***The End Times

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-182***

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2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Philippians 2:15: "That you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God, above reproach, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the Word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have caused to glory, because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."

Luke 4:4: "But Jesus answered and said, 'It is written: man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

This morning, we once more direct your attention to Colossians 1:21-23. Our subject is "The Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number 27.

The reconciliation of a believer to God's character of absolute righteousness qualifies him to be received into God's heavenly thrown room as one who is accepted in the beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 1:6 Paul says, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved." It is always important to remember what our standing is with God, and what our state is with Him. What we are is "in the Beloved One" – the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the most magnificent position a human being can hold. And only believers of the church age have that relationship. The people of the Old Testament never could say that they were in Christ. They were in the Messiah. Only the church age believer is in the beloved one. Therefore, that is a very noble position. Immediately, that brings up certain responsibilities as to how we should conduct ourselves in view of that position.

The death of Jesus Christ as a sinner's substitute in payment for sins provides the believer with certain magnificent qualities. And it is that death that makes it all possible.

1 Peter 2:24: "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by his wounds you were healed."

Then, in Titus 2:14: "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." It is the death of Christ in our behalf as our Substitute that has removed the sin problem. People run around, worrying about their sins. But the first thing they need to worry about is their relationship to Christ, because sin is no longer a problem between man and God. Christ has paid the price. The issue is now what you will do with what He has done. For those who have accepted Him, certain magnificent qualities now accrue to our benefit.

We have seen this in Colossians 1:22: "Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body, through death, in order to present you before Him" holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. First of all, a Christian is presented in God's throne room in heaven as one who is holy. This is, as we have seen, the doctrine of sanctification, which has three aspects to it. You have to understand these three aspects, or you get the Bible contradicting itself in some respect. The first aspect that we looked at was positional sanctification. This means that the believer is placed irrevocably into Christ by the Holy Spirit, at the point of salvation – a salvation which is based upon faith in Christ as the One who has paid for our sins. This is the believer's standing before God. This is not his actual practice. People who have positional sanctification still do sinful things.

People who understand the Scriptures, as we have already looked at, that tell us that we have a position with God that makes us perfect, may make the mistake of thinking that that means that they will be sinless. And many of them foolishly pursue that. This positional sanctification is related to phase one of salvation – salvation in the past tense. This is the quality of justification, when we have imputed to us God's absolute righteousness. Now, positional sanctification (our positional holiness) cannot be improved. It cannot be made more secure. It is a perfect position given to us by God, in Christ – positional sanctification.

Then there is experiential sanctification. This is totally different. This comes down to where we live. This is personal godliness in the believer's daily life on earth. This is where the believer is admonished to live up to his position in Christ in positional sanctification. Here, on your day-by-day experience in the Christian life, you do improve. You do grow in spiritual maturity. This is the consequence of being in temporal fellowship, and then of being instructed in the Word of God, so that the Holy Spirit has the means to guide you. Without a knowledge of doctrine, you cannot be guided. Without being in temporal fellowship, with all known sins confessed, you cannot be guided by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the sin nature takes over. The world takes over, and the devil takes over.

So, here you are, a child of God, with positional sanctification. Yet, in your daily experience, you can be victimized by the sin nature of the world and the devil.

This is related to phase two of salvation in the present tense– the quality of spirituality. Experiential sanctification can be improved. You do grow in spiritual maturity to the super-grace status. You develop increased resistance to temptation from the sin nature; the world; and, Satan. The people who watch the entertainment that is so prolific on television, which is not only mindless and banal, but very corrupting – Christians who watch that do not understand the difference between positional sanctification and experiential sanctification. You are a prince, but you can live like a pig. And that's what so often happens to Christians, because nobody has pointed out the difference between positional holiness (making you secure in Christ) and your experience day-by-day.

