

Will the church go through the tribulation?

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I apologize for being back on the platform again, but there was just, I won't be too long, but I just thought perhaps to round off our considerations this afternoon, it might be just as well to refer to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and I'll read the whole, the first 11 verses, I won't really expatiate on them, it's really just a point I wanted to bring out of them. And 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 1.

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. [00:01:05] For when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travel upon women with child.

And they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, but that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as to others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. Let us throughout the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and from entailment the hope of salvation. For God has not appointed us to rob, 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.

[00:02:05] Therefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

And then Revelation chapter 3.

Revelation chapter 3, I think you're all fairly familiar with the section from verse 7 to 13.

Just read by way of introduction, verse 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens, I know thy works.

[00:03:05] And verse 10.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, and trouble them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly, hold thou fast which thou hast, and no man take thy crown.

I just wanted to say something else.

We had a very blessed reading on the rapture, and also on the resurrection, and the kingdom, and the way we pass as we go on into eternity. And I just wanted to refresh your hearts, probably most of you know this, [00:04:01] and know it far better than I am able to mention it.

And this is the fact that troubles many dear saints, certainly not many in the immediate company we are, but if like me you do find yourself in contact with believers, who are no doubt going to heaven, there's no question they'll be in heaven. They may not have anything near the light that we've got, but they've certainly got a lot of heat.

And any of these dear saints are going to heaven, but you see some of them get this worry that they're going to go through the tribulation. And this is a matter that keeps coming up.

And I think, you know, when we have these wonderful readings about the rapture, the preciousness of the rapture, and the catching away, the Lord coming for us, and how it thrills our hearts, doesn't it? [00:05:02] We're on the tip of expectation, and we like to hear that hymn that says, I can almost hear his footsteps upon the threshold of the door.

I'm sure every heart here who knows the Lord Jesus Christ is the precious and person of sin. They have just got there, they can almost hear his footsteps. Dear Brother Jackson, the integral verse, reciting to me part of that poem. As fond as I am of his work in the field, I would lay down the sword, I would lay down the shield. The weapons of warfare, I would lay on the shelf. The sword in its cover, to be with himself.

Is that your heart, dear Saint of God? Everything goes out to be with himself.

You know, dear Brother, you used to say to me, you know, if you're reading the times every morning, [00:06:01] in the train which you walked up there in London, you're not looking for the Lord to come. I said, dear dear Brother, as soon as I hear his footsteps, that time you're out the window. I'm not putting my picture on the times newspaper. It's only just passing through. No, that's not going to hold me. I'm looking for the Saviour. Anyway, dear Saint of God, we're all in that condition, looking for him. But, you know, sad to say that many dear believers seem to be troubled by this, this worry that the Saints might have to go through the tribulation.

And I've just read that part portion there, and it starts in verse 1 of chapter 5.

The times and the seasons, you see, the times are spans of time, you know, hours and days and minutes, months, things like that, years, times. And the seasons are more what characterises certain periods, you see. [00:07:02] And, well, we often say that, don't we? It's a favourite thing for us to say in June or July or August, when we get hailstones, oh, winter's here, you see, things like that. And we talk about seasons often without relevance to the time they should be. And there are these things, the dispensational aspects that we've been brought out, all these things that are going on, what characterises them, what characterises ages, the marks of them, the seasons, these features of them. And the Apostle Paul had already written to them and told them about that.

He told them the nature of the day of the Lord. And, of course, just immediately before that, he brought before them this wonderful fact that the Lord Jesus was coming again, well, they knew that,

but he was coming not to take the dead in Christ, rise and thirist, we the living remain together to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air [00:08:02] and so shall we never be with the Lord, never more to be parted from him. And that he said this day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night, the world would not be aware of it, they'd be sitting back in their ease, building, the Lord Jesus brings out the moral aspect of it, doesn't he? In Matthew 24, they built, they tore, the days of war, giving and marriage, things like that, all that went on. And then, of course, when it comes to the days of Sodom again, these things all going on, business going on, but significantly, of course, there was none of the giving of matters, wasn't there? None of the giving of marriage. We've all noted that, and of course, we've noted the legalization of homosexuality and things like that, and all these matters which are a sign of the end days and the moral degradation, things that are coming in everywhere, even infecting that which professes the name of Christ. [00:09:02] In the very second man in the Church of England, a professed homosexual, a claiming to be celibate, nonetheless, this is the state, isn't it? We have more definitely, dear saints of God, do we? And within Revelation, things like that, we see these signs here already. Now, I don't want to elaborate on it, but we're all aware of these things, we want to get our eyes away from the morass of these things, on to the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, I'll just mention verse 6, a little word of exhortation, by the way.

Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. And here, the sleep is not the sleep of death, no, it's a moral sleep, it's just letting the hands hang down, it's getting mixed up in this world, just going along with it, drifting along with the tide, without any real testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:10:03] just getting settled down here in a moral stupor. And the exhortation is that we're not to sleep as do others, let us watch, be ready, careful, looking around. And we know Satan is always on the attack, we can never let up. As we had a touch on the armour on Saturday night, let us have on that whole armour of God. I won't elaborate on it, we had it there before us, we're aware of it, let us watch and be sober, be careful, steady, this doesn't mean abstinence from drinking, things like that, though that of course would characterize the saint of God, but it means sobriety of judgment and conduct, steadiness, the steady clearness in all these matters, be sober. And of course the day of sleep, morally characterized by the features of the night, and then in verse 8, let us who are of the day, [00:11:03] we're of the day, we're of God's, we're of Christ's day here, we're of this day, we're featured, it is man's day of course, but we are in this sea and it's the day of grace, we've got to be characterized by the light, that which corresponds to this pleasant day of testimony for the Lord, and being in that, sober again, putting on this breastplate of faith and love, there together, not the breastplate of righteousness, the breastplate of faith and love, an absolute, complete, total commitment, just letting go and letting go, absolute, total commitment, no reliance on the arm of flesh or anything, but just all over, total surrender, faith and trust and love, and all these blessed aspects, we would enjoy of course the love of God, the love of Christ, he could say, as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, [00:12:04] continue ye in my love, and we should love one another, be in that blessed circle of it, that would flow out, we practice in that way, breastplate of faith and love, the two things together, guarding the breast, of course, guarding our hearts, you see, keeping our heart, the affections, and then it says for our helmet, the helmet on our head, our thoughts, our minds, and what would be there, theology, anything like that, no, the hope of salvation, the hope of salvation, and you see, in the Bible times, in the times when it was written, these things were written in 30, 40, 50, 60 AD, in that time, the word hope didn't mean what it means in our minds today, hope was a sure and certain thing, you see, not a vain wish that people might have today, [00:13:02] no, hope was a steady, sure and certain thing, and salvation was a certainty, and that was what would guard our minds and thoughts, we would not be worried this way or that way, the hope of salvation would control and guard our thoughts in every way, so here we have yet another hope, we've had much of the hope not before us, this wonderful, vast feature of hope, it opens out, you know, because this is one of the

things that God is, he's the God of hope, isn't he? God of hope, and he's going to fill you with all the joy of peace and believing, so you know he's the God of hope, God of love, yes, God of love, the God of glory, we think of God in many ways, don't we? but he's the God of hope, in Romans 15, isn't it?

