

The All Sufficiency of Christ

Part 3

Speaker	Michael Johnson
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[00:00:01] I would like to read some passages from the Epistle to the Thessalonians.

One passage first, in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17, Acts chapter 17 and verse 1.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 1 and verse 5.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 4 and verse 13.

First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 1 and verse 3.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him, [00:01:11] that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither 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 there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, all that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that when I was with you I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time, [00:02:02] for the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will be taken out of the way, and then that wicked be revealed.

Before we look at those verses, can we sing another hymn, hymn 140?

About two years ago on the quayside at Newcastle a monument disappeared and quite a lot of us wrote to the local authority because the monument was at a point on the quayside called Sandgate [00:03:10] and on it were written these words, it said, On May the 23rd, 1755, John Wesley stood at five o'clock in the morning and preached to 5,000 miners from the words, He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

I don't know whether any of you have ever read Wesley's journals, they're interesting and they're intensely challenging, I commend them to you, they're challenging because a man who put in a hundred odd thousand miles on horseback to make sure that God's word was made known in his parish is worth listening to at least, [00:04:06] but it's not only that, it's what happened when he came into places and he came and he preached a very plain gospel, no great invitations, no great music or anything like that, but simple plain statements of the scripture, Christ died for our sins, Christ rose

again, Christ is a saviour to all those who call upon him, that was a very plain message and it actually accounts how he first came into Newcastle, the only reason I know this is about three or four years ago, I was ignorant of it and a great shame that I was ignorant of it, but it was some kind of anniversary, 275th or 290th or something like this, and the local council saw in it a great opportunity for tourism, [00:05:04] so they advertised it wisely and widely and they provided some very good guides and Audrey, my wife and I went on a tour and our guide was a believer and he was absolutely marvellous really and they put these little plaques up saying John Wesley did this and if you go into one of the main streets, Northumberland Street by Marks and Sparks, they've put a plaque up and it says, I can't remember the date for that one, it says John Wesley erected his first orphanage here and we were taken round some of the parts of the city we didn't even know existed and at one point we found ourselves in the shadow of the cathedral and there was something approaching a bridal way in width and this man being a believer [00:06:01] is really excellent at this point, he said John Wesley came and he started to preach a simple gospel and he cleaned up the city, they were dirty physically and he said down the centre here there would be an open sewer and he said there would be houses here that would go up to three or four storeys and you'd have a family in the room and he said John Wesley came into this, but it wasn't just physical dirt, morally the thing was like our world today, the nation had lost its moral helm and immorality was rife and Wesley began to preach the gospel and it made an impact and it began to clean up the place and it's quite interesting, you can check this out in history, there has never ever been a true moral revival without the word of God, it brings in its wake a moral revival for the nation, many people who don't get blessed eternally [00:07:05] are affected by the preaching of the gospel and in his journals Wesley describes his first coming into Newcastle and he came down over a deep fell and those in the Newcastle area will know it's called Sheriff Hill where the mayor of the city used to go out to meet the incoming sheriff for the assizes that were held and it was late November and it had been snowing, he came over the hill and the light was beginning to go and he looked down over this place and the snow was on everything and there were a few lights in houses and he thought to himself what a beautiful place and how quiet and orderly it looks but in fact when he got in there he found it was absolutely awful, it wasn't just the immorality, it was people who hadn't enough to live on and all he did was day by day and from early morning till night [00:08:04] he went round and he preached the gospel and people began to be saved, a lot of people got saved and this man graphically described something that's recorded and he said the Anglicans got very upset about this because they saw their congregation in many cases draining away so they started to try to put a spanner in his spokes and on one occasion when he was preaching somebody stopped him right in full flow and said to him how do you know that the gospel that you preach is the true gospel and you could not fault his answer he said the gospel that I preach enables people to face death without a qualm and people who can face death without a qualm people who die well are people who know where they're going and they know they're not going to face God over one sin at all [00:09:01] you can't argue with that can you, it's the king of terrors and it puts people in fear, people who trust Christ can calmly face death I was reading a very interesting book recently called, it's a novel but the framework of it is historically true it's about the reformation in Spain and the Roman Catholics, the Inquisition, the Holy Order as they call it was ruthless in the way that they put it down but there are some marvellous accounts of how believers died well that's what happened in Thessalonica, Paul came into Thessalonica, he was only there for three Sabbath days he may have been there longer but he wasn't there for Sabbath days and he went in and he got back to the bedrock [00:10:01] he spoke of the scriptures and he says Christ died, Christ rose again, the person that we preach in the gospel is the true Messiah and plain statements, plain facts of scripture made their impact upon the consciences and we read the words about the fact that many turned to the Lord, great multitude of the Hellenists and not a few of the chief women that's exactly the kind of thing that would happen with Wesley, that's the best way, when you preach the gospel it's very nice to be

