the righteous judgments of God on Judaism; and will not the present rejection of the Holy Ghost's testimony to Christ bring clown the righteous judgment of God on Christendom? This is a subject that should have grave reflection. In the eyes of men it is nothing, yet they hate it. But what is the present rejection of the Spirit's testimony to Christ in the eyes of God? Let us return to our chapter.

Verse 7. "And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," &c. At the time of the world's tribulation, and the terrible judgment here described, those dear young babes in Christ, and all in Christ now, who may be passing through tribulation, so far from being left behind at the coming of the Lord for His redeemed, they will at that time be in perfect rest. Notice this verse carefully, for it is often perverted to deceive Christians now, just as the deceivers were seeking to deceive the saints at Thessalonica then; that is, that they were left for the day of tribulation, to pass through its unparalleled sorrows. No; at that time they and we shall be in rest. We shall see more as to this presently.

Here, remember how the apostle had shown them in the first Epistle the order of coming events. At the coming of the Lord in the air for His saints, the first event in order is this: the dead in Christ rise first. Then, secondly, we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thirdly, the day of the Lord then takes place: sudden destruction. (Chap, v.) Then, fourthly, in this chapter (2 Thess. 1) we have the coming of the Lord to this earth in terrible judgment. (Vers. 7-9.) We have also seen that when He thus comes, all His saints will come with Him. Careful attention to this would correct all the mistakes of such men as are pretending that only 144,000 will be taken.

And, mark, Paul, who writes respecting the church and the Lord's coming for it, never speaks of dates. This shows the gross error of such as the Millerites, Dr. Gumming, Mr. Baxter, and others, in applying dates to the church. May the Lord enable us to rightly divide the word, so as to see what belongs to Israel, and what is the portion of the church.

Let us now look at this fourth subject in the order of these epistles. The Lord Jesus shall come from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire. Oh where will the infidels and mere professors be at that awful moment? And so sudden and unexpected to this boasting Christendom around us at this moment.

You will notice that there is no resurrection of the wicked dead here. It is in perfect keeping with all other scriptures that speak of the judgment of the quick. On whom does He take vengeance? Two things characterize them: " Them that know not God, and that obey not the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Do you know God? If you know Him, you have eternal life. (John 17:3.) To know Him is the proof of it: for the believer has eternal life that he may know Him: " And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." If you know God, you cannot doubt Him or His word; therefore, if you know Him, you know that your sins are forgiven, and in Christ you are justified from all things. (Acts 13:38, 39.) Oh do not be deceived. If you do not know that your sins are forgiven, and that you are justified in Christ, and have peace with God, then assuredly you do not know God, and you are hastening on to that fearful judgment from which there will be no escape.

Have you obeyed the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you preferring the pleasures or riches of this world? Are you living in sin, led captive by the devil? Are you deliberately rejecting forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from them through Jesus Christ? or are you seeking salvation by works, or the improvement of your fallen nature by any means? Then you have not obeyed the glad tidings, you are still on the way to the judgment here described. Are you seeking salvation by a human priesthood, after the pattern of Judaism or paganism, by the imitation of pagan sacraments that have no place in true Christianity? Be not deceived with these things of Satan. You are yet on the way to judgment. Is it not this apostate pagan Christendom that is hastening on to its punishment? Do you think, if, you knew God's estimate of the blood of Christ, and, like all Christians, if you had redemption through that blood, even the forgiveness of your sins, would you either be so deceived as to take the sacrament in order to get salvation, or go and see a man offer a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead? Impossible! Why should you love to be so deceived? Those who knew God, and had obeyed Him, believing the glad tidings, had redemption, were eternally saved—God said they were perfected forever (Heb. 10:14), and that their sins and iniquities He would remember no more. (Ver. 17.) They simply believed the glad tidings. The Holy Ghost dwelt in them. They had a nature that delighted to do the will of God. Are you rejecting all this, and then dreaming that you belong to the true church? Is it not quite clear if you do not know God, and reject the glad tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you are not a Christian, but hasting on to this judgment?

As there are no dates given to us as Christians, all dates have reference to God's dealings govern-mentally with His people Israel, or the world. No one can say how soon these events, or at least the taking of the church, may take place, We earnestly entreat you, reader, to lose no time in having this question settled, whether you are a Christian, or hasting on to judgment. How many are deceiving and being deceived!

And what will be the punishment at that coming judgment? We are pestered with books and pamphlets, as if the professing church was going mad, to prove that there is no such thing as everlasting punishment. Let us, then, carefully inquire the meaning of these words in the next verse: " Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," &c.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Difference Between Saints and Believers

Question: 2 Thess. 1:10. What is the difference of saints and believers? and why is the Lord to be glorified in the one and admired in the other? I have asked a good many, and all see the difficulty: if you could throw a little light on it, I should be very thankful. E. C.

Answer: The careful reader will note that two classes of enemies are brought before us in verse 8: those that know not God, Gentiles; and those who, if they could not in the same way be said to be ignorant of God, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jews. They were both such as should pay the penalty of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His might, when He shall have come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all that have believed. It is not the moment of the translation of the saints to heaven, but of the appearing or day of the Lord, when He shall come, not to receive them to Himself, but “to be glorified in his saints.” This, however, being comparatively vague—for He might be glorified simply in their glorification, and this wholly outside the ken of the earth—we have greater precision in the next clause, “and to be wondered at in all that have believed.” Here display to others is more prominent. It is no question of those who shall be brought to know His glory on earth after He is thus come, but of all those that have believed previously; and as “the saints” in whom He is said to be glorified would fully apply to those of the Old Testament, so I think “all that have believed” more properly belongs to the present time, when faith has its largest exercise and fullest development. Those of old were separated to God, and though they had faith practically, yet the especial character in reference to God and Christ was hope or trust. Now that redemption is

accomplished, it is in the strictest sense faith. And this seems to be confirmed by the appended parenthetic application to the Thessalonians: “for our testimony to you was believed.” “In that day” belongs, of course, to their manifestation with Christ in glory.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Saints Entering Into Rest

Question: Does not 2 Thess. 1:7 appear to teach that the saints do not enter into rest until the Lord is revealed from heaven taking vengeance on them that know not God, and 1 John 18, that they will be here with the Antichrist?

Answer: 2 Thess. 1 speaks solely of publicly awarded rest and tribulation when Jesus is revealed. Nobody thinks either can be till Jesus appears. A previous translation is no more a difficulty for the saints caught up to heaven than a previous tribulation for Jews and Gentiles on earth. Nor does 1 John 18 hint that those addressed would be on earth when Antichrist comes, but affirms many antichrists now as an evidence of that coming man of sin, and no more.

Des Moines Conference: 1997, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Reading

Committed to the. 4/1. Does 51 and 52. For justice the thought that. The Lord brings out to his disciples in Matthew the 13th chapter. And the 51St verse. Matthew 1351 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yay, Lord, then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that isn't householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Like unto a man that isn't householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. Our God and Father. Our God and Father. Mode, as we're in this morning have come to thee for guidance and our God and Father. It is not a ritual. It is not something that we merely do because we've done it before. But we recognize the. Divine intervention of the power of Thy spirit that is necessary for poor hearts like. To us. If we took up. A second Thessalonians and go as far as we can in that epistle. Some don't know what your thoughts are. It's been on my heart. Read the first chapter. Chapter One. Paul and Sylvanus and Themotheus unto the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is me, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of everyone of you all toward each other abounded, so that we are selves glory in you in the churches of God. For your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations, that ye endure, which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer, seeing it as a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when he shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, because our testimony among you was believed in that day? Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness. And the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and me and him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The old things and the new things. Or that Christ came and that he's coming. That's old news. He came during this age that she's coming. We're living in between. We could say it's the Old Testament. It's the New Testament. What a marvelous book we have to look into. There's no limit to it. And nothing will cheer our hearts like looking for the Lord Jesus. Perhaps today, perhaps today. What a marvel it is, that God in the world in which we live.

That we think fully developed in wickedness and violence and corruption, that he keeps his people down here. He keeps it kept by the power of going through faith under salvation, ready to be revealed. That's what we'll get at his coming. If we went to the first epistle to Thessalonians, we'd see that right in the first chapter, and I believe in every chapter. Yes, he came. Yes, he is coming. Meanwhile, he has something for his people down here to enjoy, and that's Christ himself and the glory that awaits us. And the joy of the Lord to walk with him called by his name, met together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with him in the midst. This fellowship with God. I wish I'd gone ahead. That's first Peter chapter one, verse five, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. That's where we are right now. We are in the last time, and that's what Paul has to say to the Thessalonians. The. Wonderful hope that we have of the eminence when he was living. He was anticipating the return of Christ. We which are remained alive and remain shall be caught up together with him in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Paul was in Thessalonica 3 Sabbaths. That's as far as the record goes. That's all we know of. And yet in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians, in the fifth verse, he says. Remember ye not, when I was yet with you, I told you these things. Before I got saved. I was told that the things regarding the coming of the Lord in the future, events and so forth were not for new Christians. Therefore the beginners. It's the blessed hope, Peter says. Of the soon coming, glorious appearing. Both of them soon coming for us the glorious appearing. For all of us, including Israel, but. This is a marvelous portion of the scripture that we have here in the of good news, and yet of extremely solemn warnings. How far we would get in the second epistle. We only have two reading meetings. It would be nice if we would have time to spend some time in the second chapter, which is very important. Maybe if we would not repeat ourselves. We maybe we could get into the second chapter because it contains very important truth. That is undermined and misrepresented in our day. Maybe we can hope that we will get into the second chapter as well. Actually more strongly than any other part of the epistle the second chapter, but I thought we would start and at least briefly scan it the first chapter anyway. Last time in general, let's look at a verse in Ephesians 6. To find another description of the time in which we live. The time in which we live is between the coming of the Lord the first time and the coming the second time, and that's called the Evil day in Ephesians 6. Verse 13 where we all are exhorted to take unto us the whole armor of God. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day. Satan has succeeded in putting Jesus out of this way. World, we may say. At least God has taken him out and the world thinks they've gotten rid of him. And the whole of this time is the evil day, and we need to be prepared for it.

And having done all to stand in a position, now our assembly here in our first verse we read. Now, Thessalonica. Is in a very secure place, the same place the assembly is in today. In a most secure place. The Lord had said when he announced the church. I will build my church and the gates of hell. Shall not prevail against it. The assembly stands. Christ does that work. And here where Paul had gone and written the first Epistle, both in the first Epistle and then the second pistol, he begins this way. The Church of the Thessalonian in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't that comforting In the evil day in which we live, who think that she is impregnable, Satan got into Eden. He'll never defeat the church. She gets up to heaven. Christ comes and brings her there. He came to purchase her, to get her out of this scene and we're just about ready to go. But to have that security go on from day-to-day, realizing that the church is in the position of in God our Father, that relationship of Father was not known. Much in the Old Testament, at least. But it's there all the time. In the new when Christ comes and reveals the Father, he mentions the Father. I think many, many times in John's Gospel. And. Money gives Mary a message when he's standing there in resurrection. The 20th of John the Lord says to her, Go tell my brethren I ascend into my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. There it is, brethren. God is our Father. The Church is put in God the Father. Our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, what a position to be in. And then he says grace to us. Well, this is good for us. We see too that. Say a frontal attack against the assembly. He would try to work in a subtle way. And so we see that these Thessalonikins were disturbed in connection with the Lord's coming in the first epistle. They needed correction about those that had already passed on, and it's made clear that God would bring them with him. So, But then we see in chapter five of First Thessalonians that the Apostle gave them credit for understanding these things perfectly. But did they? You know, the point of it is he didn't have much time, as you mentioned, to be with the Saints in Thessalonica. And we may assume that they're getting truth correctly, but it is so important to keep repeating things. Is that not true? To just keep repeating things, Paul spent a year and six months in Corinth, and you can be sure that he repeated the truth again and again and again. And in Asia 2-3 years, so many things were rehearsed again and again. We have found that very important, to continue to repeat things and to express it perhaps in a little different way. And sometimes it just suddenly registers with the person. You know how that is. Well, when you get into the second epistle to the Thessaloniken, Satan had achieved A deception here and got them all muddled up. About that which they should have known perfectly, Paul thought they understood it clearly, but they didn't. They thought the day of the Lord had already come. Because of the trouble and trial that they were passing through. Clever of the enemy to use that. But Paul's style is so good here. Because he brings out the positive side of the thing. He expresses the truth of it before he brings up this correction in the second chapter. He brings a clear correction in the second chapter. But first of all, in this first chapter he lays out the facts of it so nicely, you know, and I believe it's lovely to see that. Keep the truth of the Lord's coming before us, like you say, but not not merely as a doctrine that we hold and understand, but that it be something that it really, truly effects our hearts. Brother and I don't suppose that anyone here really holds the doctrine that the church will go through the tribulation. But, brethren, if it is true that at any moment the Lord Jesus is going to.