Then there is ultimate sanctification. That is the total removal, someday, of the sin nature. This happens in heaven, when we see Christ. The believer is then freed from the very presence and the practice of sin. We are set apart from death; from sinning; from sorrow; and, from suffering forever. This is related to phase three of salvation, which is salvation in the future tense, and has to do with the quality of glorification. We will someday, in our ultimate sanctification, reflect the very glory of God. Ultimate sanctification is the believer in the state of sinless perfection. We will be like Christ. Until then, we are never free of sin. We always had the means to combat it. We have the means to resist it. But ultimately, our sinlessness comes about in heaven.

Now, you and I cannot even begin to imagine what that's going to be like. We will be totally different people than we are now, and we will be able to live a life that is as perfect and as good as God Himself. Positionally, you are like that. Experientially, you have not made it. Ultimately, that will irrevocably be the case. There is no question about it. So, what a grand thing it was for the Colossians Christians to be told: "God has made you holy, and that's how you will stand in the throne room of heaven."

Furthermore, we've been told that we have been made blameless. The word "blameless" means without blemish. It is in the pattern of the Old Testament sacrificial animals. That is the background of this reference to this word.

**Roman Catholicism**

1 Peter 1:19 says, "But with the precious blood, as of a lamb, unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." This is the basis of our salvation. There is, when the believer stands before God, no moral blemish which could disqualify him for heaven. When do you face God personally in that way? When you die, or you go up in rapture. Roman Catholicism says, "This is not true. When you die, you do not stand before God without moral blemish. You stand before God with all kinds of moral blemish. That's why we send you to purgatory, so that you may suffer enough to remove that blemish. Christ has removed your moral guilt, but you must remove your own temporal guilt through your sufferings." So, suddenly, salvation by the grace of God becomes salvation by the works of man.

This is a very clever device (deception of Satan). And one billion people on the face of this earth, who belong to Roman Catholicism, are all marching lockstep (every one of them) into the lake of fire. That's why Jesus said, "The gate is small, the road is narrow, and few there be that find it – to eternal life." That in itself should cause you to break out in a cold sweat – that He would have chosen you. Otherwise, you'd be just like that sincere religious group, who will never stand blameless in heaven before God, our Creator.

The believer's permanent standing of blameless is in his eternal fellowship. And that should be demonstrated in our temporal fellowship through the confession of our known evil. Evil consists of human good works, and of our sins. If we are in this position of blamelessness, with no blemish on us, in our eternal fellowship, we should seek to practice it, as 1 John tells us – we should seek to live up to what we are in Him.

It is Satan who seeks to insult the Christian's blameless standing before God, in the believer's daily practice, by tempting us to do evil. He wants to insult God. He wants you not to live up to what you are – a person without any blemish. Blameless standing in heaven is to be reflected in one's status on the earth as a moral beacon of integrity. If anybody should be a moral beacon, it should be a Christian.

Nothing could be more loathsome than to see somebody who walks into church with a Bible under hand, and has his light snuffed out (if he is a believer) through personal sins – sins that have not been repented of, and confessed. That is a gross picture. And yet there are multiplied thousands of Christians who, for one reason or another, are not beacons of integrity. Instead, here they are – blameless in heaven, and yet living with all kind of moral defects in their practice.

Lacking personal freedom from moral blemishes in daily life is a shame. And when Christians have had lost their sense of shame, then they are no longer distressed by having moral blemishes on them in their practice, compared to their standing.

Ephesians 5:11-12 say, "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead, even expose them. For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." This is what we would like to teach our children – that when someone wants them to participate in something that is sinful by the standards of God, that they will recognize that they stand before God in heaven now without blemish. And they are not to add blemishes upon themselves in their practice. But our children should just say to somebody like that, "No, I can't do that because that's a sin" – just like that: "No, I can't do that. I can't participate in that. I won't go there. I won't say that. I won't do that because that's a sin." People will look at you like you're really crazy: to sin, so what?

That's the objective that Paul says that we should not be part of – these unfruitful deeds of darkness. In fact, we should expose them. We should say, "It's a sin, because God says so." And we don't want to do it because it's disgraceful. It's even disgraceful to speak about these things which are done by them in secret.