able to speak of your personal experience and I wouldn't diminish the value of that but the preaching of the gospel is telling people who God is, what God is like and it's made known in the incoming, the life and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the framework of the gospel [00:11:01] but it wasn't just the preaching of the gospel, it's the way that Paul speaks about the impact that it had on them there's a proverb and it says the lips of the righteous feed many and over the years I've proved that, people have been speaking and they've made a comment and it's been food for my soul and it's opened the door to other things and some years ago a brother well known by many of you here was speaking in our local meeting we have a Saturday evening address from October to April inclusive and we invite someone from outside to come and speak to us and this brother was speaking upon the use of the word which is variously translated in our authorised transform, change [00:12:02] and at this particular moment he was speaking on the mount of transfiguration in the gospel of Luke and it's remarkable there because it tells us that there were two others with the Lord, Moses and Elias and our authorised says and they spake of his decease and he just made an observation on the word decease he said the word decease it sort of seems final but he said actually it is the word exodus or exodus as it is in the language of the new testament and exodus is going out and if you say somebody's gone out you say where's he gone and you say why has he gone and you say is he going to come back again and as he finished that he just made a reference he said this is the word which equates to the title of the second book of the old testament exodus he says it's quite interesting to have a look at the word which is the opposite to that eisodos which is the entering in [00:13:07] it only occurs about four times in the new testament and one of them we read in the Thessalonian epistle chapter one what manner of entering in we had unto you when God's word enters in it radically changes things and this is what he says to them he says how you turn to God from idols they didn't turn from idols without turning to God when they turned to God it transformed them and it wasn't only that in turning to God it says to serve the living and the true God and every believer has God given ability and if all of us used our God given ability as it is intended what a transformation there would be in the Christian scene but he doesn't only say that he says to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead [00:14:09] even Jesus who delivered us from coming wrath what a remarkable transformation the entering in of the word of God had and a little higher up he says we don't need to speak about you because the impact of your Christian testimony is spread abroad and they didn't have the avenues of communication that we have today and when you look at that you say Satan would be pretty concerned to stop a testimony like that wouldn't he where people had been so transformed we don't use the words do we today very much turn to God but it always brings back something it's an individual case and certainly the brother who spoke that night was helped to God in the centre of Newcastle there still is a big area which has cobblestones called the big market B I double G [00:15:03] and until about 1978 when the police gradually forced us out we used to preach in the big market and it was quite a miscellany right on one end and we had a Pentecostal group and then there was a fine open meeting brother who was an excellent preacher of the gospel he used to preach on his own but we used to stand with him he preached a clear gospel he's in heaven now and then we had another mission and then we had the Catholic Evidence Guild and then there were ourselves and then there was another evangelical church and then there were the communists and right at the back there were some strange folk with long flowing beards called British Israel who believe that England composes the ten lost tribes but one evening there was a brother who always stood with us and he never preached very much at all but this evening he was the first to get up I've never heard anybody preach in the open air [00:16:02] and for that matter I've never heard anybody preach indoors on this verse but this is the verse that he preached on to him that works the reward is not reckoned of grace but of debt but to him that works not but believes on him that justifies the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness well when the Catholics used to come they were a bit sort of more organised than the rest of us and they had a kind