Rapture its home to glory. It should have a practical effect on our lives and it should be evident. There should be unworldliness. There should be heavenly mindedness. Just to think that we're going to step at any moment onto the cloud and face to face of Jesus. It's got to affect our hearts and that's what's so important in it. And so the enemy tries to get the wedge in in any way to take away. The present enjoyment of the Lord's coming. That's exactly what he did. Like you mentioned, Brother Don, I'd just like to read, just put the two epistles in contrast in First Thessalonians chapter one and verse 3. It says, remembering without ceasing your work, of faith and labor, of love and patience, of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the sight of God and our Father, the three fundamentals of the of Christianity, faith, there was the work of faith, there was the labor of love, and there was the patience of hope. Now go over to 2nd Thessalonians, chapter one and verse three, he says. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is me, because that your faith is the faith, and it grows exceedingly, that's that's precious. To see faith growing exceedingly and the love charity is love of everyone, of you all toward each other abounded. Their love was growing too. But. Where is the hope? Talks about patience in verse four and faith, but where is the hope? According to chapter two, they had been told that they had to go through tribulation. That the day of the Lord was already upon them, and they had lost that present hope. So the enemy uses anything he can to get away from us, that present hope. And I must say, rather than I feel in my own soul the importance of when we're speaking about the Lord's coming to let it sink into our souls. Just to think, is this just a fantasy we're talking about, brethren? Is this just mere doctrine, or is this something that's actually going to take place one of these moments? Rather, it's going to take place, and it may be in a moment when we least expect it, busy with the cares of this life and the call comes and we're going home. Ready. Or even if you're not ready, you're going home. If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus, to meet him face to face, oh, to let that sink into the soul, the practical reality of that truth, so important, brother, not to lose the hope of it. Is it not the spirit of that precious truth front and center before the soul? This book is a book of parallels and now thinking of what we have in Luke's gospel in connection with the Lord Jesus when he appeared the first time. How many were really looking for him when he came? Well, we have Simeon, we have Anna, and we can we can trace it out there. That beautiful story of those who were looking. You notice how the spirit of God is mentioned in connection with Simeon, how it mentions that he was there, and the spirit of God also had him in the right place at the right time. I think it's very instructive. Maybe just turn back there for just a couple of verses. I just want to touch on that because it's so beautiful. Luke's Gospel, the second chapter. And we're just going to touch on this quickly, their brother and want to get through chapter one. Verse 25. Beholder was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and the same was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. Notice this, the Holy Ghost was upon him and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lords Christ. Notice verse 27, He came by the Spirit into the temple when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law and so on.

And you can see his response. He took him up in his arms, and blessed God and said, Lord, now let us thou, thy servant, depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people. Israel. He was in the right place at the right time. But we have a much greater hope even than this. You see, Simeon was looking forward to as soon as he see the child to pass on in death. We're not looking for death, brethren. We're looking for that one who's the resurrection. And the like, of course, we notice Anna too, some, you know, some sadness in her life. She'd spent the greater part of her life in widowhood and so on. But it's lovely to see with this dear woman what she was speaking about. She was occupied with Christ in the end of revelation. Three times it's brought before the church. Behold, I come quickly. No response in the first two instances. In the last one it says, and the Spirit capital S and the bride say, come. And then she says, Amen Even so come, Lord Jesus. It's the Spirit of God. Oh, brethren, may we value this because we're closer now than we were this time yesterday. And we're getting closer every day. Some more general thoughts about the Lord's coming, the difference of coming for his own and then coming with his own. Much of the epistle to the Thessalonians is connected with his coming with his own, and even the verses that our brother Don has read in chapter 5, the Times and Seasons brethren that has nothing to do with the Rapture. Times and seasons have to do with him returning to this world, with his holy angels and with all his sayings as we have it at the end of chapter 3. You know, there's quite a company that comes out of heaven as we have it, even in Revelation, the armies and the holy angels and all the Saints. And it's interesting that they didn't need any further instructions on his

coming back to earth. They had been instructed already. In this truth, although this first epistle was written only five weeks after their conversion. That shows that we should be interested in that aspect of his coming. Why? Because it will be to His glory, you know, He will be glorified in the very place where He was put to shame and crucified. That's why that truth is of such interest to us, and even when what we have read in chapter one, that he shall be glorified in His sayings. And be admired in all them that believe. Beloved, He is glorified. He is admired in his sayings. It's not so much the thought that they will be glory for us, although we will be glorified with him. But the main thought in our minds should be it will be for his glory when he comes back with us as trophies of his grace. What the grace of God has made out of sinners, that in trespasses enemies of God. Now we come in his company back and will be for his glory. And that is a truth that should be very much of concern to us. Of course, as already said, the coming for his own How can he come with his own, with all the Saints, not only the New Testament Saints, all the Saints from the Old and New Testament, if he hasn't first taken them home to be with himself? And he comes back with them, and they were not clear on what would happen to those that had fallen asleep. Would they miss out when he comes back? No, He will bring them with him. They will be raised 1St, and we, the living will be changed. And then we will go forever be with the Lord. But then He comes back with us, and that truth should be of great interest to us. We tend to always emphasize the Rapture. And that is for our hearts. And that is certainly a wonderful, most wonderful truth. And to be a comfort, to be forever with the Lord, with all the Saints, what a comfort it is. But we ought to be very much interested in that coming with his own because of the glory that will be brought to him who was so dishonored and put to shame here in this world.

Important what you say because. We've often heard that the coming for His Saints is a comfort, and the thought of coming with His Saints brings the thought of responsibility. But it brings comfort to our hearts too, because we've often heard it said that the Lord's Prayer. We don't say it Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, but there is something that longs in our hearts to see things set right in this world, and it's really the coming with His Saints when we by faith see that, that we have comfort as to what is going on in the world and the spirit of trying to set things right in the world is subdued in our hearts. So many Christians getting taken up with politics and trying to set the world straight and fix things up is because they don't see that side of the truth. But he is going to come in glory not to set to make the world a fine place without the Lord, but to wait until that day of manifestation when he will be glorified. So I think that side of the truth is so important and we'll keep our hearts from trying to go about in the world and trying to set it right because it's in a certain sense it's a right spiritual instinct to long to see his will done on earth as it is in heaven. Scientists put together in the second chapter in the 13th verse, looking for that blessed hope. That's the rapture and the glorious appearing. The new translation reads The puring of the glory of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Both things are the proper hope of the believer. Both things. When you look into Scripture in general, you're going to find the second part is what Scripture deals so much about. An awful lot about it in the Old Testament and a lot about it in the New Testament as well. And really what deals with the rapture at the beginning of the tribulations Scripture speaks not that much about. There are quite a few places in the New Testament. But it was something that was just revealed to the apostle Paul and. It is something presented for our enjoyment. Just to think that we're going to be with them, but to leave it just there would be kind of selfish brethren. No, God has his interest in this world, and he is going to put the man of his counsels into power and authority, to reign supreme from sea to sea. And like you're saying, Brother Neil, it's something that our hearts should long for when we see the misery, the terrible confusion in the world around. Is there an answer to it all? Yes, there is an answer to it all. God has the answer to it all. And the more we get into God's counsels and think his thoughts about it, it will liberate us from popular movements to get into political movements to change things that are not right. Brethren, I think it's because they've lost the truth practically that the Lord is coming at any moment that they get into those movements. And we can't say that we're not apartment to go in that same direction if we lose the president. Enjoyment of the truth of the Lord's coming. That's why it's so important to keep it. Vividly before our hearts. A crown of righteousness being laid up for those that love his appearing. There in Second Timothy. So that's the right love, isn't it? Because we see that the world is in opposition to God, and so that's the right love. But it's sad to see the other side of the picture, a wrong love where it says Dimeth hath forsaken me having love this present world or should be present age. He may not in a sense have gotten off into worldliness, but. He hankered to have the things of this present age, as it were, that appealed to his heart. It caused him to turn away from the apostle. It's a sobering thing to consider. That statement it might be help back to what was read in the prayer meeting this morning in Acts 7 to see the effect upon Steven. Told out there in Acts 7. 55. He was at his stoning. And says in verse 55 he, Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost, there was a man full of the Holy Ghost looking up steadfastly into heaven.

And here it says and saw the glory of God tells us that he saw that. And Jesus the person is mentioned standing on the right hand of God. Then he begins to talk, and when he talks, he doesn't say anything about the glory. He talks about the person. Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. We need this for our hearts. It's the person that's coming. He is coming. And there are not two comings ahead of us, just one. He gets us first, Then he begins to take possession down here. I try to understand that. I have to look at it this way. That are his coming, you and I. Are taken up to heaven, soon to heaven. The new body and we enter into eternity. We're no longer in time. People in heaven are not in time. They are in heaven, in eternity. So there we get into that. And then the rights of Christ are being taken by God in power and glory to change this world and bring that blessing. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That will begin to take place, and people on the earth will still be in time, but Christ will be brought back at his peering and admired in them that believe This is all in our. Chapters here. Now, the Lord said. In Acts chapter seven, we know that in Hebrews he is presented as the one that has sat down. Why is he standing here? Two thoughts have been expressed. The one is that he was there to assist Steven in his hour of trial, which is nice, but I believe the correct thought is that he was standing had they accepted? Stephens message he would have come. You know, like we have earlier in Acts. The statement that times of refreshing would come from on high. Of course they had not only rejected the Lord Jesus, they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Stephen. So this concludes you might say the dealings of God. In connection with his earthly people. You know the Lord Jesus is standing coming to fulfill the promises had they accepted the testimony, but they rejected Him. And so from then on we see more and more the Spirit of God directing the activities of His servants to bring in the Gentiles together, a people for his name from among the Gentiles, but in the coming day. Even for this earthly people, the blessings that are yet outstanding will be fulfilled. He will come back. Even to bring blessing to his earthly people, the people of Israel. Of Christ it's good that we realize now it is in two installments, That is the Rapture and the appearing. Now we had read that a scribe instructed brings out his treasury things new and old. The truth of his appearing is not a new truth. It was mentioned in the Old Testament. The Lord cometh with 10,000 of his Saints Jude speaks of and we read it in Zechariah and in other places too. So his appearing is not a new truth, But the Rapture is a brand new truth, and it was given to Paul to unfold the truth of his rapture. He brings it out in detail. And 1St Thessalonians 4. And he introduces it as a mystery in one Corinthians 15. And so it is important to see that there are those two installments now of the second coming of Christ, the Rapture and the appearing. And I appreciated an illustration that you've heard no doubt and was given out many times before. And that is that we have an example of a rebellious city, and so this king.

It has to deal with these rebellious subjects, and so he lays siege, as it were, upon this city. But before he goes into overpower the city, he sends his scouts in among the city and said to any faithful subjects, come out and get out of the city. And so the faithful subjects are taken out of the city and join this king, and then they come with him in the destruction of this city. It's a simple illustration. But that's the point will be taken out of this world before the judgments fall, and when they do, we'll be with him. The the work of judgment, of course, is all his own, but we follow him, as it were, upon white horses in Revelation 19. He comes out of heaven as a warrior king first, before he sets up that sessional judgment and Kingdom. But we're with him for his own glory. That's the point, and what an honor and privilege to think of it. In connection of. Would you make a comment or two on Revelation 18 four as to whether it's a timely thing now or not? Seems to me it just portrays exactly what you're saying. Well, that's probably good for all ages, is it not you? Go ahead, read it and tell us about it. And I heard another voice come from heaven saying, come out of her, my people. That she be not partakers of her sins, and that she received not of her plagues. Well, we see what a horrible state is described to us there in that 18th chapter of Revelation. It is what characterizes ecumenical Christianism in its most corrupted state. And so this is a voice for all, for all times, I believe. I don't know how far you could go with it, but I believe it is good for all times. Out of this state of things. Well, it applied to the whole age of the church. But it seems to me that the Babylonians system of things is fully developed here, and it's a present day right here in 1997. Exhortation for anybody who's caught in the systematized error, this vast thing that that person who's living here now doesn't. Partake of her sins. Well, what's a simple thing? It's worse than the world seems to me like. And then receive of her plagues, and to still be here and caught for eternity in this, in that vast judgment. Oppose this, your steward. As we look at it in connection with an ambassador, we're ambassadors and ambassadors don't vote. They don't become involved with the affairs of this life and so on. I mean, I'm a Canadian. I have no rights as an American citizen because I I wasn't born in this country. And so it is in connection with heavenly things. We're heavenly people. What's the first act of war? The ambassadors are recalled. Right. You and I are going to be called out of this world one of these days, and then God is going to be at war with this world. So how in the world could we ever be occupied with its affairs and so on? When we think of it in that light? We're going to be taken out of here, brethren. And then the Lord is going to be at war with this world. And we know what the outcome is going to be. It's going to be, it's going to be judgment, overwhelming judgment for this world. Two parts of the Lord's coming are mentioned in each of the chapters of Thessalonians of being interesting, perhaps for the young and for us all, just to notice them in chapter one of First Thessalonians, the last verse. The Thessalonians turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven. That's evidently the rapture. That's what we wait for at any moment in chapter 2 and verse 19. For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing, or not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ? At his coming. In chapter 3 and verse. 13. Last verse as well, Establish your heart's unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His Saints. That's definitely the revelation at the end of the tribulation. The manifestation or the appearing in chapter 4 is the well known portion and it really deals with both parts of the Second Coming.

