

Prophecy

Part 4

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[00:00:00] First epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians chapter 1 and I want to read verses 9 and 10. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how he turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come. Chapter 4 the same book beginning to read from verse 13. But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them that are asleep that he sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

[00:01:10] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent or if you like shall not go before them that are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort [00:02:10] one another with these words. The second epistle chapter two and verse one. Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him that he be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled either by spirit nor by word nor by letter as from us as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except they come of falling away first and a man of sin be revealed the son of perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped so that he [00:03:03] as God sitteth 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 ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time for the mystery of iniquity does already work only he who now leteth 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 [00:04:02] and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish because they receive 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 believe not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness but but we are bound to give thanks all the way 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. That's all I want to read. [00:05:02] The subject on the card, the invitation card for tonight, it may be it may be a provocative one.

Will the church go through the great tribulation? I'll repeat that again. Will the church go go through

the great tribulation? Now on the two sheets that I gave you, one on Tuesday and one on Wednesday, on each of these two sheets, on each of these sheets there is marked very clearly the great tribulation.

The first sheet, the one I gave you the first night, this one here, [00:06:02] between six and seven are the words the awakening of Israel and the great tribulation. Between circle six and seven you will find the words the great tribulation, just before the circle which has to do with the millennium. Now on the other sheet, the second one that I gave you, you'll find once again that there is a section just before the millennium, just before Messiah reigns, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, there is a section marked the great tribulation. You will notice that that little section has to do with one week, and that one week of course is a week of years we were saying, [00:07:06] and I've got that week halved, you'll notice halved, and the second half of that week I've got it tallied the great tribulation. Now it's this great tribulation that we are going to be concerned with tonight largely, but I want you to see this very clearly, there still remains one period of seven prophetic years to be fulfilled.

They are fulfilled just before the Lord Jesus Christ takes up his government in this world, just before he takes his place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, there is this great tribulation as it's called, and the worst part of it so far as we gather from the Bible [00:08:05] will be the last half consisting of three and a half years, that is half of the last week of Daniel's prophecy that we were talking about the other night in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel. Now then this great tribulation then, let's just pinpoint it precisely, it will take place just before the Lord Jesus Christ comes back with all his saints, and he'll come to set up a kingdom which will last for a thousand years. We often refer to it as a millennium, the word millennium is not found in the Bible, you'll not find it anywhere, but you will find in one chapter in the book of Revelation about six or seven references to a thousand years. [00:09:07] In fact we are told for instance that Satan is bound for a thousand years, and other things are said to happen inside of this thousand years when this world instead of being filled with the glory of man will be filled with the glory of God. As the Bible says, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, yes in place of the glory of man there will be the glory of God, because the Son of God, the true Son of David, the true Lord of David, the root and the offspring of David will be upon the throne, but before, just before he takes up his dominion will be this great tribulation.

[00:10:06] The Bible says that this tribulation will be unparalleled, never been anything like it before in the history of this world, except the Lord shortened the days, they will be non-saved, non-saved, so terrible will this day be.

Well now the question is of course on the sheet, on our little card, will the church go through the great tribulation? There's one thing certain of course we can say at the beginning tonight, that every believer suffers tribulation. Before the Lord Jesus Christ left this world, you might remember, some of you, in the 16th chapter of John, isn't it, the end of the gospel, at the end of the chapter, just before he went to the [00:11:01] cross, just before that remarkable prayer in chapter 17, he said to his disciples, left behind in the world, he says, in the world ye shall have tribulation. We have good cheer, I have overcome the world. Apostle Paul in writing to the fifth chapter, in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans, he says, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, not only so, we rejoice in tribulations also. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. And there are many other scriptures that tell us that the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will have to pass through tribulation, and I would suggest that every one of you here tonight, [00:12:06] every one of you, without

exception, who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, know something about trials, and difficulties, and problems, and tribulations in our lives here.