of a stand and it had a big pole on it that said Catholic Evidence Guild and I'm not a Geordie I've lived there for 40 years so I wouldn't attempt to repeat it as this man did but he used to walk in front of it his name was Turnbull he was an ageing man well into his 60s and he used to say when they got to the top of the big market and they were carting things down he would say hear the church hear the church but he listened to those words that night and the next three Lord's Days he didn't turn up and on the fourth Lord's Day when he turned up [00:17:10] he said I have turned to God marvellous words those I have turned to God and in what years remained of his life there was evidence that what that brother had preached on that night brought that man to God Satan would be very concerned to stop a testimony like that wouldn't he and what I want to do very simply and very briefly is to carry on a theme that we've looked at this week and this is this matter of the all sufficiency of Christ we for those who have not been here we looked we're looking at the New Testament epistles where there were difficulties and looking at the way that Paul meets them and in every occasion he meets them by a presentation of Christ we looked on Monday night at the Corinthian epistle the first epistle [00:18:06] with all its problems and in no way could you have said about Corinth what he says here about the Thessalonians he couldn't have said your testimony is spread abroad so that we have no need to speak about you there were many things about the Corinthian testimony that was anything but a testimony of Christ but when it comes to chapter 3 of the second epistle he says of them that company who had been marked by so many sad features he says of them ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ written by us not with ink but with the spirit of the living God not on tables of stone but on the fleshy tables of the house how did that transformation take place it took place by a simple ministry of Christ and particularly the application of the cross of Christ [00:19:02] and we looked at that as the way of meeting a problem and something that we might have thought was beyond recovery by the goodness of God that ministry of Christ brought an assembly to what all local assemblies should be an epistle of Christ last evening we looked at the Colossian epistle and noted the fact that the Colossian assembly happily carrying on as it was was in danger of being influenced by philosophy vain deceit Judaism with all its rules and all its commandments and all the feasts and all the rest of the things and particularly this matter that comes on later of superstition sort of covering up things as if there are things which are too holy for some and only available to others [00:20:01] how does Paul meet it does he start off with words of oratory he certainly was a man who was powerfully able to argument doesn't do anything like that at all what he speaks about is the greatness of Christ and so in chapter 2 you have him saying these words about the Lord Jesus Christ in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and then he makes that amazing statement he says ye are complete in him it's not the speaking about the cross essentially in Colossians 2 what he's doing is speaking about our association with a risen Christ and that's the way of meeting what could have been a serious problem in that assembly coming to the words then that we've read Satan would be very concerned to begin to hinder that kind of testimony if anything Satan is set dead against [00:21:02] is a true assembly testimony to the greatness of the Lord Jesus and he does it in a very insidious way if you go to Acts chapter 20 where Paul calls the Ephesian elders there must have been at least two elders not one elder elders and overseers or the word bishop as it's used were in a local assembly and there were at least two because elders were called over from Ephesus to Miletus and Paul talks about himself first talks about his own character I mean this is a challenge to me and it's a challenge to any of you who attempt to serve the Lord in a public way it's absolutely imperative that anyone who attempts to serve the Lord is in some degree marked by the things which he speaks about [00:22:01] it's not a matter of looking at things in a book and then coming and retailing them out when Paul speaks to them about the content of his ministry at least two times in that chapter he says I have shown you what he's saying is I practically am in the good of the things that I tell you I'm not somebody who urges you to do things but I'm not marked by them myself he says I have shown you how that labouring he ought to support those that are weak but he speaks particularly about the