Because he says in verse 14 if we believe that Jesus died and rose again. Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring? With him that's the coming of the Saint of the Lord with his Saints. And how did they get to be with him? Then the last verse of the chapter describe how they get to be with him so that they can come with him. And then in the 5th chapter you have the Day of the Lord mentioned in verse 2. The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. That's the Lord's coming as well, but this is it is appearing. It is something that's connected as you were mentioned, Brother Heinz said. The times and seasons the Rapture has no time and season, no earthly sign, will announce his coming to take us home. We need to be alert and ready at any moment. But there are times and seasons definitely connected with his coming in judgment, with his manifestation is appearing at the end of the tribulation period. And at that time, he's going to come as a thief in the night. Sometimes, they say to the brethren in South America. There's two things that you can say about a thief. Do you want him to come? And of course you say no. Do you wait for him to come? No, you don't wait for him to come either. But I ask every believer, do you want him to come? And they say yes. Do you wait for him to come? Yes. Then he will not come for you as a thief. When it speaks about coming as a thief, it is Speaking of those who do not want him to come nor wait for him. It's definitely the. Ones that are of this world that do not want him, that he will come as a thief. Now in chapter one of Second Thessalonians we have his coming. In flaming fire in verse 8, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is coming. It's mentions in verse seven with his mighty angels. It's definitely the end of the tribulation period as well, when he's going to be manifested in power and glory. In chapter 2 it says we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him. That's definitely the Rapture, isn't it? All believers are going to be gathered. Isn't that nice? Sometimes we talk about gathered Saints, Brethren, all believers are going to be gathered at that moment. Tremendous to think about it. But then he goes on to speak of things that relate to the tribulation period and the appearing of the man of sin in chapter 2, whom the Lord will destroy with the power verse 8. Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. There's this coming mentioned again. That's definitely at the end of the tribulation period. Then in the third chapter we have In the fifth verse the Lord directs your hearts into the love of God. Then into the patient waiting for Christ, or into the patience of the Christ. It's definitely connected with his coming as well. So every chapter of the two epistles speaks in some way of his coming, and I think it's so tremendous to let the truth of it get into our souls in a practical way, brother. We have a further contrast of the two events in Hebrews Chapter 9. In verse 28. And unto them that look for him. Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation and.

And then in First Corinthians 15, as was alluded to earlier. In verse 52. Tells us that. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. So there's no grandeur about it. It just happens and we can compare those two verses with. Matthew 24. Where I I believe it's Speaking of the latter stage of his return, the second coming. The time when he becomes as it was said to make war. Matthew 24. Verse 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even under the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be there will there will be a manifestation there that that all will be able to see. Matter of fact, the Revelation chapter one, verse 7 tells us every eye shall see that second part of the the return of Christ. But I was. I've been sitting here thinking and examining my own heart as we've been talking about the coming of the Lord and Brother Bob, what what you brought up many times about how that basically should stir our hearts. Why should it stir our hearts? And I, you know, as Brother Neil brought up about how people get discouraged and get involved in this world's matters. And that's simply because. They're they've stopped looking for that return. But am I looking for the return of the Lord so that I can escape this world's troubles? Or am I looking for the return of the Lord? For the Lord? Does he capture my heart and make me want to be with him? Or is it that I simply want to escape? So if I'm faithless or if I'm getting discouraged, I have two options. One is to get involved in this world's politics and systems and try to change it, or two, seek for an escape. But either way, it's a sign that my heart is probably getting discouraged. Chapter And I think we see that there's a tendency in our hearts to want to fix things in the assembly, in our hearts, in our circumstances. And we see this even in brotherly love. Brotherly love that says and Peter were to add to that divine love. Brotherly love, as my brother is its object, and divine love has God as its object. And we see that the brethren were going on happily and well here together, and yet tribulation and sorrow and trial came in. And it was really to turn their hearts and look for the Lord. That's what the Lord does. We see that with Smyrna is that they left their

first love. So persecutions and trials and difficulties came in. And so these difficulties and trials were to show that we settled down in the world. We the tendency of our hearts is to think it's not such a bad place. We'll just fix it up a bit, but it's really destined for destruction. And so the Lord allows these difficulties to see that the. That these are just the manifest tokens, That the only way to correct this is judgment. And so the difficulties will become so difficult and so severe that we realize that the only solution to it is that God should judge it. And even in our situations is that a person may be going on with religiously in a wrong system and so on. And they seem to get along happily with it as long as things are going on peacefully. And then God just sort of it seems as allows more and more difficult until they realize that the only separate solution to it is to separate from it and to really seek the Lord's honor and glory. And that's really what we come to in the end of the chapter. And that's really the object of what the Lord is allowing is that. We really have our hearts set on the Lord's glory and not just simply our comfort and peace and happiness here in this world. Matter of fact that. Our patience and our faith. In these difficulties we have an opportunity to manifest patience and faith, and we speak in Revelation. We read of the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself is patiently waiting for the day when he will be able to straighten out the mess in the world. And in the meantime we might be called on to suffer. And that God's judgment, righteous judgment for us He will.

Erect. Bring judgment upon those who cause. Problems for his people, but not necessarily at this time. You know, we have to wait for the future day and find grace in the midst of the difficulties that God allows to come our way. We can be thankful that we are not living in Muslim countries or in China, you know. But many of God's people are dying for Christ in this world today, you know, and they patiently. In faith. To continue under the circumstances that God puts them under, God gets a crime. World. Then I'm taking a Psalm 84. It gives us the two reasons why we will want the Lord to come. Very strong reasons. Psalm 84. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts? Are you thinking about the glory? Stephen got to see it. And then the second verse, Psalm 84, says my soul longer. Yeah, even faint it for the courts of the Lord. Two things. My heart and my flesh. Try it out for the living yard. Our deliverer from the coming wrath is the last words of first Thessalonians, the last verse of the first chapter. Our deliverer from the coming wrath. He's going to get us out of this place. No matter whether you're lying on a bed or living in a palace, you're going to be glad to go. And Brother Clinton enjoyed the principle that is brought forth in that 84 Psalm. That is, as you've already mentioned, the trouble brought upon them causes the longing over their hearts. And so we see that grace and glory comes before the psalmist here in verse 11. Well, that principle runs very strong in the New Testament. As an example, turn over to Romans chapter 5. And here we see the combination of that principle. We have. The grace in verse two and the glory of God rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And then we see tribulation is brought into it because it works patience and experience and so forth. And the love of God shed abroad in our hearts with the Holy Ghost. Now notice also how Peter takes up that same. Line of principle, where we have the grace that instills in us the hope of that coming glory, and in the meantime the trouble that comes upon us to brighten that prospect. So we have it in chapter five of first Peter and verse 10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. After that, she have suffered a while. Make you perfect, Establish, strengthen, settle you to him. Be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. So that principle holds true in all of our lives. Just keep it in mind. Will rest with us, because Paul practically and morally displayed that in his life there he was and the jail of Philippi, and he was seeing him, and then you find him in writing to the Philippians. Everything could naturally burden it and crush his heart to look around and see Men were preaching Christ in contention and supposing to add afflictions to his bonds. And what was he doing? He rejoiced in here, and he did rejoice. He wasn't troubled by the by this. And so we can get very way down and troubled even by the condition of things in Christendom. Around us and troubles and so on and way down by it. But he said rest because God, it's just a manifesting token of God's righteous judgment and so just a look for the glory of the Lord. That causes patients and there's faith required for that. So important. Who are troubled? Rest with us. The basic word is innocent. In the original language, well at the drugstore you can get a non prescription drug called Anesin. And so in connection with our lives we can in some cases certainly be thankful for medication. And that's not my point, but so many times if we just had the rest that came from scripture, we wouldn't need the Anisein that the drugstore.

Human rights are made such a point of, and it affects us in our thinking, brethren. And I don't know of anything that really delivers us so much as thinking that there will be no human rights, Properly speaking, until Christ has His rights. When He has His rights, then everything will be right. Until He has His rights, nothing can be right. And So what he's bringing forth in these chapters is just to rest. And that till that time I think it's good to realize, like it's been brought out, that we have a nature that loves righteousness and hates iniquity right now, brethren. And it should bother us when we see the terrible moral issues that afflict the country we live in. It should bother us bad. But we need to realize that nothing can be right until Jesus is in his place. And that's what we get. Rest with us. And when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty angels. O brethren, we're going to be eyewitnesses of this most glorious time in the history of this world when God is going to introduce his man into power and going to replace all the structure of government that exists in this present day in this world, he's going to replace it with his man, his government. You think of all the powerful armament that. The technology and warfare that there is today, it is stupendous. But think of it when the Lord comes writing out of heaven on the White Horse and the armies of heaven, we with them there, the mighty angels accompanying him. They can use all their rockets they want, and and guided missiles and whatever they want to call them. It will have no effect whatsoever with the word of his mouth. One army after another is going to fall before him. And he's going to reign supreme. Oh brethren, we're going to see it. We're going to be eyewitnesses of that time, and then things will be right. Until then, nothing can be truly right. So it's right that we should love righteousness. We should be bothered by moral issues in this world. If we're not, something's wrong with this. But we should wait for that moment when God brings his man into this world, and this is what we have in these verses. And notice how it says in verse 10 when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints. Isn't this beautiful to think of it, that he's going to be glorified in US sometimes, Brethren, down here in this world, he doesn't get a whole lot of glory from our fleshly actions. But in that day, real will have passed by the judgment seat of Christ. The fire will have consumed all that is dross. All that is wood, hay and stubble. Only that which is gold, silver and precious stones will remain. And when He comes, He will be glorified in His Saints. The people here in this world will look. Perhaps they will remember that used to be my neighbor. I knew him. Look at him. Come now with Jesus. Tremendous to think of that day. And that's our hope, brethren. What did the 7th man from Adam prophecy? The first prophecy, as far as I can get, a hold of that God has given us in the Bible, and it comes in the last epistle. It's determined from God, from way back before anything else was behold. The Lord cometh Enoch also. The 7th from Adam prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord. Cometh with 10 thousands of his Saints. This is God demonstrating the victory he gets in a man in the man Christ Jesus, with all this company coming in his as his attendance in glory. A scripture, and I just can't put my finger on it that the desire of the nations will have come. You know, many, many millions grown under unrighteous government. And so even not only for us, the world as a whole is looking for righteous government. You know, I don't think there will be any billionaires in the Millennium, you know, amassing fortunes.

From the unrighteous labors of their underpaid laborers, you know there will be a fair distribution of wealth. You know, I read just this country in Zir that the former ruler amassed billions of dollars and the people were starving. You know, that kind of a thing will not take place. There

will be righteous government, fair distribution of wealth, no more. Discrimination and inequities. Wonderful time that will be for the whole world. 101St Psalm. It's only a short chapter of Psalm of eight verses, but it's extremely significant in regard to that which we are discussing right now. I'll read the whole Psalm. I will sing our mercy and judgment under the old Jehovah. It is the Lord will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when wilt thou come unto me, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will sit in a wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside. It shall not cleave unto me. A forward heart shall depart from me. I will not know a wicked person who so privily slandereth his neighbor. Will I cut off him that has a high look and a proud heart? Will I will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land. That they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house. He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early May I quote Brother Glendine early in the morning. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of Jehovah. This is. A picture of. The coming day when we are with the Lord Jesus in heaven. Over the earth that is ruling, the earth he is, and he's ruling in righteousness. Today you sin, tomorrow you're judged. Mike is haggy I chapter 2 I believe. Thank you kind of interesting. Thank you. And it's better in the translation in Spanish. But Haggai chapter 2 is very very interesting. Talks about shaking. The Heavens and the earth in verse 26 Haggai. And then 27 says, I will shake the nations and the desire of all nations shall come in Spanish. It's the desired one. It's a person. I think it's so nice to get it that it is a person who's coming. He's going to come and he will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord. Him number 3.5. We wait for the.

Correspondence, Correspondence: 2TH 2:7; Should Revelations Be Read in Reading Meetings?

Ques. Please explain "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." 2 Thess. 2:7.

Ans. At the present time all those principles of evil that characterize fallen man, are at work among men. Their manifest power and intensity will increase as we near the end of the age.