In the world ye shall have tribulation. They that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, the Bible says. So as Christians, there's nothing in the Bible to say that we're going to have as Christians a bed of roses. The Bible seems to suggest that as believers in the present day, we suffer because righteousness suffers today. If righteousness suffers, then the Lord's people will suffer. So then, let's be clear on that point, shall we? That every believer in some way or another [00:13:06] finds circumstances of affliction and trial crossing their path. In the world ye shall have tribulation. But that is not the great tribulation. We've got to be careful, I think, to distinguish between the tribulation that crosses the path of the believer today, and what the Lord Jesus speaks about as the great tribulation. If you're interested to look this up yourselves, you'll find the term used twice in the 24th chapter of Matthew, and once in Revelation chapter 7. The expression The Great Tribulation. We are given to see a company in the 7th chapter of the book of Revelation, a Gentile company. And the one who is speaking says, these are they who have come out of [00:14:10] The Great Tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The Great Tribulation. Now every believer, I repeat, has tribulation, trials.

But is it right to say, is it right to say that believers will go through The Great Tribulation?

That's our question, isn't it? That's our point tonight. Will the church go through The Great Tribulation? Well now, that's a question that has to be faced this evening in our little talk together. Now then, one of the things I want to say about this Great Tribulation, [00:15:04] I should say that if you want to read about it very, very carefully and in detail, and I would suggest you do, when you've got some time, read from chapter 6 to about chapter 16 of the book of Revelation. There you'll find, you'll read about some judgments, seals, trumpets, vials.

Of these seven seals that are unloosed, there are certain judgments falling upon the earth, which I would say were maybe of a providential nature.

But as we go through the book, these judgments increase in severity, and when you come to these [00:16:04] seven vials, I want you to notice this, when you come to these seven vials, the Spirit of God says, the vials of the wrath of God, vials of the wrath of God.

Now my dear friend, this Great Tribulation that we are talking about tonight will not consist of providential judgments. It will consist of definite, clear wrath from God upon a world that has thrown aside every restraint and refused to bow the knee to the Christ of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's wrath that this day of Tribulation is characterized by, not providential judgments, but divine wrath.

[00:17:02] It may be, as we were saying here tonight, that Israel shall be the center maybe of this matter, I'm sure she is. Do you remember what they said when they crucified the Messiah? They said, His blood be upon us and our children.

And for a long, long time now, that nation has suffered, suffered, but they're going to suffer again. They're going to pass through this time of Jacob's trouble. Unparalleled, we repeat.

Yes, the world will feel the repercussions of this awful day. I have no doubt about that. Why is it that we are trying to emphasize that these judgments are not providential, [00:18:03] but are the wrath of

God upon the Christ-rejecting world? I tell you why. We've asked the question tonight, will the church go through the Great Tribulation? If I may speak about myself for a moment. If, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, if, as a Christian whose hopes are centered in Christ, and who has found all his blessing in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, if I'm going to go through the Great Tribulation, there's a question mark against the cross. There's a question mark against the efficacy and the value of the death of Christ. [00:19:03] I wonder, my dear friends tonight, if we're all aware of the place in which Christians have because of the death of Christ. Again, to turn to the fifth chapter of Romans, the Apostle says, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath. Saved from wrath through him.

Oh, I don't trust me know what it is to be justified. Justified. Paul likes to use the word justified. Justified by grace. Justified by blood. Justified by faith.

Oh yes, if I'm going to suffer the wrath of God in the Great Tribulation, there's a question mark against the efficacy and the value of the death of Christ. [00:20:01] And I, as a believer, can see no question mark. No question mark against the death of Christ at the cross. Fellow believer in the Lord Jesus, all your blessings, all that you have of eternal value finds its center, finds its basis in the work that was done on Calvary's cross.

Two thousand years ago, he took my place upon the cross. He bore the judgment that I should have borne. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. He that heareth my word, believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. In the light of the work of Christ, I say, [00:21:03] no believer, no child of God, shall pass through that season of unparalleled wrath that will fall upon this world. I don't trust we got that first point. It's a simple one. It's the simplest point in my little discourse tonight, but oh, how important it is. Do we really understand, my fellow believer tonight, of the matter of being justified and brought near, always sometimes saying so near, so very near to God, nearer we couldn't be. For in the person of his son, I am as near as he.