God of hope, and here we have this wonderful other feature of hope, the hope of salvation, and now, sorry, I preambled a bit too much, but I really wanted to come to verse 9, [00:14:01] which is the thing that really brought me to the platform, it says, God has not appointed us to wrath, God has not appointed us to wrath, and that wrath, the saint of God, is looking at what comes in the tribulation, I mean it's quite clear from other scriptures that we are not going to hell, is it? so the wrath, you see, God has not appointed us to that at all, so we take comfort from that, and any that are worried, we should tell them that, God has appointed us to obtain salvation, that's what God has appointed us to, to obtain salvation, by whom? and the full name and title is here, our Lord Jesus Christ, and notice the preciousness of it, Lord Jesus Christ, how has he got that salvation, [00:15:03] how has God appointed us to it, because he died for us, Lord Jesus died for us, let us get the preciousness sinking to hearts and souls, and if the Lord died for us, he is not going to let us go with him, he died for us, and so he is not going to allow us to be going through any tribulation, he died for us, and then it says that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him, now I know many take this waking or sleeping, the sleep of death which was in chapter 4, and at the end, the sleep of death there, and it no doubt would corroborate the fact, that those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, wouldn't be let here either, [00:16:01] but I'm pretty clear that it's made clear there, at the end of chapter 4, that those who are asleep in Jesus, will certainly be raised, prior to any tribulation coming on here, and this waking or the sleeping, the sleeping is a different word for sleeping, and it conveys the thought of a moral sleep, a moral sleep, and so sad to say, you know if there are dear saints, who are not awake in a spiritual sense, they are morally asleep, they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so there is no need either for a partial rapture, you see, many will admit a rapture before the tribulation, but some of them try to bring out a partial rapture, just of those who are waiting on tiptoe on fire for the Lord, but of course, that I think this verse would bring before me, [00:17:03] whether we wait, whether we are spiritually awake or asleep, we are going to live together with him, now of course, the danger is, that people might think, oh well I can live in the arrival, I'm going to go with the Lord, but you know, we have to heed the exhortations, many scriptures, to be morally waiting for the Lord, and that's why there was the stress, and the fact of being in a condition, ready waiting for the Lord, don't just, you know, be saved, so as by fire, just carried along, let us be going in, full sail, we used to speak about, in Kentucky, where I was brought up, a fisherman there, going in, full sail, and dear saint of God, let us be found, in moral correspondence, to all that blessed truth that is ours, waiting for the Lord, and so there is no doubt, that we are waiting for him, we are alive and ready, we are evoking moral correspondence to him, [00:18:03] and don't let us be found, in any other condition, and so you see, here again, we have repetition almost, of these words, of verse 18, chapter 4, where for, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do, well they were doing it, and let us continue, to do that thing there, comfort ourselves, over this blessed fact, that we are not going to go, through the tribulation, the Lord Jesus, that precious bride, for when we die, no, she is not going to be sorry, he is going to come, and claim her for himself, with what delight, what wondering heart, he is filling hearts as well, we as sharers of thy joy, call with thee to dwell, yes, that wonderful, wonderful call for the saviour, and just to commemorate, this, what we have been saying, I read also in Revelation, chapter 3, [00:19:02] the letter to the church, in Philadelphia, written by, given by him, let us hurry, the truth, which is the key of David, he says, in verse 10, chapter 3, because thou hast kept, the where of my patience, I also will keep thee, from the hour of temptation, which I take to be, the tribulation, which shall come, upon all the world, to try them, that dwell upon the earth, and we see of course, and some dear ones, have had the privilege of, getting into this in great detail, recently at

Plumstead, the temptation, that shall come upon all the world, to try them, that dwell upon the earth, but we are, dear saints of God, we are going to be kept, from that, and it says, thou hast kept, the where of my patience, you see, the where of my patience, just to me, [00:20:02] this where of my patience, means we've kept, the word, that he's coming again for us, that's what it is, I know there's been great, poems written on, what the where of patience means, but you know, one aspect of it, we've got to see is, that we've had the, as our dear brother, Adams has been stressing, this truth, of the coming again, of the Lord, for his own, and that catching up, was recovered, in the century, last century, it wasn't one of the truths, you know, you can notice, that was recovered, in 1827, the truth of the one body, and things like that, you'll find it to develop, it comes, seems to come out, a bit later on, in the, you know, more definitely, a bit later on, you see, in the fifties, and sixties, and that, more and more stress, given to it, and, so, it's the word, of his patience, this, [00:21:01] wonderful message, that the Lord, Jesus, is coming again, for us, every blood work saved, and we're going to be, caught up, to meet him in the air, before, this, tribulation, stops, isn't that wonderful, we keep in that word, and, then, we will be, kept, from the temptation, comes upon the earth, and so, the Lord, says, I come quickly, isn't that an encouragement, for us, he could, be here tonight, dear saint of God, are we, waiting for him, I come quickly, hold that fast, that thou hast, what have we got, war, we can enumerate, quite a lot, many, many things, the ancestral riches of Christ, all these treasures in him, many, many things, hold that fast, that thou hast, that no man, take thy crown, the crown of rejoicing, and all these, blessed things, no man, take thy crown, the, it could, have a moral bearing, of course, in that the crown, [00:22:01] that will be awarded, at the, judgment seat of Christ, but, again, it could have just, a general bearing, the crown, of the, crown of our hope, the real crown, of our hope, and expectations, be, with the light, the blessed Lord, that which, tops it out, all the, the top stone, of all that, teaching, appreciation we have, the crown of it all, is the coming, of the Lord Jesus, for himself, for us, to take us, to be with him, forever, with the Lord, that could be, in that sense, and then, of course, there is the word, to be overcome, well, I'm sorry, dear Reverend, but I just felt, that perhaps, it might do, a bit of encouragement, this wonderful fact, that we might be able, to help and encourage, the dear, many souls, that are alone, that get troubled, by us, let us stir up our pure minds, by way of remembrance, well known truth, let us rejoice in it.