"Evil men, and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13.

"Let" is the old English word for "hinder," or "restraint," and for the present there is a hindering power, keeping these wicked tendencies in check. It is the presence on the earth of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the hearts of believers, and who gives His sanction to the Word of God as it is sounded out in testimony in this world. Yet this will not always be so, for, momentarily the church of God awaits the return of her Lord, to catch His people out of the world to meet Him in the air. (1 Thess. 4:17).

Thus suddenly the apostates on the earth find themselves free from the restraining presence of the Spirit of God in believers, and so Satanic wickedness in men's hearts stride into the open to find its highest expression in the fateful "Wicked one," or Antichrist. (See 2 Thess. 2:8; 1 John 2:18).

Ques. Should the book of the Revelation be read in Reading Meetings?

Ans. It is not wise to say that one portion of the New Testament is more profitable than another: surely we need the teaching of every part of it. Of the Revelation it is specially said,

"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." Chapter 1:3.

We do not see that the Revelation is unsuitable for a reading meeting. Doubtless some parts would be dwelt on more in detail than other parts. For instance, what is more profitable than to dwell minutely on the addresses to the Seven Churches in the first three chapters? Other chapters might be considered more as to the periods they refer to, with the general scope of their meaning; and other parts again be taken up in their detail as the book is gone through. If there is dependence upon the Lord, will He not lead and guide in all these matters?

Certainly the Revelation is important; for we are exhorted not only to read it, but to keep the things written therein: for the time is at hand. Guidance should be sought from God on each particular occasion as to what part of Scripture should be read at a reading meeting. He knows the hearts of those who usually attend the meeting, and knows best what portion of His Word would be most suitable for them at the time. If there is real dependence upon His guidance, He will guide, and all will be well.

We must not read only favorite portions, or we shall not be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Caught up Before the Lord Comes

Question: Will the saints be caught up before the Lord comes in glory and the tribes of the earth mourn because of Him?

Matt. 24 Here there is no hint of the Church’s escaping the great tribulation, except by sudden flight; nor of any other except that which we are to expect after that tribulation. (See ver. 23, 27, 29.) Nor of any gathering of His elect unto Him except in verse 31, after the great tribulation. In verses 32, 33 we are directed to “know that it is near, even at the doors, when we shall see all these things,” i.e., those which are described in verses 7-29.

1 Thess. 4. The living will not be changed before the dead in Christ are raised (ver. 15); then (1 Cor. 15:51) we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (literally, for the trumpet shall sound)—all, not some only, of those who believe. And the trumpet mentioned in Matt. 24:31, when all the elect are to be gathered together, cannot be subsequent, or the other would not be the last trump.

(3.) The caution of 2 Thess. 2:1.-12 seems to imply that the Church must witness the full revelation and of the wicked one, and then expect the immediate coming of our Lord.

It is true, we are to be continually looking for the coming of our Lord; but is this inconsistent with the expectation of a previous tribulation? Q.Q.

Answer: The Old Testament saints and the Church, which is being now formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, will be caught up to meet the Lord before His coming as Son of man in power and great glory, when all the tribes of the earth (or the land) lament. This necessarily follows from the doctrine laid down in Col. 3:4 compared with 1 Cor. 15:23, 1 Thess. 4, 2 Thess. 2, and other scriptures, and from the prophetic intimation of Rev. 4:5 compared with Rev. 17:14; 19:14. For if Christ and the glorified saints appear together at the selfsame time in glory, it is evident that the saints must have been caught up, changed into His likeness, before that common manifestation of Him and them. Besides, the Revelation indicates their presence above, after their translation there, and before their appearing along with Him, under the symbol of the crowned and enthroned elders, who are seen in heaven when the seven churches disappear (Rev. 2; 3), and before the pre-millennial judgment of chapter 19, and the millennium of chapter 20. This interval is occupied here below by God's preparation of Jews and Gentiles (separate from the glorified) who will be to His praise on earth, as the Old Testament saints and the Church will be in heaven when the administration of the fullness of times is put under Christ, the Head of all things heavenly and earthly.

(1.) This helps to render Matt. 24:15-41 perfectly plain. Certainly there is no hint of the Church's escaping the tribulation by sudden flight here; for those spoken of are a remnant of converted Jews who will be found in Jerusalem, in connection with the temple and the sabbath in the latter day. What possible ground is there to predicate this of the Church of God, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, and which, save at its first origin, is found everywhere under heaven? What reason to take it away from the last days of this age, when God will again be savingly at work among the Jews in their land, protecting a remnant from the last fiery tribulation which the Antichrist will occasion, and fitting them as a people for the Lord, when He comes for their deliverance in the clouds of heaven, and the mass being apostate will be filled with terror and mourning and shame at His sudden glory which flashes on the world? That the elect of verse 31 cannot possibly mean the Church is evident, if it were only from the passage itself; for the sight of the Son of man appalls all the tribes before He sends His angels to gather these elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now if you apply this to the same scene and persons as Col. 3:4, you set, one scripture against another—the unerring proof of error. Distinguish between the saints already caught up, to be glorified with Him on high, and these elect gathered from all places of their dispersion here below, to be blessed under His reign here below, and the balance of truth is preserved. No doubt, the gathering of the elect here, then, is after the great tribulation, but it is also after His appearing. It is therefore not the Church which appears with Him when He appears in glory, and which is promised (in Rev. 3:10) exemption not only from the place and circumstances of the great coming temptation, but also from its hour. The signs are, as usual, for the Jewish saints, who were wont to ask such things as evidence of the approaching accomplishment of their hopes.

1 Thess. 4. No one contends that the living will be changed before the dead in Christ are raised. It is clear that, the latter being raised, and we who are then alive being changed as they, all together will be caught up to the Lord. The "last trump" of 1 Cor. 15 is an allusion to the final signal of the break up of a Roman camp for its march. It has nothing whatever to do with the loud sound of trumpet in Matt. 24 (with which compare Isa. 27:13), any more than with the seven trumpets of Rev. 8-11.

Undoubtedly when the Lord at His coming or presence () gathers the changed saints to Himself in the air, it is all, not some only, of those who up to that time have believed (compare in 2 Thess. 1:10) But how does this present a difficulty to such as see from Scripture that others subsequently are to be converted, kept through the tribulation and blessed in the millennial kingdom of the Lord? It is the querist's system which is at fault, not leaving sufficient room for all the elements, and of course therefore both leading to confusion in the various parts, and presenting a defective result. 1 Cor. 15 presents (and so I may add 1 Thess. 4) our last trump, because the question is of the risen saints; Matt. 24:31, presents, if you will, the last trump of the Jewish saints then scattered over the earth. How does this identify the two, even if the trumpet in Matt. 24 had been styled the last trump, or "his elect," were called "all the elect," neither of which is the fact? Is it a contradiction if the historian speaks of the last trump sounding for the tenth legion in Gaul, and of the trumpet gathering the twelfth legion in Syria?

2 Thess. 2:1-12 cautions us against the error of those who confounded the coming of the Lord to gather His saints on high with His day upon the lawless one. The misleaders of the Thessalonian believers sought to alarm them by the false cry that the day of the Lord was already present ( ).

This the apostle dispels, first, by a motive of consolation for the heart, as well as, secondly, by an express prophecy. First, he beseeches them, by the coming of the Lord and their gathering together to Him, not to be shaken or troubled by this pretense (for which they feigned a revelation and even a letter of the apostle). The first act of the Lord, bound up with His very presence, is the translation of His own beloved ones to Himself. But, secondly, that day (mark, he does not say the Lord's , but His day) should not come till the full development of the evil which His day is to judge. The mystery of lawlessness is now restrained: when he who hinders its outburst is withdrawn, then shall be revealed the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth and annul by the appearance of His coming. Observe the striking difference between the terms in verses 1, 8. When it is a question of gathering the saints, the phrase is simply His coming or presence; when it is a question of His day or dealing in judgment with the lawless one, it is the shining forth of His coming—not only, but . The real caution of the chapter would have preserved the querist from an error kindred in principle, though not in form, to that which wrought among the Thessalonians.

We are then to be continually expecting the Lord, apart from either external signs or the final great tribulation, which Scripture connects with others, not with us, after we have been translated to heaven.

Des Moines Conference: 1997, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Reading

In Hebrews chapter 10. And verse 36. For ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. That we pray our God and Father. Reading the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. If someone has some comments about the first chapter,

feel free. Second or first Thessalonians chapter 2, Second. Excuse me. 2nd Thessalonians, Chapter 2. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter from us, as that that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away 1St and that man a sin, be revealed, the Son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worship, so that he has God sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things, and now you know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in this time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. Only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. And then that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always for God, to God, for you, brother beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. And belief of the truth we're up to. He called you by our gospel to obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which he had been taught whither by word or our epistle now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us and have given us everlasting consolation and Good Hope through grace.

Comfort your hearts and establish you in every. Good word and work. It's in beautifully with what we've had the last two nights in the gospel, especially last night when Brother Bob. It's exceedingly solemn. These verses in anticipation of the Antichrist specifically. His work during the tribulation period he is not yet manifest. He will be afterward gone, along with the Beast, the other beast of Revelation 13. But when you think of. Such verses as verse 12. The 11:00 and 12:00 For this 'cause God shall send them unbelievers, rejecters of Christ, strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, or the lie, the lie of the Antichrist, that they all might be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure and unrighteousness. It's exceedingly solemn to think on these things and realize that there are those who are hearing the gospel today, but they have pleasure and unrighteousness. Something that already works, doesn't it? It's the mystery of a work of the iniquity that already does work. We are seeing the progress of it in the world that we live in today. What it seems that happened here in Second Thessalonians, I'm sure it's often been explained, but it's important to understand that someone had seemingly troubled the Thessalonian believers because of all the persecution and trial they were going through. And told them that they were already in the day of the Lord, that day of judgment. And if you read verse two, he says that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us. Perhaps they'd even send a letter forging the Apostle Paul's signature, telling them that the day, and it should be the day of the Lord, is present. Their words They thought that perhaps they were already in the day of the Lord. And the Apostle Paul writes to them to tell them that that day could not take place until there was the falling away first the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin, and that the man of sin could not be revealed until he who was hindering be taken out of the way. So he's writing now to clarify this, and it's really instructive to see. Where we are in connection with this, it's very possible that this man of sin. The son of iniquity that it speaks of in this chapter is already alive in this world. But he cannot be manifested as such until that which hinders is taken out of the way. And so he beseeches them here, and it's beautiful in verse. One brethren again to comment on it by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him in this day and age we gather to His precious name. And. Brethren, we need to hold that truth in humility of mind, realizing that. The ruin is great and that we are part of the ruin too. Need to hold it in real humility of mind. God sees our hearts, and He will test what He sees that is not of him. May the Lord grant that we hold it in humility of heart and mind, but at the same time, rather than to realize that all our beloved brethren in the faith, wherever they may be, are included in God's purposes.

That everyone who is a member of the body of Christ. Is going to be gathered together unto him at this supreme moment. What a glorious moment as our brother was praying in the in the prayer that all those differences are going to. Remain behind When we're called in this presence, isn't it great to realize that and hold dear in our hearts the truth of the whole body of Christ? In this world, O brethren, we're going to be gathered. Everyone of them is going to be gathered at that supreme moment when we are called into the Lord's presence. That's our gathering together unto him. Another thing to look for? It's not the Antichrist, it's the true Christ. What a comfort. If we just get a hold of that, it's enough we won't see the Antichrist and know him. They'll never come under his dominion. We come under the true Christ. He's looking to get us out. He's our deliverer from the coming wrath. When the day of the Lord comes, that'll be the day of the wrath. But Jesus is our deliverer from that day of the coming wrath. I'm referring to 1St Thessalonians chapter one and the last verses. It's so simple in the first epistle. The order of the blessing that came to. Thessalonians in the last two verses of First Thessalonians one for they themselves show of us what matter of entering in we had unto you use us alone in and how ye turn to God. That's the first thing they did. They turned to God, and left their idols from idols. Then they became servants to serve the living of the true God, Not a dead idol, a living in a true God. And the next thing was to wait for his Son from heaven. And what does he do? Whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus. Delivered us from the coming wrath, our deliverer from the coming wrath, that's Jesus. He's going to take us out before the wrath of God falls on this world. No, brother, it's just looking at the 5th chapter of the first Epistle. I think it'd be good to just read a couple of verses there in connection with what we're talking about in. Yes, in verse 8 or verse 7 rather says they that sleep sleep in the night, they that be drunken or drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and foreign helmet the hope of salvation. Here's the reason for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to be out of here, brethren, one of these days. That's the salvation that we're looking at here. But it's lovely to see that those three beautiful attributes, faith, hope and love, and every believer possesses them. If you're here today and you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you have these three things. Maybe we don't exercise them as we ought to, but it's lovely to see. Especially I was thinking of that statement there foreign helmet, the hope of salvation. It is the hope of His coming. The hymn writer could say that gladdens my heart, is what makes this poor world tolerable. To realize that we're soon. Are soon going to be with him and like him forever. Rapture and error often comes in installment and I worked with a man who believed in a partial rapture If you just go down in that 5th chapter you mentioned 7:30 because that's really the subject of they that sleep in the night if you get out of the. At first it says who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him, and I puzzled over why, it mentions the waking ones first, but if you turn to Mr. Darby's translation, it says whether we watch or sleep. I don't believe it's Speaking of the dead and the living there, but it's Speaking of those that are looking for the Lord's return and those that are not. We're all going to be caught up together. There's going to be a lot of surprise Saints at the Rapture, whether we're watching or sleeping.