He took my place, that I might have his place up there of acceptance. Now I ask you, if that's true, [00:22:07] if that is true, could it be, could it be that any believer in the Lord Jesus will have to suffer the wrath to come? These Thessalonian believers that we've read about tonight were young believers, just young believers in the Lord Jesus. There were three weeks there were three weeks ago when Paul wrote this letter, they had been converted. They were converted to the truth that the Lord was coming, turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven, our deliverer from the wrath to come, from the wrath to come. These Thessalonian believers had no doubt in their mind that they would never see the wrath of God, they knew the deliverer from the coming wrath. [00:23:06] I do trust we all know that tonight. I do trust we're not amongst those who tremble at the thought of what's coming upon this world, because my friend, let me assure you, when these awful judgments fall upon this world, we believers in the Lord Jesus will not be here, will not be here.

I have no doubt about it, the more I read the Bible, the more I read what Paul has to say, no believer will be here upon earth, no believer, no Christian believer, anyway, I better be careful, there will be other believers, but not the church, no member of the body of Christ, no believer will be here on this earth when these terrible days of wrath fall upon this world for the simple reason we look at the cross and we say he took the guilty [00:24:04] culprit's place, he suffered in our stead. For man, oh miracle of grace, for man the Savior bled.

Well now, how are we going to escape this, this tribulation? How are we going to escape these terrible days that are going to fall upon this earth? Well as I said before, these Thessalonian believers, they were very, they were very much taken up from the very commencement of their Christianity, not only with the fact of their being converted from idols to serve the living and true God, but they had been converted to the truth, they were waiting for his son from heaven. Let me assure you my friend, although 1987 years have rolled by, thank God the church are [00:25:06] still waiting for his son from heaven. I'm waiting for his son from heaven, I do trust we all are on the tiptoe of expectation waiting for his son from heaven. These believers at Corinth had learned something about the day when the Lord Jesus shall come, note the words will you, when the Lord Jesus shall come with his saints, w-i-t-h, with his saints. You know, before the flood, before the flood, there was a man, lived the seventh from Adam, Enoch, and he wrote and he said, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, [00:26:07] Enoch, long time ago since he lived, oh yes the Lord Jesus Christ is coming with all his own, with his saints, with the church, they're going to be with him when he takes up the kingdom, takes up the reins of government, but ah look what was happening to these believers at Thessalonica, oh they were troubled, they were cast down in spirit, they were getting anxious because some of the believers had fallen asleep, in other words, they had died. Perhaps you might just take a note of that, that in the Bible in a general way, when believers are said to die, they are said rather to fall asleep, fall asleep. [00:27:07] Some of their company had fallen asleep, dead in Christ if you like, and they were very very much concerned, very much concerned as to whether these believers who had been laid to rest in a grave, buried, that they would miss this wonderful day when the Lord Jesus Christ came with all his saints. They were a little bit concerned lest they miss that wonderful day, and they were sorrowing, sorrowing because they had lost some of their company, and they thought, well they thought that they were going to lose out, lose out. Now the apostle says to them, we don't sorrow as those who have no hope, [00:28:01] and I want you to listen to these words, if we believe on him, if we believe on him that, I better quote it, I better read it, hadn't I, for this, for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus, note the words, will God bring with him.

I hope you just catch on to those words, if we believe on him who died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

What he is saying is this, there's no doubt, you don't need to sorrow, you don't need to be careful [00:29:02] and care worn. Those believers who have died, they'll be there all right when Jesus comes with all his saints, they won't be missing, everyone will be there when Jesus comes to display the triumphs of his grace, when he displays the trophies of his love, everyone will be there, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, with Christ that is, with Christ, there's no doubt, even those who have been put in the graves and buried, they'll be there when he comes out with all his saints, no doubt about that. Now then, what you're going to say to me tonight, well all right now, but if they've been put in the graves, if they've been buried, how are they going to get there? How are they going to get there? How are they going to get [00:30:06] there to be able to come out with him in glory? And this brings us to the truth, that we've mentioned once or twice this week already, that we believers very often refer to it as the rapture, now you don't find the word rapture in your authorised version, you won't find it anywhere in the authorised version, but we did read tonight, perhaps you noticed it, we did read the words caught up, wrapped up, if you like, r-a-p-t, you could give it snatched up if you like, I remember some years ago, looking at a translation of the scriptures, and the [00:31:04] writer said, he said swept up, well you can take which one you like, the authorised version before you tonight is caught up, caught up, and so the apostle says here, for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, which we which are alive and remain

unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent, not go before them that are asleep. We here tonight believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we might be here when the Lord comes, we might be here alive upon earth when the Lord comes.