We had a president a few years ago who was very powerful and highly esteemed by some very prominent religious leaders. And when tapes of his conversation became public knowledge, they were filled with bleeps – expletives that had to be taken out. I saw a segment unedited, and I couldn't believe it. I have heard and seen a lot so that my shock level is pretty high. I couldn't believe what I was reading – that here was a person who was out there on Sunday, who was out there with the Christians; and, who was out there talking about religious matters, Bible on hand. And then there was the obscenity; the filth; and, the degradation, all of which honors Satan, because it is incompatible with the character of an unblemished believer.

So, there are two sides to this. This is a wonderful thing such that God says, "You stand before me without a mark on you morally." That is what we should reflect in our practice.

Philippians 2:12-15: "So, then, my beloved, just as you've always obeyed, and not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God, above reproach, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." That is very clear. Anybody who understands English can understand what he has said. We are to prove our experience, to be matched up to our standing of blamelessness in the presence of God. We should let our experience reflect that, in this crooked and perverse generation in which we live, so that we appear as lights in the world. It is always a sadness to find Christians who are the hypocrites in the world instead of being the lights in the world.

Many years ago, one Sunday morning, I came in the front entrance before the service, and there was a man. We all knew him. He had been around us for many years. He had a nice personality. And I walked in, and I nodded, and I said, "Good morning, sport." And his face became sober and he said, "What? What do you mean by that?" Well, I didn't mean anything by it. It was just my usual pleasant, sweet, friendly self. But I had hit, inadvertently, a raw nerve that I didn't know was there to be hit, as subsequent sadness developed – the immorality in the life of this man, within his marriage, that finally became public knowledge and became such a sad blemish upon a man who had so much; was so promising; and, had such significance. It's not worth it. We are a wholly people, separated unto God. We are a people without any blemish upon us before God. We are blameless.

And, as if that wasn't enough, there's one other thing that has been done to us. God says, "You stand in My throne room beyond reproach." The Greek word looks like this: "anegkletos." "Anegkletos" means "free of any legitimate accusation before God." Roman Catholics say, "No, you're never free of any legitimate accusation before God, until the church has properly cleansed you through its ritual, and ultimately through purgatory."

However, Romans 8:1, which I pointed out to you recently, says, "There is therefore now." What is "therefore?" That is the therefore of justification that we have been given instantly at the point of salvation. And that means that we have imputed to us the absolute righteousness of God. In view of that: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." There is no reproach. There is no condemnation which can be brought against you as a Christian.

Revelation 12:10 tells us that, at this point in time, now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who does this at the present time – accuses them before our God day and night. He accuses our born-again brethren before our God, day and night. Every time we sin, Satan is there to let God know how we have failed Him – how we have not lived up to our holiness, and to our blamelessness, so that we, who claim that we have no reproach to disqualify us from an eternity in heaven, do not demonstrate that in our daily lives. And Satan constantly throws that up before our Father.

However, I'm happy to remind you that 1 John 2:1 reminds us that God has made a provision when Satan does that against us: "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin." I want to discourage you from doing the sinful thing: "But if any one sins, which they do, we have an advocate (a lawyer) with the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous." And it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is there, constantly defending, by the evidence of His death, every believer against any reproach of sin. And the Father says, "Not guilty. My Son has paid for that sin." It is by the merit of Jesus Christ that a believer is forever free of any possible moral guilt.

Romans 8:33: "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies." So, if God has justified us (has given us absolute righteousness), nobody can bring a moral reproach against us. In the Lord Jesus Christ, the condemned are freed from death, and the accused are declared not guilty.

Romans 8:33-34: "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns Christ? Jesus is He Who died. Yes, rather, Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, and Who also intercedes for us." Not only does he defend us against all reproach, but the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for us so that our daily lives would be compatible, and reflect that "no reproach" condition.

What this connotes is a legal determination in court, with God the Father as Judge. The believer can never again be charged with moral guilt for anything he has done, or he will do. This is not beyond reproach by one's human good conduct, but beyond reproach by the fact that Christ paid the penalty.