Many Saints we can fall into a slumber and sleep as you read there in that verse that. As those that are drunken in the night going on with the world and seeking pleasure in the world and so on, but but they're watching us or or sleeping. We're going together with him. Even if I am, even if I am watching, is that any credit to me? You know, some Christians, they might say, well, I'm watching for the Lord to come and I

might be very proud about that, you know. But the fact is, is that because the Spirit of God keeps it before our souls, it it's it's he that does the work. So the credit goes to him. No credit to me. Sure, God stays here. As long as the Saints are here and then he leaves. The hindrance to the falling, the apostasy, and the. Tribulation is the presence and power of the Spirit of God down here in the Saints at the end of the book says the Spirit and the bride say come. That is the Spirit is down here in this world looking for asking for Jesus to come. So that he can go up with us and we're taken out. And. When a person gets saved. He gets the Spirit of God. Sealed with the Spirit of God. And always has the Spirit of God. When the Lord Jesus comes. And were taken up, it says, Then so shall we ever be with the Lord. The spirit will be up there and we'll be up there. This is the next event to expect. Would you say, Brother Clint, the Spirit of God leaves as the habitation of God, That is the habitation of God with the Spirit When the church leaves he leaves in that sense. And then would you say that he would probably work as he did in the Old Testament times? What I mean by that is in Matthew chapter. 10 as well as other places. There's some indication of. The Spirit of God, working as He did in the Old Testament times in verse 19. Matthew 10 But when they deliver you up, this is during the tribulation. Take no thought how or what she shall speak for shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall speak for. It is not she that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. I think there's a place in Luke 1212. I'm not sure. What is characteristic of this dispensation? Is that there's a man in the glory. And the Spirit of God on earth dwelling in the individual believer and in the church collectively. That was not the case ever before, and we know that the Spirit worked. And even came upon. And came even upon unbelievers, as we know with Balaam and with Saul. He was not a believer, King Saul. And so there is a distinct difference. And David when he sinned, remember. He prayed, Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. You know the Spirit could come upon and also leave people in the Old Testament. But according to John 14, the Lord Jesus said when he would come, he shall be with you and in you forever, with you collectively, in you individually forever. And he is going to leave this scene. With the church when the church is raptured, but he will work and continue to work like he did in the Old Testament. And. These servants, the brethren of the Lord that will preach the gospel of the Kingdom, you know the Spirit will direct them and guide them in their activities. But how wonderful to live at this time in this world's history.

Where the work of redemption is accomplished, and that the Lord Jesus as the ascended, glorified Christ, sent forth the Spirit, you see, he received the Spirit and sent it sent the Spirit here to dwell in US individually and collectively. But what a solemn truth that is. You know the Spirit is given us so that he be in charge of us individually and in the assembly collectively collectively. But how wonderful too. And it's important to emphasize that when the Lord Jesus comes for us to take us home, he comes in the character of him being the Son of God. He doesn't come as the Son of Man for the Church. You know that verse already quoted in the First Epistle, chapter one. We're waiting for his Son from heaven and we have various passages in Matthew where his coming as the Son of Man is spoken of in connection with setting up the Kingdom of the Son of Man. You know at the at the present time we have the mystical form of the Kingdom of Heaven. That it has taken because he is rejected, but that Kingdom will become the Kingdom of the Son of Man when he comes back. In power and glory. And you know, the day of the Lord is when he comes back and cleanse the earth with judgments, preparing it for that glorious reign. And that has not taken place. The apostasy, as our brother Bob said, has to come first. Now the spirit of apostasy is already at work today, and this is, I believe, something. That is very solemn. Do you realize? Do I realize if I give up any aspect of God's truth, it is really the spirit of apostasy? Giving up, abandoning that which God has revealed, That's a very solemn thing of where does it end? You know, if the grace of God doesn't arrest us, but that spirit of apostasy is active, you know? And isn't that what the enemy is trying to do, rob the Saints of God? Much of the precious truth, including the truth of the Rapture, that will take place before the Tribulation. Laboratories can never be in the class state, but he can be affected by the spirit of apostasy, and that's what we need to be exercised about. I'd just like to point out in verse 3 the words that really Mr. Mr. Darby translates in his translation, Apostasy is. And let no man deceive you by any means for that day he's talking about the day of the Lord, which is the day that is. Introduced at the end of the tribulation period in awful judgment. That day shall not come except there be a falling away, that those words. A falling away is apostasy. It means to go back means it someone who has made the profession of Christianity and then goes back from that profession. In times of the early church, there was a lot that did that in connection with Judaism. They made a profession of Christianity and then they went back again. To Judaism, that's apostasy. But apostasy can be giving up Christ in any way and going back. But here is a He's. He's saying something that is different. It's the apostasy. We have apostasy in our days, but the apostasy is something that takes place after we are gone. And what is it? It is when the man of sin will be revealed. This is. Dirt during the tribulation period. He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. So that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. In other words, the time will come and the tribulation period. The Jewish people are going to have their form of worship again, as they did in the old times. There's going to be the sacrifice. In a holy place that speaks about in Matthew 24. And then that's going to be taken away. The Antichrist is going to say, in effect, no more worship of any God in heaven.

I'm God, and he's going to sit down in the temple of God to be worshipped as God, and that is the apostasy. And that's what initiates the last 3 1/2 years that are properly called the Great Tribulation. And when that happens, God is not going to wait any longer. He's going to begin to pour out his wrath on this earth in increasing furor right down to the end of the tribulation period. That is the apostasy that is when man turns away from even the outward form of a worship of a God in heaven and worships a man here in this world. But brethren, what is so tremendously searching is that the Spirit is working in the world today. And we mentioned there's been a number of references during these meetings to humanism and how it permeates the society we live in. Basically it makes. Man, the center of his world. It's the old lie of Satan that he used on even the Garden of Eden. Ye shall be as gods your God. It's interesting. What I heard a report some time ago that when that man, David Koresh down in Texas was still alive and he had his followers and they believed that he was Christ. What A report from one of the local radio stations said They were not so surprised at that. But at how many phone calls they got from different parts of the United States to say he cannot be Christ because I'm Christ? They got it from all over the states. The spirit of it is alive. And they say, brethren, even we in this country, if we're not careful as believers, can become affected by that spirit by thinking that we are the center of our world and not let Christ be supreme in our lives. He is the reference point. We are not. He is the reference point in the truth of gathering how important to set Christ forward. That Christ be exalted not us, brethren. By grace we may be at the divine center. And that's where we desire to be, I trust. But we are not the reference point. It's Christ that is the reference point. And we need to make a special emphasis when we talk about the truth of gathering that Christ be exalted and glorified. So there, Dawn, you expressed. Believe in a helpful way in connection with the presence of the Spirit of God in this present dispensation. And I'd like to pick up on that. That is that a Pentecost spirit of God came down and filled the whole house. And I think sometimes we're led into error because we hear young people and others say, well, I was in such and such a place and I saw the Spirit of God working. The Spirit of God came down and killed the whole house, and the Spirit of God will work wherever he has given liberty to work. It's true that immense systems that. There's dispensationally sin against the Holy Ghost. That is, they conduct their services and their order of things as if there was number Holy Ghost on earth at all. And it's important to see that because our brothers spoke yesterday and he spoke, what characterizes the gathering center is not the presence of the Spirit of God, but the Lord's authority. And that is really what characterizes the two or three gathered to the Lord's name is the Lord in the midst and his authority. The Spirit of God will act in

the entire house wherever He's given liberty. But the fact is. That systematically he is displayed. I was visiting with a Christian friend in his home, and his pastor and the assistant pastor made an excuse to drop off a cake pan or something. And they came and he wanted to kind of put me on the spot. And he said, where do you go? Do you have a pastor where you go? And I said, yes, I've had the benefit of men who hazarded their lives and given of themselves for my good in my care. I said, I've had pastors and we have pastors. And he said, you didn't get my question. He says, is there one man to run things there? And I said yes, and he's sitting on the throne of God. But the Spirit of God is free to work in the house, and that ought to be characteristic of the assembly, that the Spirit of God has liberty. But it is the house that the Spirit of God filled in Pentecost. And we as an assembly gathered to the Lord's name, surely ought to give the Lord the Spirit of God liberty. But when he is withdrawn, the house will be still here, so to speak. It will be left desolate, and there will be the outward form of Christianity going on, and they'll go on as usual.

But it will apostasize, as we've seen here. The house will be left empty and desolate because the true church, every believer, those that are watching and those that are not are going to be caught up. Every believer, every redeemed one. But there are going to be many professors going on and they're going to believe this lie that her brother was Speaking of, and they're going to give up the entire profession and foundation of Christianity, and that is Christ. They or the hour of our Lord's return. I remember a brother who was a great help to me in this back in. Matthew won't take the time to turn to it, but there are two instances that are mentioned about that evil day that's coming, and it is the days of Noah and the days of love. Now Christians sometimes think that those two days are on us now. They're not. They will not be until we're taken out of here. The days of Noah, what did they, what did they set before the idea of violence? The earth was filled with violence. And the days of Locke, what do they represent? Corruption. If that's so, brethren. And we know that it's true. We see things that are developing in the world at the present time, How close the Lord's coming must be. We're at the very doors, there's no question about it. But the full development of of violence and the full development of corruption, be it of a sexual nature or whatever, will not really fully develop until the church is taken home. It's frightening when you think about it. If it's that bad in the world at the present time, think of how more intimately worse it's going to be after the true Church of God is taken home. Daniel speaks of the Antichrist as. The king shall do according to his will. He's the willful king. He will be manifested as that, but we have a warning in Hebrews 10. That is for us in this day. And our brethren might have used. This 25th verse of chapter 10 on their invitation to come to the conference. It's right to use and wonderfully use for a conference invitation. So I'll read verse 25, Hebrews 10/25. Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, ourselves together, as the manner of some is. But exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching, the day that is seen approaching here is apostasy. Because the next verse says if we sin willfully, that's what apostasy is. Willful sin. Man doing according his will, just like the Antichrist will do, He'll do his will and there's already indications of that spirit in the world. In many, many places. Well, if we know these things are coming up, the next thing to look for is the Lord, not the Antichrist. The next thing to look for is the Lord. He'll come ahead of the Antichrist. I believe the Spirit of God focuses a good deal upon this personality. Although right in this passage, he is not clearly. Defined, but he's only spoken of as the man of sin. But this personality is the one that is so greatly in contrast to the Lord Jesus Christ in every respect. And we see that he is the one that promotes the political beast of Revelation. Chapter 13, the first part. So this personality is really the second beast of Revelation 13 that that has two horns like a lamb, but he really speaks as a dragon and he's a religious person. We see where he is. So he has to be the leader of Israel. So if you trace this personality out, you can see a terrible, terrible description of such wickedness. And as a leader of the people, he has no regard for the people at all because in John chapter 10, he's like the wolf that flees or like the.