You know I believe my friend, my Christian friend, I believe in the eminence of the Lord's return, I believe he may come at any moment, there's nothing, nothing that I can see that should bar [00:32:10] this wonderful truth of the Lord's coming for his saints. Note what I've just said there will you, the coming of the Lord for, F-O-R, we've been talking about the coming of the Lord with his saints, but before he comes with them, he must come F-O-R for them, and so we get this word for the Lord, we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, yes you might be here when he comes, I might be here when he comes. Many of us who are believers in the Lord Jesus, we like to think that we will be here when he comes. When the apostle talks about this in another place, [00:33:02] you know he says, listen he says, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, all be changed, we shall not all sleep, some of us, some of the saints of God, some of the church of God will be here upon earth when the Lord comes. But listen, because these Thessalonians were worrying, concerned about those that had fallen asleep, he says, oh well, we which are alive and remain, we shan't go before them that are asleep. If anybody's going to have precedence at all, is going to be the sleeping saints, the sleeping saints, it might be momentary, it might be the twinkling of an eye, but we which are alive shall not go before them that are asleep, and so we get this happy word [00:34:03] for the Lord himself, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ, listen, the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, so shall we be forever with the Lord.

It may be, I don't know, maybe I'm talking to someone who's never heard this before, I don't know, I don't know, I have met quite a lot of believers in my life that haven't any knowledge of what we are talking about tonight, you know my friend, it's here in the Bible, it's here in the Bible, it's not a matter of something that somebody suddenly thought about [00:35:06] a few hundred years ago, oh no, no, no, my dear friend, it's what the apostle taught in the time of the Thessalonians, it's what he taught in the very beginning of the dispensation of this era, what he taught at the very outset of Christianity was this, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, do you know that, is that your bright and blessed hope, you know, if I hadn't that hope, if I hadn't that hope, I'd be of all men most miserable, if I thought I had to exist down here and pass through all the carnage of the world, of the of the great tribulation, well I wouldn't have a very big smile on my face, I can assure you, the reason why believers can sing and the reason why believers can [00:36:03] triumph for the day when the Lord shall come, and I say again, this world is going to get a rude awakening along, a very rude awakening along, may not be long, but every believer shall disappear, they shall disappear, just you think, here is a family, next door to them is a family of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christians, maybe they've said, funny lot they are those Christians, don't do this and don't do the other, well you know the day will come when in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye they'll go, they'll go, do you believe it, do you believe it, you know the other night, the other night [00:37:03] we were talking about a prophecy from the book of Daniel, and we were noticing that part of it was fulfilled prophecy, and we were saying together that every single detail that was said and written hundreds of years before, took place exactly as it was said, exactly as it was said, the Bible prophesied as to where the Son of God should be born, how he should be born, and we were looking through the night at a prophecy that told when, when the Lord Jesus Christ would die, and every detail of those promises and those prophecies have been fulfilled to the letter, well if that's so, why should I doubt, why should I doubt [00:38:06] why should I doubt the fulfillment of unfulfilled prophecy, I have no