This word, "anegkletos," is used only five times in the New Testament by the apostle of the grace of God. It is used here in Colossians 1:22. It is also used in 1 Corinthians 1:8: "Who shall also confirm you to the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have a total blameless, beyond reproach condition.

Now, this is what we are as Christians. And to perhaps give you a sense of awe and appreciation for the fact that you are holy, blameless, and beyond reproach, I thought I'd like to remind you of what it is going to be like for the people who are not holy, and blameless, and beyond reproach by an act of God through Jesus Christ. It is not uncommon for the Christian to be attracted to the world. And perhaps it might be useful for us to say, "Where are these people going?"

I listen to the people who are making public opinion, and who are leading the minds of the people of this country, and who are making the pronouncements. And for these who are unbelievers, I always tell myself one thing I have to keep in mind. These people are going to spend eternity in the lake of fire. These people are doomed to the lake of fire. Now, they're very sophisticated. Many of them are ignorant intellectuals. They know no God. They have a high IQ. They have lots of money. They have position. People hang on their every word. People would look twice. You and me, we walk down the street, and nobody looks twice at us. Even the dogs don't look back at us. Nobody cares about us. Who cares what you have to say? But here are these people. We see these heads appearing on nightly television. And they speak with great pomposity and wisdom. And by the things they say, they make it clear to us that they're going to spend their eternity in the lake of fire.

**The End Times**

So, I thought it might be useful to remind ourselves, since we are so close to the rapture event potentially, that the next thing, as you know, that takes place in prophecy is the rapture – the catching away of believers to meet the Lord in the air, and to be taken directly to heaven. And then, on this earth, there will begin a period of time (seven years) to complete the Jewish dispensation, seven years which were cut off by the death of Christ. And we've been in that, and we won't stop to review that. But God made a declaration to Daniel as to exactly how many years would come before God's promises were all fulfilled to Israel, and the end would come. And He gave him the exact figure. And it clicked off, to the year, at Palm Sunday. That was the formal and final rejection. But seven years had not been fulfilled. 490 years had been predicted. 483 years, on that day, were completed.

1. **The Tribulation**

Now these seven last years are going to be fulfilled, and the bible calls it "the tribulation." The last part of it (the last three-and-a-half years) are called the great tribulation. What is going to be happening in the world? These people who are unsaved, and who are not holy in God's sight, and who are not blameless in His sight, and who are not reproached in His sight, and who cannot stand in His presence in the throne room of heaven, and never will – these people are going to experience something that you should keep in mind. If you don't, you're going to be tempted to get impressed by these people. And I don't care whether they're young people or older people. You might get impressed with them at school. You might get impressed with them at work. You might get buddy-buddy with people who begin to influence you. Let's just take a look. Where are these people going, and what are they going to experience once we Christians are gone? After we are gone, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the body of Christ, is removed from this earth in His presence. He will still be here in His omnipresence, as deity, but His actual presence, as Jesus, when he went back to heaven, was removed. Yet He is here in His omnipresence. The Holy Spirit removes Himself with the church.

Now there's nobody to hold back evil. All the Christians who are doing right and holding back the judgments of God, and all the Christians who are proclaiming the Word of God are gone. That voice is now silent. So, what's going to happen? All of these people who are fighting against what are called these right-wing fundamentalists, are going to have a free hand to bring about all of the evil that is characteristic of those societies.

I just watched a videotape that I recorded. It was on the ancient cultures: Egypt; and, ended up with Rome. And it dealt with the moral qualities that characterized Roman society. It was so horrendous. It was even worse than what I had thought, and what I had known. And the illustrations they gave, as they walked around the archeological remains, showed the evidence of what life was like, even for youngsters in the great Roman Empire, and it was that sophistication, covered over by Satan's gloating victory of moral degeneration.