Hireling that flees when the wolf comes, and he's like the idle shepherd, he has no concern or care for the sheep. And as you've already mentioned, he's the willful king. He does according to his own will. And what is that? Well, he puts an idol right in the holy place and that which is an holy place. He's so brazen in everything that he does, and it seems like the spirit of God focuses a good deal upon this personality. Now he works in conjunction with the first piece, the political beast, and he does that as the false prophet. So he establishes him before the eyes of the people, makes the image according to the first piece. So you can see how this we have what in effect is kind of a Trinity of evil, Satan being the wicked spirit behind it all. Terrible, isn't it? No. The beast, the political power of the revived Roman Empire, the woman writes. That beast, you know that the ecumenical church. But then the beast will cast off that woman, and then the Antichrist will be all you know. Isn't that a solemn thing that Christendom will recognize and go along with? It's not just the Jewish people. It's christened up that will accept the Antichrist and the ecumenical movement that we see already, you know, pulling together. And. Forgetting about. Their doctrinal differences and so on. You know Rome will head up this world church, you know, and that will be for some time. This woman will ride the beast, control the beast, and then the beast will cast her off, destroy her, and in cahoots with the Antichrist will. Present him as the object of worship. I remember a year ago being at a conference that had an ecumenical conference in Sweden, and the conclusion was that it was Christ with the obstacle to union. I can't quote it exactly the way you said it, but that's really the point. And that's what we need to be on guard on, because the spirit of things in the world is, even among evangelicals, is to set aside the person and glory of Christ so that we can get together. And we need to realize that it really is the spirit of this thing that we're reading up here. People getting together in a stadium and singing how great thou art with Mormons and blasphemers of every kind and going on in movements like this. It's the Spirit. It's not the thing itself, but it's the spirit of it that's leading up to that. Yes, the. Decision they came to at that conference in Sweden years ago, these religious leaders said, well, we can't get, the only way we can get together is to get rid of Christ. That's the end motive under the Antichrist. To refer to this in connection with the Jew, the Jewish nation is over there. Go to Isaiah 28 because I think it's helped to see how Scripture is bound together. At the beginning of these meetings. A brother read from. Matthew 13. Where there is the treasure, that's. Kept up from which is brought forth things new and old, and we had about the appearing of Christ and the rapture, and we've had especially the truth of prophecy, as to the Lord coming with 10,000 of his Saints to execute judgment. And it all fits together, but God has the earthly people. And he was going to send the true Christ to them, and he did send the true Christ to them. But there are some words in Isaiah 28 that come down to.

Refer to things that are about us now. At least they are. Seeing. And there is a nation over there in Israel, and I believe that. Isaiah 2814. Seems to be almost directly written for those leaders of Israel over there today. Call them yeast. Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. It's the people in Jerusalem. There are scornful men ruling them. And they are saying at that time in this prophecy because. You have said they're thinking this in the heart. We have made a covenant with death and with hell. Are we in agreement there's going to be a covenant made with the Western powers? Evidently soon not while we're here or we won't know it, I don't believe. But there's going to be a pact made for protection. When the overflowing skirts will pass through, it shall not come unto us. I think that's the Assyrian of the last days, perhaps, for we have made. Lies our refuge. There's another place the Prophet says he's at the same table. When you have a Treaty of these leaders of these nations, that's what you hear coming out of that table. Under falsehood are we? Have we hit ourselves? Therefore, thus saith the Lord God. Now God is talking. Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone. A Cride stone. A precious cornerstone. A sure foundation. Can anybody doubt who God is talking about? This is the rock upon which the church is built. God has put his

son there on that holy hill of Zion, and he laid that stone in his own plan. Then he says, and I believe he's saying it to any Jew that's in that area now. To listen to. He says he that believeth shall not make haste. That is, he's saying to any Jew over there now anyone in that area. Don't get in a hurry and receive the Antichrist, because the next one that's coming over there now is the Antichrist. He'll open up all this sin ordered of God for the true Christ to come later and put down the Antichrist. So we are in very sensational times. And it ought to turn us to look for the Lord for our deliverer from the coming wrath, And our the Jews deliver, if they will have him, the only deliver the Jews can have that are over there now to save them from the seven years of great tribulation which are going to come upon Israel especially, but upon all the world to try them as well on the earth. I say, the only thing that will save anybody is Christ. Put your trust in him and don't go to over there and support Jews to go over there, because that's going to be the most. Horrible center of the coming round. Brother Neil. We can be a little more specific. You were hinting at the movement that is going on, which is really an ecumenical movement. The Promise Keepers. You know the enemy has used various movements. In Christendom, to bring about union in the Christian profession, the charismatic movement was a very distinct movement in that direction. See, people were looking for the same experience. Forget about doctrine and differences, as long as you have the same experience of speaking in tongues, we are having fellowship. Catholics and Protestants and all of these differences didn't mean anything as long as they had that.

Experience then. Now with the Promise Keepers, it's the same thing they link together regardless of what their doctrinal differences are. Then another thing that has taken place is that evangelicals have joined forces with Catholics and others against abortion. And then they have come to an agreement that they will not try to win Catholics away from Catholicism. You see, they have to. Tolerate each other, so these movements by the enemy are used to try to bring about. This One World church, it hasn't yet taken place, although the World Council of Churches certainly is all heading in that direction and. The. Rural church. Will come about, but how wonderful that we have the word of God. That shows us that we ought to walk apart from all of these things, and that we should cling with purpose of heart to the Lord Jesus and to the word of truth. You know, when Paul said farewell to the same the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20, he did commend them to God and to the word of his grace, you know, and for young people. This scripture here. Along with other scriptures, very plainly teaches that the Rapture will take place before the Tribulation. You know reference has been made to Revelation chapter 5 during these meetings. That's another scripture that very plainly shows that the Church will be all redeemed for a matter of fact, as a matter of fact will be with Christ worshipping him as we see it in Revelation 5. Before he takes the book out of the hands of him that sits upon the throne. Which is the book of judgment, or Brother Clem called it the title deed to the earth, you know. And then these judgment will prepare the earth for the glorious rain of Christ. But the redeemed are already roundabout, the throne worshipping the lamb. Then in Revelation we have that before the hour of temptation which comes upon the earth. It's another indication the hour of temptation is this time. Of trial when the Antichrist is revealed, but we will be taken out of it, We will not be here. The word of God clearly teaches that the Church will not go through the tribulation, and then reference was made to the partial rapture. Well, for the landing called that the doctrine of pride. You know in other words, those who are spiritual and go on for the Lord, they will be raptured. The others are left behind. Nobody is going to be in the glory because of anything that they have done. All of us will be there with Christ because of his work. None of us will be there because of anything that we have done, even as believers. We will all be there because of His work. Be nice, brother, if we could get down. At the end of the chapter, before the time runs out. It's very bright there from verse 13. Paul by the sphere. Says we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord. That's what the Thessalonians were to him. That's what the Saints all are to God. He has saved us and pulled us and brought us in, and feeds us and fills us and satisfies us and directs us, He goes on in the verse. Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, where you're going to get any pride for yourself in that it's all of God. He has chosen us for salvation. In the first, in Acts chapter 2, as many as were ordained were saved. God has done the whole thing. He did it for the Thessalonians. He has done it for everyone who is here. Yesterday, talking to a young man reminded me of another one in a simple way.

This man had gotten saved. And he was asked, well, how did you get saved? He said, well, God saved me. How did you get saved? That's the way it is. God saved us. And God has chosen the Thessalonians. He's chosen us. He's brought us here to this conference to hear about the Lord's coming. And he is coming, and he is coming before the Antichrist, the appalling ways around us. So we need to be worried about it. Concerned, I should say. And be careful and seek to help the lambs and the sheep. Keep them from the clutches. Of all of these movements of men which have men's wills at their base. Not the will of God, nor the glory of Christ. It goes on and says here, and I mentioned that the truth is mentioned four times toward the end of the chapter. It's not always. That they believed it. But the truth. The truth. The truth. But here is. God has chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. We had that. So blessedly in our prayers. From this room this morning. Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Believe this word because God says it. We don't have to. Reconcile 2 scriptures. We don't have to do that. It's a wrong thesis. We're to believe it. Believe this book whether you understand it or not. It is true belief of the truth. Where to He called you by our gospel? To the obtaining of the glory. Of our Lord Jesus Christ, what could be more blessed? What's going to be your end? The glory, that's where you're going to end when you belong to God, and it must be getting close. But it's so, so good to be stirred in our souls about the state of things around us. Because the apostasy is coming forward more and more. I didn't ever think I'd see so much truth given up. My brother and I love so much. I thought it would be impossible. I tell you, we can't trust our own hearts. He that trusts his own heart, His own hearts of who? Trust your belief of the truth. Well, these last verses are positive and nice. We've set apart and marked out for the truth, the sanctified them through Thy truth. Thy word is truth, and the Spirit of God has written it and He teaches from it. That's our sanctification as we make progress in the truth. It might be more than that. The Word of God sets us apart. The Spirit of God sets us apart. We don't really belong to this world. Truth is important because you don't reconcile railroad tracks. If you try to, the train will derail. And there's many truths that go on in parallel in the word of God, God's sovereignty, and man's responsibility. And if you try to reconcile them, you get into difficulty. You're the Lord's servant, and yet you're also subject to your local assembly. And if you try to reconcile those truths, you know that you answer to the Lord, and you try to reconcile that with something else. It's only faith that, so to keep speak keeps the truth going on together. And it's not just the activity of the mind to try to rationalize things together. And the reason we get into difficulty and stress is because we try to reconcile things that God has left apart to go on. There are the traditions here that are nice. Sometimes. We rather speak against traditions, that is, the traditions of the elders. When the Lord was here, they were teaching for doctrines of commandments of men. Those traditions were wrong and bad. But you get good traditions here in this epistle. In verse 15, therefore, brethren stand fast and hold the traditions which he had been taught, whether by word or our epistle. That's the traditions that Paul introduced in Christianity, and they are good. Something that was handed down by word of mouth before it was all written down, and that's really what traditions are, is something that's handed down now we have them all written for us.

Mr. Garvey uses the word instructions and I think that's that's good. So it's not really traditions of men that it refers to, they're what is was handed down before it was all written down. Is that what you get in Second Timothy chapter one from which all in Asia have turned away? The

the teachings of Paul himself. Think about it. The word was not all written. I don't even suppose Matthew was written. They had no written New Testament. It was coming. This is the first. These two books of a Thessalonians are the first appalled document written down, and they hand it down from word of mouth, from Colossa. They'd take it to Ephesus and so on. That was a handicap, I suppose. I would sure think it was. How wonderful to have the written word. And oh, how we ought to value it and look at that and compare spiritual things with spiritual. That we might be kept in the traditions of the Apostles. The church fathers today, but that both versa quoted from Timothy shows that they were all an error rate from the beginning. They'd all forsaken Paul in Pauls lifetime. So it wasn't the church fathers And I think you made reference to the meaning of the word us when we get that your fellowship might be with us is really referring to the apostles. He's not referring to the Brethren. They went out from us for they were not of us. It may we may be able to apply that. That may be the reason a person leaves the assembly because they want to forsake the Apostles. But it's really the awesome scripture is the apostles. There are such things as traditions that or practices that we do not necessarily have from the word of God, and as long as these practices and traditions do not. Undermine the truth of scripture. Don't try to force the change. But I'm referring to, for instance, is when I grew up. In Europe, the custom was, and the tradition was that the women were sitting over there and the men were sitting over here. And. In most of the world, that's the way Christians sit when they come together. It's really only, I believe in the English speaking world that we sit together as families. Now, I myself prefer it that way, but I do believe that if we happen to be in a place where Saints have other customs, I don't think we should try to force a change that doesn't collide, I don't believe. With Scripture, the same we used to stand up, all of us. When somebody would pray anytime during the breaking of bread or during a ministry meeting, a brother would pray, all the Saints would stand up. Now I would personally prefer to do that that way, but am I going to force a change according to what I like and cause disturbance? So I'm using some of these examples to show that there are customs. That are not in collision with the truth of scripture, which we go along with and but if there are customs that would set aside scriptural teaching, then that's a different thing. Then we have to set aside these customs or these traditions and bow to the word of God. What about if women? Come from groups of believers where they're permitted to participate. In meetings, well, they might be accustomed to doing that, but that is contrary to the word of God, and we cannot allow that kind of. Tradition to find its way amongst the gathered things. But young people go along with whatever you find to be customary wherever the Lord puts you, as long as these traditions and customs do not clash with the word of God. Another height you mentioned about. You were raised where the stood up. Would it be all right if we said Amen?