doubts, I hope you haven't got any doubts, it may be that the Lord will come very soon. The coming of the Lord for his saints, for the church has nothing to do with the happenings in the world, not really, we do of course say well things are getting pretty rough, we often say well I don't know what's going to happen next, many of us we see the formation of the AEC, the Treaty of Rome, some of us have lived to see the fig tree putting forth its leaves, many of us have had the remarkable experience of seeing an Israel nation set up in this world, [00:39:11] many of us are bewildered as we think of the the fears of men, think of how men are so fearful today of nuclear energy, what will it do, Chernobyl and all these things have got people afraid, got people afraid, well we're not concerned really as believers with these signs and these signs that we say, no no, but, but we can't help but say to ourselves the coming of the Lord must be getting very near, very near, coming of the Lord for his church is not connected with times and seasons and happenings, it can happen at any moment, but there are many things that [00:40:02] make us think today as to the nearness, the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Prophecy, we were talking about prophecy the other night, prophecy, the coming of the Lord for his church is not part of prophecy, people think it is, but it's not, it's not part of prophecy at all, it's the conclusion of the church period, it's the conclusion of section 6 on the diagram, the conclusion of the church period, and then prophecy begins again.

I remember a brother once telling me that when the church goes to heaven, the clock will begin to tick again, the clock of prophecy will begin to tick again, it stopped for nearly 2,000 years, tick up again, when the church is gone, when the saints are gone, it'll start off ticking again, [00:41:04] God will revert to his dealings with his earthly people Israel, and they'll have to pass through the great tribulation, but the church won't be here, the church won't be here, well he's coming, he's coming, oh thank God he's coming, you know there were days, you know when I was a little chap, just a little fellow, not very old, I heard a lot about this, you know a lot about this, very often I, before I was converted, I was very, very fearful, very often somehow, I wasn't prepared, I wasn't ready, I hadn't trusted Christ as my Saviour, I hope we are all ready tonight, the Lord Jesus says be also ready, be also ready, are you waiting for him, the Lord himself, he's not going to send an archangel [00:42:04] either is he, he's not going to send any, any wonderful heavenly being, the Bible says the Lord himself, oh I'm glad about that, the Lord that I've known, the Lord that I've known day by day in present grace, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, archangel's voice, the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first, we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so shall we forever be with the Lord, does that hope not brighten your heart, my fellow saint tonight, does that hope not cheer your heart, coming of the Lord draws near, I trust we're all ready, I trust we're all on the tiptoe of [00:43:05] expectation, he may come tonight, no other reason, no good reason, no good reason at all, when the church is complete, the last stone is put in the building, the bride is prepared for her husband, he'll take her to glory, Lord himself, lovely words aren't they, the Lord himself, nobody else. In the 14th chapter of John, you know these words I'm quite sure, words of the Lord Jesus, he said this, let your heart be troubled, let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me, in my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, [00:44:07] that where I am, there ye may be also, he's coming for his saints.

I remember somebody saying to me once, oh well of course that doesn't really mean what you say it means, and they said it really means when a believer dies, that's what it's all about, the 14th chapter of John, well of course that cannot be, because when a believer in the Lord Jesus dies, he goes to be with the Lord, depart to be with Christ, which is far better, in the 14th of John he says, I will come again and receive you unto myself, when a believer passes away, absent from the body, present with the Lord, [00:45:02] but when the Lord comes, I will come again and receive you unto myself, in the