content of his ministry says four things about it and the first thing he says about it is he preached the gospel of the grace of God a gospel which had right at its heart the unfettered grace of God somebody was saying recently who'd been brought to God from a church that was absolutely dead and where they were urged all was to do she said the thing which I find most astounding of all is that the greatest blessing rests upon me and I haven't to do one thing for it [00:23:11] the gospel of the grace of God but he speaks then the second thing about the preaching and teaching of the kingdom of God and although in the words that we read in Acts 17 don't specifically refer to the kingdom of God what the people who were opposing and that was a sad thing wasn't it moment the gospel begins to take a hold Satan the words in our authorised are not nearly as graphic as the actual words that I use when it says certain lewd fellows of the base of sort when you say they were of the lowest rabble that sort of represents the people and Satan began to stir them up but what they said about the teaching and preaching of Paul and those that were with them was he teaches another king even Jesus which seems to say very plainly to me [00:24:14] that what Paul taught there in addition to the things which are specified is the truth about the kingdom of God now there are a lot of aspects of the kingdom of God and I was saying recently that where we are if somebody suggests a reading on the kingdom of God immediately you can almost see question marks coming on people's faces are we in the kingdom of God does Matthew 5 apply to us and at a reading recently where this sort of vacillating was evident from the beginning there was a brother said right at the beginning he quoted a verse we were looking at last night he says don't let's have any doubt at all because there's one verse in the New Testament if there are no others and it says very plainly that we are in the kingdom this is Colossians 1 verse 13 where it says who has translated us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the son of the father's love [00:25:11] beautiful words but that's what we are in the kingdom but there's no doubt also that when you teach about the kingdom of God it's looking on to a day when Christ will reign supreme righteousness will be the hallmark of the day but all this sad world with all its deficiencies with all its shortages will disappear and if you read Psalm 72 it's absolutely beautiful some while ago I was listening to someone speaking on Psalm 72 where it speaks of all the richness that will mark that day once Christ is enthroned and godly order prevails and he made a comment on where it says handfuls of corn in the tops of the mountains and what he said was there will be a diminishing yield in the millennium [00:26:10] and I'd actually been reading the book of Genesis a few weeks previously and it says of the seven years of harvest that the ground brought forth by handfuls what it meant is there was absolute abundance when it talks about handfuls it's not talking about handfuls as compared with bagfuls that we might think of it's talking about handfuls which mean absolute plenty there won't be any diminishing when the Lord Jesus here the earth will yield her increase well if you listen to those kind of things what an answer to the fact that many saints of God have before us gone through the mill and laid down their lives and many still do it today where's it going to find an answer it's going to find an answer in that coming day of glory [00:27:04] because the Lord Jesus will gladly identify us with him in the day of his glory and we have that precious opportunity of sharing with him now in his rejection. Satan came along and how we don't know but the insinuation that was made those who die they're going to miss that coming glory and it seemed logical from the Old Testament scriptures and the answer which is given is a marvellous presentation of Christ in yet another way this time it's in the display of power.

I was at a reading recently at a conference and we were looking at those lovely words in the 17th of John and particularly the early verse, verse 3 is it, where the Lord says as thou hast given him power over all flesh that he might give eternal life to those whom thou hast given him and there were a couple of remarks that was made one was a very good remark and a necessary remark in the light of what some people have said [00:28:18] he said firstly don't let any believer doubt that they have eternal life every believer has eternal life Christ gives eternal life to all those who've been given to him of the