And I believe the word of God teaches that very plainly. And I have found that that was a better custom. Over in Europe, there was always a loud Amen when somebody prayed. In the local assembly, when someone prays and there's no amends, you wonder if you should hide yourself or or whether what you said was contrary to scripture. But when there is. I was in Fullerton recently not to bring focus on any particular assembly, except I am. We were there for a couple months and it was beautiful. Not just my prayer, but anyone's prayer. You knew that your brethren were listening and that they were in Concord with what you said because they said it. They said Amen. And one particular brother, and I won't mention his name, but if you're ever there, you know who I'm Speaking of. He said it loudly enough that you knew that his heart was with you. And I'll tell you it does something if we don't stand. And I remember my my wife's grandfather, Ruskin Gill, saying that if we don't stand. Shouldn't we, Brethren, and I say it almost pleadingly, can't we at least say Amen? Now the last two versions. Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God even our Father. Which hath loved us, and has given us. Everlasting consolation and Good Hope through grace comfort your hearts and establish you in every good work. Word and the word how full is this? Last part of this epistle to give us to rejoice, having been in this conference, and having the word of God before us, and have our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father. Here to give us everlasting consolation and Good Hope through grace comfort our hearts. And establish you we're not gone. There's still something to say. There's still something to do in every good word and work. The progress of evil is so evident in the world sometimes, said Brother. And I really think it's something we need to meditate. If we walk in the fear of the Lord, we do not have to fear the devil, nor all the hosts of hell, nor any man we can go on. We can be established in every good word and work, and we need to be encouraged in these last days to go on, even though we live in days of small things. We have a great God, brethren, and he's not any less great because we live in days of small things. He's not any less great because we have failed as much as we have. He's still as great as he ever was, and we can count on him. We have a God we can count on even today. Over 270. Pray, I'd like to read a few verses in Acts 20 and Acts 21. In connection with departing one from another. And for the apostle Paul, it was the last time that he felt that these Saints would see one another, and it may be because of the Lord's coming that that will be so with us. And so in that spirit I would like to read Acts 20 and verse 25. And then the first verse of the 21St chapter and verses five and six of that chapter. And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God. Shall see my face no more. This is not on my part of prophecy, but it may well be because of the nearness of the Lords coming that we will not see one others faces again. And then the first part of the first verse of chapter 21, and I want to give what I think is the is, is a nice little meaning to two words there. And it came to pass that after we were gotten from them it's as if some of us that know about barnacles at the sea. They have a special way of attaching themselves and to get it loose it takes a great deal. And that's the thought that after we were gotten from them And so because we've been together, it is with difficulty, no difficulty to to walk to our car and to turn the ignition. But emotionally, spiritually, it's difficult for us to to go away from one another. And now verses 5:00 and 6:00. A little different incident and maybe not the same intensity of getting, but still the thought is there. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way.

They all. Brought us on our way with wives and children till we were out of the city, and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed what a scene like to have been there. And we kneel down on the shore and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another we took ship. And they returned home again. Our God and Father we are going.

Things New and Old: Volume 24, Election: No. 4

We now turn to the word of God, and our inquiry is this: To what hath the Father in eternity chosen us in Christ? To what is the church elected? That the election of the church was in the beginning in eternity is most certain from scripture. “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(2 Thess. 2:13, 14.)

Thus the ultimate purpose of God was, that these chosen ones should obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a salvation! What a purpose!

Chosen from the beginning. The Holy Ghost, the blessed One by which they were sanctified, as to the new birth, separation to God, and growth in grace—"Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

It may be asked, How could the apostle thus give thanks for these Thessalonian believers? How did he know their election of God? He tells us, "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.....And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. 1:5, 6.) Further marks of their election of God were found in that the word of the Lord was spread abroad by them, and they were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven. Here were the proofs of their election of God. Beloved reader, can you say it is so with you? Has the gospel that Paul preached ever come with power to your soul? You will find the gospel that he preached to them in Acts 17:2-4. Has the Holy Ghost ever made known to you the deep need of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus? the blessed news that through Him is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins—that all who believe God are justified from all things? Have you received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost? Have you cast in your lot with the Lord's people, following the Lord as they did? Is that word of the Lord so precious to you, that it is your delight to be making it known all around? Have you been turned to God from all the idols to which your heart once clung, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven? If you can say, through the amazing grace of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, all this is true of you, then these are the same marks as those by which Paul knew their election of God.

All this is so entirely contrary to the natural man, that it must be of God. You would, like the world around, have refused to have received the love of the truth, that you might be saved, if God had not from the beginning chosen you to salvation. To God be all the praise; to you rest and peace. Before we look at the purpose of God expressly as to the church, we will turn to another scripture that may give strength and comfort to the individual believer.

We will take a scripture in that epistle which describes man's utterly lost and guilty condition before God, and also treats especially of the righteousness of God in the sinner's redemption through the blood of Jesus, and His complete justification by His resurrection from the dead.

Here it is found that man is saved and justified on the ground of the free favor of God. Now, from such a company, where all were alike guilty, what a revelation of infinite grace is this! "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." This was the predestined thought of God—I will have a company out of that world of vile sinners, who shall be like my Son. He shall be the firstborn among them; yes, they shall be conformed to the image of my Son! (See Rom. 8:29-39.) And let it not be surmised that this means that God predestined them after they believed the call, or because they believed it. No, that would be no predestination, as is further shown in the next verse, that the predestination surely was before the call. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Now bear in mind, that if God had dealt in righteousness personally with every one of these, they must, as enemies, ungodly, and despisers of God, have perished everlastingly. All, therefore, was pure grace to these. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." "What shall we say to these things; if God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, if such a God as this be for us—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.... who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?

It is "Christ that died," &c. Let us pause, and contemplate God predestinating poor ungodly sinners to be conformed to the image of His Son—even now accounted righteous before Him without condemnation. To accomplish this in righteousness, He spared not His own Son. Nothing can separate us from such love as this. Shall we say it is dangerous for the believer to be acquainted with all this?

We will now turn to another epistle, where the church of God is especially revealed; and that, not only what it will be, but what it is even now, seen in its heavenly character. " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3.) What a rebuke to unbelief is this statement! How clear, present, and certain! What a bright contrast with the dark human thought that we shall only get to know at the day of judgment whether we shall obtain such heavenly blessings! Yes, it is all ours now. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us thus in the heavenlies in Him. And mark, all this is according to plan and purpose. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Have you ever thought of these words? How far do they take us back? Are we chosen in Christ because of something in our own history or circumstances? No, farther back. Were we chosen in Him before the formation of this world in its present state, and before the introduction of sin? Farther back still. When were the foundations of the world laid? We read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What vast ages this may have been before the six days' formation of this earth for man, we know not. Men, with all their learning, can only measure time; they have no language to explain eternity: that laying of the foundations—that creation of the heaven and the earth—in that vast unknown, "in the beginning." Yet the heavenly blessing of the church is, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Men love to speculate about past ages, but here is no room for speculation, but the distinct revelation, that the church, that we who have redemption in Christ through His blood, were chosen in Him before those ages began.

Further, notice, this is not so much a question of the election of persons, though it surely is that, for what would the church, the body of Christ, be, without persons, individual members of that one body? But this wondrous epistle reveals what God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in eternity chose us to and for.

"That we should be holy, and without blame before him in love," none but God could have conceived such a thought, yet was it His pleasure in eternity! How soon will it be realized in all its fullness by us, even as we are seen by Him now in the Beloved! "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Surely every sentence is full of infinite love. What a contrast to the blessing of Israel as a nation on earth! We were thus predestinated to the higher relationship "of children." Do our souls enter into this, that God would have us in the blessed relationship of children, and "according to the good pleasure of his will." How sweet it was to Jesus to reveal the Father's joy in receiving His long-lost son, in that precious parable of the prodigal son! Oh, that this short paper may be used to lead the "children" to meditate on every sentence of this chapter. Think that the place given us is "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Yes, when God is known, then we see how suited to Him is the infinite extent of His grace. The free favor of God, in every sense, is altogether beyond all human thought. We can only understand it by seeing where Christ is, and what is His future glory; and then the overwhelming thought that we are in Him, and all is ours. Yes, all is so suited, so worthy of God. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not

according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Tim. 1:9.) Oh, do we believe these weighty, soul-sustaining words? Let not Satan be listened to for a moment, that if we believe these plain statements of God’s blessed word that we have been predestinated to such unspeakable blessings in Christ before the world began, then it implies that others have been predestinated to be damned. No, no, there is not such a thought in the holy word of God: we have seen that their everlasting judgment is “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” This is as clear as that our salvation, vast and wonderful as it is, is “because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” (2 Thess. 2:10-13.)

Oh, how sad that so many should deny the grace of God, the free unmerited favor of God, in thus choosing us in Christ from eternity! Be it remembered, that if He had left us to our own free choice, all must have been lost, since all in their natural state reject the grace of God. Man in his natural unbelief will seek to be saved by his own works, will gladly accept any false religion of ritualism and ceremonies. He will seek and go about to establish his own righteousness when he has none. But if the writer of the letter, or the reader of this paper, has been led, as a lost and guilty sinner, to accept Christ, and to believe God, who raised Him from among the dead, then rest assured that you were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Thus may our hearts rest in the eternal love of God in Christ, from which nothing can separate us.

Bible Witness and Review: Volume 1, He That Letteth

2 Thess. 2:6-8.-It appears to me that the Spirit here treats of the restraining influence and person with a certain studied obscurity, and that, if wise, we should not too hastily form conclusions. It must be borne in mind that the epistle was an early one, written to young converts who had enjoyed the apostle's oral teaching on the subject of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus (cf. Acts 17:7, with 2 Thess. 1), as well as on the matter in question (ver. 5). Further, if we attach any value to the idea, so prevalent in the early church, that the Roman empire was " the letter," or " what withheld," it is natural that the intimation should be but dim, especially if previously taught by the apostle. If the hindrance consisted in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, whether personally in the church or governmentally in the world, one can understand how nothing more is here given than the assurance of a restraint up to a certain point. Thus, while the powers that be (whatever the form) are ordained of God, there is a time coming, as we know from

Rev. 11-13, when this shall cease, and the beast shall rise out of the bottomless pit (i.e. be resuscitated by diabolic agency in an exceptional and frightful way), when the dragon (i.e. Satan) gives him his power and his throne and great authority. The withholder will have then disappeared, or at least cease to act as such. The apostasy will have come, and the man of sin be revealed in the fullest way: for I do not deny a partial application of the prophecy to the papacy, while looking for a far more complete development of the evil. The revelation of the lawless one, who is clearly, I think, "the king " of Daniel 11: 3640, will be characterized by an unprecedented energy of Satan " with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," similar language as St. Peter uses of Jesus, "a man approved of God" by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him. It is quite a mistake to suppose that verse 6 will bear "and ye know what is now restraining;" for is here a particle of transition, and fairly enough given in the English version. No more is implied than their general knowledge that there was a some one or thing which restrained; but in verse 7 does mean that he restrains now. Next, is correctly rendered " out of the way." It is its regular known force in sacred and profane authors, whether connected or not with verbs implying separation, as any good lexicon may satisfy any one. Thus, in (Herod. 3: 83) the verb has nothing to do with that sense, which the phrase does carry. See also Dem. 323, 327 (Reiske). Accordingly the authorized version rightly connects . . With , while the beginning of verse 8 answers to the beginning of the 7th. If the phrase . . applied to "the wicked one," and meant "till he appears," the force of . would be weakened and useless.

Bible Witness and Review: Volume 1, Coming and the Day, The

2 Thess. 2:2.-It is quite right to distinguish between "the coming" and "the day of the Lord." They are not the same thing, though of course closely connected. Again, it is certain that means "is actually come," or "is present," and not " is at hand." But it is a mistake to assume that the Thessalonian saints then knew the relative order of these two things; and this ignorance on all sides gave occasion for the false teachers to trouble them with the cry that "the day of the Lord was there," which would have been trying enough, even with the thought of being caught up during or after it. This the Spirit meets by intimating that the coming precedes the day, which, besides, awaits a fuller development of evil.

Peace: January 2021, Lord of Peace, The

“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means” (2 Thess. 3:16).

“The God of Peace” and “The Prince of Peace” are familiar expressions, which have become exceedingly dear to our souls, each carrying its own special message to our hearts. But the expression, “The Lord of Peace,” is perhaps not so often thought of, although in these days of sorrow it carries a peculiarly precious message to us.

In the beginning of 2nd Thessalonians, we find the apostle commending the Thessalonian saints for their love one to another — “the love of each one of you all towards one another abounds” (2 Thess. 1:3 JnD). But in the third chapter, as he nears the end of the epistle, he gives a most solemn command, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition [or instruction] which he received of us” (2 Thess. 3:6). The disorder at Thessalonica seems to have been that there were some who were “working not at all,” but were “busy-bodies.” But the Word goes even further — “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:14-15). Among the words given “by this epistle” we find the following, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [or instruction], which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle”

(2 Thess. 2:15).

No Company with the Disorderly

These commands are very searching and very solemn, and must have been especially painful to the saints at Thessalonica, where “the love of each one of you all towards one another abounds.” What is there that causes more real sorrow and pain than to be compelled “not to keep company with” or to have to “withdraw from” a dearly beloved brother? Not only must the very heartstrings of these dear Thessalonian saints have been torn by such commands, but the very peace of the assembly seemed to be at stake. Yet such are the clear and solemn commands, “withdraw yourselves,” “keep no company.”

What is the comfort and source of strength that God gives for such a moment? “The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means,” or as another translation beautifully puts it, “at all times and under all circumstances.” Because HE is our LORD, our path is implicit obedience to His Word, painful though it may be at times. How precious, then, to remember that our Lord is “The Lord of Peace” and that He can give peace, as well as joy and courage, at all times, yes, even in our times! and under all circumstances, yes, even in our circumstances!

G. C. Willis

Edification: Volume 3, Our Scripture Portion.

(2 Thess. 2:8—3:18.)

Please read the passage indicated above before reading this article, and then keep your Bible open so that You may refer to it as may be necessary from time to tinge.