14th chapter of John, those well-known words often read at funerals in one place or another, they have, they are a reference, they are a reference to what we are talking about tonight, from the fourth chapter of first Thessalonians, the rapture of the church, well now I'll have to leave that passage, I hope I made that clear, I hope I made it clear, I hope you'll leave this meeting tonight my dear believer in the Lord Jesus, with a hope that you never had before, with a hope that you never just thought about before, any moment, any moment, maybe it might make you more concerned about that next door neighbour who's unsaved, it might give you a greater concern about those folks you know who are lost, [00:46:04] because when the Lord Jesus takes his church to glory, oh dear me, those that are left behind, left behind, they'll have to go through that day of wrath, the day of tribulation, they didn't believe the truth, if they didn't believe the truth, they'll believe a lie, or be concerned my dear Christian friend, about your friends who are not saved, well now I want to turn now to the second epistle, I shall have to ask you to be very patient tonight, please I seem to have a lot I want to say, but in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, something else had happened to these believers at Thessalonica, and Paul had put the first matter right, wherefore comfort ye one another with these words, and he put the matter right about the sleeping saints, oh Lord they'll be all right, they'll come first when the Lord comes, then [00:47:04] somebody had come along, and you know these Thessalonian believers, they were suffering because of their faith in Christ, they were going through tribulation, going through problems, meeting opposition, we all meet opposition don't we, as believers in the Lord Jesus, and they were just doing that, they were having a rough time, because they trusted in Christ, and somebody had come along and said, you know you Thessalonian believers, what's happening to you is, that you're going through the day of the Lord, you're suffering the day of the Lord, somebody it would seem, had even even forged the apostle's signature, and put it on the bottom of a letter, to lead these saints astray, to lead them up the [00:48:01] garden path, and make them think, that the problems they were going through, were that sufferings in the trials of the day of the Lord. Notice the words will you, in the chapter, I think it's very very important that we get the idea, that he be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letters from us, as that the day of the Lord is present. You'll have to beg my pardon, I beg my pardon tonight, I have altered that a little bit, because it's a little bit of a textual change, that I have made according to other translations of the scriptures, which are fairly consistent, the day of the Lord is present. They were given to think, and to believe, that the trials they were passing through, were the trials of the day of the Lord. [00:49:06] And once again of course, they were getting all upset, and getting all concerned, and anxious about things. But you know, the beginning of this chapter is very good, I haven't quoted it, I'll quote it again to you. Now we beg you, we beseech your brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus, and our gathering together unto him. Now I'll tell you, that's a reference, to what we've just been talking about, the rapture. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him. Now what he's saying is this, look you Thessalonian believers, I beg you to think, I beg you, I beseech you, by the coming of Christ, and our gathering together to him, that you're not going to be cast down in your mind. Putting it very simply, [00:50:05] it's this he says, it can't possibly be the day of the Lord. It can't possibly be the day of tribulation, because the Lord hasn't come yet. Because the Lord hasn't come yet.

Oh yes, get the argument? Do you get the burden of the Apostle's argument? He uses it as a lever, and he says it can't be the day of the Lord that you're going through. By the way, the day of the Lord and the great tribulation is more or less the same thing. You can't be doing that, going through that he says, because the Lord hasn't come yet. This of course is this of course is underlining what we've been already saying tonight, that the Church of God, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall not be here, shall not be here, when the day of the Lord [00:51:02] dawns. So Paul says it cannot be the day of the Lord, because you're still here, because you're still here. The Church is still here, cannot be the

day of the Lord. Then he goes on to say, well it can't be the day of the Lord, because first of all, A, there must be a falling away, and the revelation, the revealing of the man of sin. Man of sin.

Well now, this could keep us going for a long time tonight. Just I want to say this about it, the falling away means apostasy. Just means, all it means is, the word apostasy means a total giving up of everything that we've held precious before. And you know my friend, even Christendom, even Christendom, they're going to give up, throw overboard, all the precious truths [00:52:10] that we have held so dear for many a long century. The falling away. Man of sin.

Well now, this man of sin, he's called the Antichrist, in another place.

And I want you to notice that, that the man of sin, and the falling away, stand and fall together. They stand together. The Apostle Paul, Apostle John, in his epistle, he says something like this, already there are many Antichrists. Already there are many Antichrists. You listen my dear friend, to the voices of many in this land of ours, pulling this old book to [00:53:01] pieces. We don't believe in the virgin birth. We don't believe the Lord rose from the dead. We don't believe in atonement. We don't believe in this. And they're tearing our precious bible to bits. Even now, there are many Antichrists. But when the liar comes, he shall deny that Jesus is the Christ. That's Jewish apostasy. The Antichrist shall deny the Father and the Son.

That's Christian apostasy. By the way, the Father and the Son is Christianity.

The Father revealed in the Son is Christianity. And there's going to be a total giving up of all [00:54:03] this. Whether it be Jewish or whether it be Christian, there'll be a complete apostasy from it all. And the man of sin shall appear, the man of sin, the man of sin. Who is he? Well, I don't know. When the Lord Jesus was here, remember he said, one occasion he says, I came in my Father's name. And you wouldn't believe me. One shall come in his own name, him you will receive, him you will receive, the Antichrist. You can read about him in the 13th chapter of Revelation. It says he has two horns like a lamb, but he roars like a dragon. Antichrist.