father but the other remark that was made is a very thought provoking one he said the power which is going to subdue the world is the power which is being used now to give eternal life to those who've been given him by his father that's actually taken up in chapter 4 of the epistle and the first words that we read interesting words I would not have you to be ignorant that expression occurs a number of times in the New Testament it's well worth looking at because every time it says I would not have you to be ignorant they're very important passages Romans 11 where it speaks about the predetermining grace of God 1 Corinthians 12 about the body of Christ [00:29:27] and the way that it is worked out practically in the in the ascended head on high in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God giving gifts here and this is very important too and he says I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them who are asleep so he's beginning to address the lie of Satan in these words concerning them who are asleep I've never heard anybody say very much about sleep really it's quite interesting actually that very often when you fly to the books to see what they have to say you find they don't have anything to say about the particular point that you want [00:30:13] but there are two things to say about sleep firstly it's temporary God doesn't intend us always to be sleeping it's a temporary thing in view of waking up for another day of service but the second thing is it's intensely beneficial to sleep and I don't know whether you've ever thought of this but there's a most thought-provoking statement in 2 Corinthians 5 where it speaks about resurrection and Paul says things like this he says we are willing I say rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord read in the original it's you could almost read it like this we are willing I say rather to be away from home out of the body and to be at home with the Lord [00:31:09] it's not just the fact that we're going to be with him we shall be absolutely glad to be there there'll be nothing to make us feel uncomfortable when we're there and we know most of all that the desires of his heart will be satisfied but at the end of that he uses these words he says therefore we labour that whether present or absent we may be well pleasing unto him have you ever asked yourself who's he talking about when he says present or absent when he's talking about present he's talking to use the words of this particular passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 he's talking about we who are alive and remain when he's talking about them who are absent he's talking about those who are with the Lord so they're very much alive whether present or absent that we might be well pleasing unto him and then he actually in verse 14 he actually speaking about the coming of the Lord Jesus with all his saints that expression occurs in the last verse of chapter 3 at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints [00:32:21] so he says in verse 14 if we believe that Jesus died and rose again it is as certain as the fact that Jesus died and rose again that God will bring with him those those who are asleep those who sleep in Jesus I don't know whether you would agree with this but I think that when it speaks about sleeping in Jesus as opposed to in verse 16 the dead in Christ it must be speaking of saints of this day and you can easily check this for yourself in a concordance it's a rather different word for in it's not the same word which is used for in Christ it's the word which usually means through [00:33:09] and what it's saying is this that they sleep through Jesus bringing it we had four children and I can remember taking the babies up and laying them down at night in view of the next day but they were you laid them down to sleep and that's exactly what that verse is saying when I was a very young believer I met a fine brother from the Walsall area called Jack Boot and his two daughters married two brothers in the Lord who were also brothers in the flesh and they ran into problems with their business I don't know the details of it but he used to pace the floor at night and I heard someone say he went to an early grave and I was a young believer so it seemed quite logical to me but then I listened to the late Cecil Richardson speaking on Revelation chapter 1 I am he that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death [00:34:20] and these are not his exact words but this is the gist of what he said he said listen he said no one absolutely no believer will ever go to an early grave and no one will go to a late grave you might say you might say I come from a family that's marked by longevity and my mother lived to 90 and that's the kind of thing that I'm expecting he says no

guarantee at all because you'll never go until he who holds the keys of death says the time has come and you will never stay longer than he who has the keys of death that was much more satisfying wasn't it that's what it means when it says asleep through Jesus he does it he doesn't send an angel to carry saints home to glory it's himself he does it himself asleep through Jesus [00:35:12] the question then arises how is it possible that those who have died their bodies have been put in the grave their soul and their spirit have gone to the Lord how will they be with him when he comes back and from verse 15 to verse 18 it's a parenthesis and that's why I read on into chapter 5 because verse 14 logically carries on in chapter 5 but in the parenthesis there are some marvelous exalted truths and they're particularly connected with the fact not that the Lord Jesus is head of the assembly not that we're associated with him but that in his hands is absolute power when it speaks of the the Lord Jesus as Lord [00:36:02] I'll just break off here I don't know whether any of you ever read a magazine called the Bible League quarterly it's an interesting magazine and it's written to commit people to a total belief in the inerrancy of scripture that's written in their sort of article of association and it's an interesting magazine the historical articles are pretty good but recently the January to March edition they had a go at Darby well I'm not wanting to try to defend Darby I wouldn't defend any individual believer really because you don't know the motives that they do them but when people attack what somebody is trying to say what the scripture says then I think it's worth taking up your pen to point out certain things and I wrote to the editor the first thing I said to him was had he ever considered that never in scripture save once does it speak of the righteousness of Christ you see because you might be very surprised at this but if I said to you tonight do you identify with Martin Luther I would be very sad if not 100% of us said straight away of course we do [00:37:20] he taught justification by faith it's the teaching of scripture thank God for Martin Luther and for his courage and the stand that he took on the scriptures but if I said to you what did he actually mean by the justification you might be a little surprised if I told you that the reformers view of justification is this that when the Lord lived by his perfect keeping of the law he amassed an infinite quantity of righteousness and when you believe some of that righteousness is put on you now it's a striking thing that I know of nowhere in the Bible where it says that what it does say in the Bible and there is not a blessing we have apart from the death of Christ [00:38:10] we are justified by his blood that's Romans 3 we are reconciled by the if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son and there are plain statements in scripture that every blessing we have is traced to the fact that once doing the will of God at tremendous cost he laid down his life for you and for me so it's very important that you stick to a scriptural term the righteousness of God there is one occasion where the righteousness of Christ is spoken of it's totally different have a look in the concordance and find it but it's important that you speak of the righteousness of God so the first thing I wrote to him was I said have you ever noticed that it never speaks of the righteousness of Christ save once in a very special way [00:39:07] but it always speaks of the righteousness of God so he wrote back he says there's a very simple answer to that Christ is God so the righteousness of God is the righteousness of Christ so I wrote back to him in the next letter and amongst the things I tried to say to him it was very sad to write to a reputable editor and have to point out to him that the names and the titles of God in scripture are used in a very meaningful way we might use them haphazardly and I'm sure we all do but have you ever thought of the if you say well they're all interchangeable you might so what this would be appalling to a mind who would imbibe the truth of scriptures would be appalling to say well God is the father so we can change the words and so the cry from the cross would be my father my father why hast thou forsaken me utterly against the whole tenor of scripture it's a remarkable thing that in the Gospels the only time the Lord Jesus ever uses the words my God is when he laid down his life otherwise always upon his lips right from the very beginning to the end were the words my father and when it says here in these verses about him being Lord what it's talking about is absolute authority and absolute power [00:40:28] and so in verse 15 he says this we say unto you by the word of the Lord it's one of the ways that Paul