The writer takes it for granted that you will comply with this request, and hence he addresses you in the terms he would employ if giving a homely “Bible-talk.”

IN verse. 8 the man of sin is referred to as “that Wicked,” or more literally, “the lawless one).” The phrase in verse 7, “the mystery of iniquity,” is more literally, “the mystery of lawlessness.” Reading it thus, it is more easy to catch the connection. Lawlessness is thy very essence of sin. It is the refusal of all controlling authority and restraint, and therefore in deadly opposition to God. The lawlessness, which has long been at work in Christendom in a mysterious or hidden way like a suppressed fire, is going to blaze forth in the lawless one.

But this will only be when the saints of God are removed from the scene of conflict by the coming of the Lord for them. At present the forces of evil are under restraint —restraint is the meaning of the two words withholdeth and letteth in verse 6 and 7.

There is “He who restrains” and also “what restrains.” The former doubtless refers to the Holy Spirit of God, who is at this time personally upon earth as He never was before and will not be again. The latter, we believe, refers to the presence of the church on earth; the church being the house of God wherein the Holy Ghost is dwelling.

We have probably but little conception of how great is the restraint placed upon the working of lawlessness by the presence of the saints of God. They may be poor and feeble but the Spirit of God who indwells them is almighty. Occasionally this restraint is manifested in quite unmistakable style, as when, for instance, a spiritist seance has been a failure because of the presence in the building of some definite and earnest Christian. This we believe has happened more than once. Have not many of us noticed how the flow of ungodly conversation in a room or office is stope by the sudden entrance of an out-and-out servant of Christ?

When the Church is raptured to heaven, and therefore the Holy Spirit no longer has a house on earth, the consequences will be very serious and very immediate. The repressed lawlessness will burst forth in the lawless one and for a brief moment the working of Satan will have full scope. This coming lawless man will be inspired by Satan and exhibit his energy in every particular. Notice how sweeping are the expressions used. Satan will support him with ALL power, even to signs and wonders of falsehood, so that EVERY possible deceit of unrighteousness will be brought to bear upon men who have been left behind to perish.

This tremendous energy of Satan will continue but for a short time. The lawless one being revealed on earth, he will be speedily dealt with. The Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven, He will utterly destroy him, casting him alive into the lake of fire, as Rev. 19:20 shows. How appropriate it is that this utterly lawless and disobedient man, the very personification of Satanic energy, shall be dealt with personally by the Lord Jesus, the wholly subject and obedient Man, the personification of the power and majesty of God. No intermediary shall be allowed to intervene in that conflict!

We must also notice how just are all the dealings of God with men. Those who will fall a prey to all this deceit of unrighteousness, are just those who when they heard the truth did not love it. Loving not the truth, they did not believe it, rather they had pleasure in unrighteousness. And now the deceit of unrighteousness captures them; they believe the lie, and they all fall under the judgment of God. Formerly God sent them the truth, the Gospel was sounded into their ears by men who preached it “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12). Now God sends them a strong delusion. He does for them what of old He had to do for rebellious Israel, when He “blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart” (John 12:40; and see Acts 28:26, 27). Is God unrighteous in acting thus? On the contrary; He is acting in righteousness of the strictest and most exact kind.

These verses should act as a check upon those Christians who seem to be so very desirous of possessing miraculous powers, particularly in the directions of “healings” and “tongues.” Let them note that though there were such miraculous displays in the energy of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the dispensation, it is predicted that at its close there shall be a great display of similar powers, but of a spurious and Satanic kind. We are now near its end and it is significant how there has been a revival of strange happenings which purport to be miraculous and divine. We do not assert that all these happenings have been spurious and Satanic, but we do say that many have been and that if we do not test them all in very exact fashion by all the Scriptures we may easily be woefully deceived.

If we review for a moment the first twelve verses of our chapter we shall see then that directly after the coming of the Lord for His saints there will be,

1. A great movement in the realm of HUMAN thought, resulting in the falling away or apostasy, and culminating in the man of sin.

2. A great movement in SATANIC realms, resulting in an intense concentration of the powers of darkness, and culminating in great displays of lying wonders, so artfully staged as to utterly deceive apostate men.

3. A great movement of GOD'S government and power, resulting in His shutting such men up in their delusion and unbelief, and culminating in His public intervention in judgment through the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus.

There will be first the catching away of the true saints of God. Then the falling away of corrupt and forsaken Christendom. Lastly the sweeping away of the whole nauseous thing in the judgment of God.

No hope is held out here for Gospel-rejectors. No second chance after the coming of the Lord for His people is hinted at. The solemn statement is, "that they ALL might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

How delightful is the contrast of verse 13 with verse 12. The Thessalonian believers —and ourselves also—have been chosen of God to salvation, a salvation which will be consummated when the Lord comes for us, and we obtain His glory. To this we were called by the Gospel. In believing that Gospel we believed the truth and so from the outset we have that which fortifies us against the lie which those who perish believe, deceived by Satan.

The "sanctification of the Spirit" does not refer to the progressive work of the Spirit in the hearts of believers, conforming them more and more to the will of God. It refers rather to that setting apart for God which is achieved by the initial operations of the Spirit of God in the souls of men, operations which have in view His indwelling us when once the Gospel is believed. By this sovereign work of the Spirit we have been sanctified.

In view of this the word to us is "stand fast." We are to hold the apostolic "traditions" or "instructions." The Thessalonian believers had these instructions in two ways—by word of mouth and by the written epistle. We have them in one way only. Let us take therefore the more earnest heed to the apostolic writings. We have indeed a good hope through grace, so we may well be comforted and established.

Finally, the Thessalonians were to pray for Paul himself, and that not only in regard to his personal safety but in regard to the work with which he was entrusted. The history recorded in Acts 17 shows us how greatly prayer for his safety was needed at this juncture, yet he gave the first place to the work. The word had had full course amongst the Thessalonians and consequently it had been glorified in the wonderful results it produced in them. Paul asked prayer that thus it might be wherever he went. He prayed unceasingly for his converts but he was also not ashamed to ask for their prayers for himself. The most advanced saint or servant may well be thankful for the prayers of the youngest convert or the humblest believer.

As to the Thessalonians themselves the Apostle had confidence in the Lord concerning them that they would be governed by his directions, only he desired that the Lord Himself might direct their hearts into the enjoyment of God's love and into the patience of Christ. This is what we all want, and especially so seeing that the end of the age upon us. If our hearts enter into Christ's patience, as He waits at God's right hand, and are tuned into sympathy with Him, we shall not chafe at what to us may seem a long delay. God's love will meanwhile be our enjoyed portion and we shall be able to display it to others while passing through the world.

From verse 6 of this third chapter and the succeeding verses it is evident that the erroneous ideas concerning the coming of the Lord, which had been pressed upon the Thessalonians, had already borne evil fruit. It is ever the way that evil communication corrupt good manners. Some amongst them had become fanatical in their minds, under the impression that the day of Christ was upon them and had thrown up their ordinary employment. Having done this they began to expect support from others. They became disorderly busybodies, doing nothing themselves and preying upon others who quietly went on with their work.

As to this the Apostle was able to hold himself up as an example. He had labored night and day for his own support, though he might justly have been chargeable to them. God had ordained that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Yet he had not claimed this right. As to all others the divine rule is, "that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

In verse 12 we have Paul's word to these busybodies. He commands them to work for their own living. Then in verse 13 he turns to the rest of the assembly at Thessalonica and tells them not to be weary in well doing. We can well imagine how tired they must have got of these disorderly brethren who were continually trespassing on their kindness. If now they were to be removed of this burden let them not cease their benevolence but still be hearty and cheerful givers in the interests of the Lord.

Verse 14 and 15 give instructions in case any of the disorderly brethren were contumacious and refused obedience to God's word through the Apostle's letter. Such were to be disciplined. The displeasure of God was to be manifested in His people withdrawing their companionship. The offender would thereby be made to feel the unenviable notoriety of his isolation. His links with the world without were broken and now there would be no happy companionship within the Christian circle. This would be a well-nigh impossible position and calculated to bring him to his senses. He was not however to be put right outside the Christian circle as though he were an enemy, which was the dealing that had to be taken with the offender of whom we read in 1 Corinthians 5.

All this should be done that peace might reign in their midst. Only the Lord Himself however could really give this. Paul desired that it might be theirs at all times and in every way.

As the Thessalonians had been troubled with an epistle falsely represented as coming from Paul, he was very careful that there should be no doubt about the authenticity of this epistle which really did come from him. This explains verse 17.

F. B. Hole.

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 20 (1905), Joying in God and Waiting for Christ.

(2 Thess. 3:5.)

THERE are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian to be his on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord, and the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled, from the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around; for we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without at the same time seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, and that the world is going wrong—its wise men having no wisdom and all going on to judgment, the principles of evil loosening all bonds, &c., and the soul becomes oppressed and the heart sad. But if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. Brethren, we all want this. To walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and, moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and all the Church with me. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"— when I find my delight, then shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me— "forever with the Lord."

You may think to find good or to produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the second Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got to be with the One I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me; and the more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore Paul says in 2 Thess. 1, "To you who are troubled, rest with us." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, it is not that we are to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no, rather let us be victorious every day. Still, it is not rest to be fighting.

However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat as joying in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is, but it is the same kind of joy I have now that I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love I enjoy, and I desire that they should possess it, as it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict, so that our souls should be exercised on both the fellowship and the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, though through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the second Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found as in 2 Cor. 1; there it is present blessing in the midst of trial. But in 2 Thess. 1. it is tribulations, and not rest out of it, until the Lord comes; "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." In 2 Cor. 1:3, 4, there is present blessing in the midst of the trial — "who comforteth us in all our tribulation"; so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there are at the same time the comforting's of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mind. I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself; I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, the very joy of God, God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him. There is no time for God's coming into a soul like the time of trial, for in no way does He so fully reveal Himself to the soul as when He is exercising it in trial. There is astonishing power in this; for the amazing power with which Christ is to us present power and consolation is by His coming in, in present living power, even whilst these poor mortal bodies are unchanged. Ours are not yet redeemed with power, though they are bought with a price, but we have in Christ the life and the power; and, in spite of all, God is pouring in these consolations when we are in tribulations, showing the kind of power in Christ by which I am lifted' up above every circumstance of trial. "The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

J. N. D.

Christian Truth: Volume 22, Rejoicing in God and Waiting for Christ

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5.

There are two things that constitute the joy of a Christian while on his earthly journey, presenting an object constantly before his heart. The first is the hope of the coming of the Lord; and the second is present communion and fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. These two things cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have real profit without both of them. If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing whatever that can separate us from this present evil world; if such be the case, Christ Himself will not be the object before the soul; nor shall we be able, in the same measure as when looking for Him, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, but on the contrary we shall be enfeebled through the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. We cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven without at the same time seeing that the world has utterly rejected Him, and that the world is going wrong; its wise men having no wisdom; the principles of evil loosening all bonds; and all going on to judgment. Seeing this, the soul becomes oppressed, and the heart is sad; but if through grace the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul is steady and calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard and the sorrow is seen, but his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, which carries him far above every circumstance. We all want this. To walk steadily with God, we need both this fellowship and this hope.

I do not believe that a Christian can have his heart scripturally right unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven. There could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen; and moreover a correct judgment of the character of the world will never be formed until that crowning sin is apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking for Christ and waiting for Him to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not only that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me and for all the Church. It is this that gives its character to the joy of the saint. As Christ Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." When He finds His delight, then will you also find yours—He with you and you with Him—because it will be, "Forever with the Lord."

You may think to find good, or to produce good, in man; but you will never find in many any thought of waiting for Christ. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated and civilized, but he remains the first Adam still. The last Adam, having been rejected by the world, will never be found there; and it is the looking for Him, the rejected Lord, that stamps its character on the walk of the saints.

Then again, there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I am not yet with the One I love; and while waiting for Him I am going through the world, tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore the Apostle says in 2 Thess. 1:6, 7: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense... to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." So then I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way. For the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still, we are not to be "weary and faint in our minds." It is not a right thing to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! rather let us be victorious every day, remembering that tribulation and conflict come before the rest.

However, when walking with God, there is not so much thinking of combat as finding joy in God Himself. This I shall know all the better when I am in the glory; my soul shall then be enlarged and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but the kind of joy I have now is the same as I shall have when the Lord Jesus comes to be glorified in His saints, only it will be greater in degree. And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether and becomes a spring of love to those in the world. For though

I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world who need the love I enjoy; and I desire that they should possess it, because it is the joy of what God is for me. This it is that sustains me and carries me through all the conflict. So our souls should be exercised about both the fellowship and the hope; for if I look for Christ's coming apart from fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed and shall not go on. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out toward all who have need of it, toward saints and sinners according to their need. For if I feel the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, because it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service and to suffer for Christ's sake.

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