End of the book of Revelation, the false prophet. The 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, the king who regards not the God of his fathers. [00:55:07] Makes us think, doesn't it, that this Antichrist, this lawless one will come out of the ranks of Judaism. He'll be a Jew. Maybe, I'm not going to be dogmatic, but it does say he regards not the God of his fathers. The Antichrist. Oh, he's going to catch everybody out, you know. Oh yes.

He's going to catch everybody out. They'd all worship this man. He'll set up a beast. He'll set up an image of the other beast, the man we were talking about the other night, the head of the revived Roman Empire. And he'll call men to worship the image that he makes, just like Daniel chapter three. False prophet, the Antichrist, the lawless one, the man of sin. This world is just waiting for people like that, you know. This world just wants a man to put things right. And if they can [00:56:05] get a man that shoots them, here he comes. This is the man that's going to put things right. Head of the Roman Empire and his lieutenant, the false prophet, the Jewish leader. But oh my friend, they're going to be terrible days, terrible days. The mark of the beast, the mark of the beast. If you haven't got the mark of the beast, you won't be able to bar yourself. They're going to be terrible days, terrible days. But Paul says it cannot be the day of the Lord. The man of sin hasn't come yet. The apostasy hasn't come yet. And then he goes on to say, I want to finish up with this tonight. He says in this chapter, For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. Oh no, I'm sorry, the verse before. I'm sorry, the verse

before. And now ye know, listen to it, what withholdeth.

[00:57:10] Shall we read it this way? But ye know what restraineth. What is it, dear friend, that's holding back the tide of evil today? What do you think it is that's holding back the tide of corruption? The mystery of iniquity doth already work. Remember last night we said that word mystery was a secret, wasn't it? Something not public yet, not public yet.

There's something which holding things back. Well, people say God in his providential sway over nations. Well, okay, that's all right. God is still on the throne, thank God he's still on the throne. But when the apostle says that which restraineth, I believe he's referring to the [00:58:09] he's referring to the presence of the church of God in this world. These days will not come to pass until the Lord comes and takes the church to glory. The church is here, the restrainer, holding back, checking the tide of evil. And then he says in the next verse, he says, he who now restrains will restrain until he be taken out of the way. That and he, that I believe is the church. He is the spirit of God that dwells in the church. The spirit of God dwells in the church. The other night we were talking about the second [00:59:02] chapter of Acts about the spirit of God coming down on the day of Pentecost and filled all the house where they were sitting. Spirit of God took up his dwelling place. Habitation of God filled the spirit. That and he are restraining. Salt of the earth, the preservative. But when the church of God goes and the spirit of God goes as well, the day of wrath, the day of tribulation, Jacob's trouble and all connected with it will come in. But we won't be here. We won't be here. We'll be in the glory. We'll be in the glory. The church is here holding things back. I don't trust tonight, my dear friend, I've said sufficient to convince you. I don't want to convince you by argument. That's not what I've got in my mind. Just by looking simply at the [01:00:01] scriptures of truth. We've asked the question tonight, will the church go through the great tribulation? I think you'll be agreeing with me tonight. But I do hope, I do hope and pray that you go home and get your Bibles out and read it for yourselves. Don't take my word for it. Go home and read it for yourselves and you can come to a conclusion whether I was right or wrong. But you look it up for yourselves. I think you'll find if you're prayerful about it, you'll come to the conclusion that God could never put you into a circumstance of the wrath of God because all the wrath was expended at Calvary's cross upon his beloved son on your behalf and [01:01:01] mine. You know, the verse that I just mentioned to you in the epistle to the Thessalonians, just one little point please. Our deliverer from the wrath to come. More than once this week we've been talking about a little Greek preposition, ek. We were talking about the church, ecclesia, called out of. And when the apostle says this in the epistle to the Thessalonians, he says, listen to it, our deliverer out from the coming wrath, out from the coming wrath.

Well, I better stop there. I don't trust my dear friend that what we have said tonight will be of value and of profit to your eyes. It's my earnest prayer that your hope might be centered [01:02:02] in the Lord Jesus Christ, the precious savior who is coming soon.