uses for saying I got it directly from the Lord in heaven he says on about four occasions or five occasions as in 1 Corinthians 11 in relation to the breaking of bread he said I deliver unto you that which also I received of the Lord he got it directly from the Lord in glory and then this is what he got we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent it's a verb which means mainly to sort of go before and it's mostly well represented in English as it is in the interlinear by the word to anticipate or to proceed [00:41:21] they thought by the insinuations that had been made that those who had died were going to miss that coming day of glory Paul says no not only will they not miss it but if there is any precedence they will have precedence and that's what it means when it says shall not prevent them who are asleep and these are the words that I'd like to occupy your attention with the first words the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout the Lord himself you know if God had sent down the archangel to do it he would have said we must be treasured in heaven if it needs an archangel but it's not the archangel who's coming the Lord personally came down to lay down his life and every believer is cherished by him [00:42:12] and when that moment comes it will be the Lord himself who descends from heaven and when he descends he will descend with a shout when I was a very young believer and trying to do my best to preach the gospel I was up in a Scots fishing village and after the preaching I was walking along with an old brother and I had made reference to John 11 and he said to me why do you think the Lord said Lazarus come forth and I said well I don't know he says has it never occurred to you that if he had not singled out Lazarus they all would have come out that's what's going to happen here you know it's the only occasion in the New Testament that this word shout is used and it's very interesting if you look at its derivation it was used by the Romans for the man who called the time in the slave galleys [00:43:08] the trireme rowers and it was the man's voice that commanded it was utter authority and when they heard his voice they responded to it and when the Lord Jesus comes the same call that brought Lazarus out of the grave will raise the sleeping saints the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. The voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God I'm not sure that this is right but I find it acceptable this is what I've not read it in a book but I've heard it from the lips of George Davison 20 odd years ago and he just said the archangels voice seems to have special reference to Israel the place that angels had in relation to the law being ordered. [00:44:01] Or ordained in the hands of a mediator in the involvement of angels and he said the trumpet of God there were those who are not Jews who are blessed by God in days gone by you think of Rahab for example who's spoken of in Hebrews 11 the voice to wake them up as well but the important thing is the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout and there'll be an immediate response. It's an assembling call it's an authoritative call and he says the dead in Christ shall rise first then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up. I don't know whether you ever saw this but was an appalling but really it's titled that the great rapture hoax written by an American and it was a tilt against the fact that we believe a rapture well it's interesting that the word caught up here is a word which means to seize by divine power when I did my a levels you know 40 odd years ago. [00:45:08] We read we read one of Milton's books Elijah and I can remember the words totally unaware that they were that they were found in scripture and he speaks about Elijah as being wrapped to glory it's a good English word it's it's got a long pedigree in English language. Those who are afflicting them this is the worst I would like to point out and to you who are troubled rest with us now you may have thought I did for many years that rest is a verb and I was staggered to find that it's not a verb at all it's actually a noun and what it is saying is it's a righteous thing with God to do two things. Firstly to recompense tribulation to those who put saints of God through the mill and secondly it's a righteous thing with God to recompense those who now for the testimony of Christ are going through the mill. [00:46:15] I read the verses in in chapter 2 because in a very few words Paul completely refutes this idea that the that the day of the Lord was here and I'm not sure that it's in his book but I listened once to the late F.B. Hull speaking on chapter 2 and he summed it up under four headings he said. A gathering away a falling away a taking away and a

sweeping away I just want to speak very briefly about the the first three verse one clearly is speaking about the rapture we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him not gathering together to his name but gathering to him personally. [00:47:09] And then he says that ye be not soon shaken in mind or troubled neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as from us that the day I think it should be the day of the Lord is at hand. The day of the Lord is not just restricted to the New Testament it's a well-known Old Testament truth and if you look in one of the minor prophets like Joel it's there in other of the minor prophets but in Joel you have words like the day of the Lord is marked by thick darkness. It's marked by judgment and he says the day of the Lord does not come because before that day some things will happen and one of the things is there will be this is verse three there shall come a falling away. [00:48:01] It's strange that they've put a falling away because clearly there is a definite article and this is just simply the statement there shall come the apostasy. You look around today and you see chaos in every area of society and you see Christian testimony crumbling you see people who are prepared to give up truths that have been clung to.

On Tyneside we have an excellent Church of England vicar called David Holloway he's a very prominent member of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church and they always ask him when there's a question of morality comes up and about a year or 15 months ago when the sad synod on homosexuality was going through he was on along with three others and they asked the first two and they vacillated and he's absolutely excellent they said what do you think about Matt Holloway he says well I'd like to tell you what the word of God says and he read the verse from Leviticus 18 for man for mankind to lie with mankind as with woman kind is an abomination. [00:49:23] And then he read the words in the 6th chapter of 1st Corinthians maybe not too obvious with the words which are used but they are very pointed words this is chapter 6 of 1st Corinthians and in verse 9 Paul says. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God be not deceived neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate that's lesbian nor abusers of themselves with mankind that's homosexuals and the end of verse 10 they will not inherit the kingdom of God and then the word goes on. [00:50:04] And such were some of you but ye are washed and it was excellent to hear him say these words he says I just want to say three things the first thing is it is an abomination to God whatever people might think about being kind to others the idea he said of a Christian homosexual is the same as having a Christian thief or a Christian murderer or a Christian rapist. And then he said the second thing is this that God says it is a filthy practice and he says to the Corinthians who used to practice those kind of things he says and such were some of you but ye are washed they've been made clean because they turn to God and the effect of that precious blood and then he said lastly. It's it's it's it would be impossible because if everybody practice there would be no pro creation very plain words but that's not the apostasy really that's spoken of said though it may be the apostasy is a total falling away of the testimony of God and it will result one day in a man. [00:51:16] And he's spoken of in the 13th chapter of the book of the revelation the man of sin who will sit in the temple of God and he will say that he is God and he apparently will have power to give life to convince people. Paul says to them you're not in the day of the Lord because before that day dawns certain things will be true and it's a simple presentation of the power of Christ. And as in the first epistle and insinuation that some saints were to miss the joy and the glory of that time of reigning with the Lord Jesus and he counters it with a new revelation from heaven marvelous revelation of the of the grace of Christ in at last taking us out of this world and in the second epistle a very simple presentation of the power of Christ. [00:52:16] That will be evident in that coming day of glory which is preceded by the falling away and the things which are spoken of. Well quite different to the way that it was looked at in Corinthians and quite different to the way that it was looked at in Colossians but another simple presentation of the all sufficiency of Christ met the insinuations of Satan and set an assembly free to shine for the

pleasure of God and for the glory of Christ. Can we sing just part of a hymn number 28.

[00:54:22] Oh Oh