Well, all those people, who were powerful and made it miserable for the Christians and the people who wanted to do right, they're all in the lake of fire now. Here's what's ahead. You can follow this real quickly. We're not going to read this. But the first segment of the future is in Revelation 6:1-2. These verses tell us that there's a world government which is going to be imposed on the whole human race. It will be based economically on the principle of socialism. I need not tell you that that, of course, is a trend in the power-making nation of the world, the United States. The United States governmental authorities are seeking to impose socialism as quickly as they can. In the West, during the first three-and-a-half years, that part of the world will be ruled by a man called the antichrist. All the world will have one government and one ruler – the antichrist. This will be only over the Western world. At the middle of the seven-year tribulation, he becomes ruler over all the world.

1. **Wars**

Revelation 6:3-4 tell us that there will be wars around the world with great acts of terrorism, and a great deal of death taking place.

1. **Inflation**

In Revelation 6:5-6, we're told that there will be enormous inflation destroying the values of saving. The result is making food costly. The result will be malnutrition, and indeed even starvation. That is what is ahead for the people of this world who are left behind in the tribulation.

1. **Death**

Revelation 6:7-8 tell us that death is widespread on the face of the earth: from the sword; from famine; from pestilence; and, from wild beasts, resulting, resulting in one-fourth of the world's tribulation population dying. Now on the basis of 6 billion people in the world today, that one-fourth is one-and-a-half billion people – within three-and-a-half years. One-and-a-half billion people will die in one way or another: by acts of terrorism; not the least of which will be pestilence – disease.

Very quietly, more and more, we're hearing from the medical people that they're coming on diseases that they have no idea what to do with, or where they came from. Did you see the lady on television the other day, holding up her hand? She got one of those mad-cow type of diseases, where her flesh is being eaten away. And she held her hand up, and there was this gaping wound. There's this flesh hanging down in streaks. And they're trying desperately to know what to do. They don't know what to do. Her body is literally being eaten by this particular disease. And there are variations of it. I don't even want to put out to you what information people bring me, because it is so distressing, and so kind-of frightening. But the disease factor – we are very confident in our medical people. But all of a sudden, when God puts in a lot of diseases that you don't have any solution for: you cannot heal; and, you cannot deal with, people who are going to be doing only one thing – dying.

So, here one-fourth of earth's population is gone within three-and-a-half years. So, the next time you see these sophisticated people, these super-cosmopolitans that speak to public television, or your friends who are in the know, just put them in this category. This is what God says: "I'm going to do to them for what they are." What has He done for you for what you are? "I've made you absolutely holy; and, separated you unto myself. I made you blameless. There is no blemish on you morally. I have made you beyond reproach. Nobody can ever touch you again. You're going to be with me in the new Jerusalem. And you want to go with the gang who is going to be in a world of terrorism, and death, and inflation, and starvation, and destruction?

1. **Some People Become Believers**

Revelation 6:9-11 tell us something about people who have been born-again in the tribulation. They were not Christians at the rapture. They were not believers at the rapture. Otherwise they would have been gone. These are people who became believers. They're not part of the body of Christ. That's gone. But these people will be left behind, and the result will be that the antichrist, in his world government, will go out after great persecution of these believers, and there'll be enormous martyrdom that people will experience. That's what these people who are your friends, that you participate with in the things that the Bible condemns is morally evil – this is what they're going to do when they're in charge.

1. **Natural Disasters**

We're told there'll be great catastrophes in nature (Revelation 6:12-17). These catastrophes in nature will include earthquakes. The sun will be eclipsed. The moon will be red like blood. Stars will be falling to the earth. The sky goes into a rolling convulsion. Mountains and islands are moved about. The political; the notorious; the military; the financial; the physically strong; the slaves; and, the free men – all of them, whatever their social status, will cower fearfully in caves to try to escape God and to die. They will want to be able to die because of what is happening.

This is ironic. The extreme environmentalists are seeking to impose socialism upon the United States through environmental restrictions. They just had a big conference in Kyoto, Japan, because the government believes that we need to get rid of the internal combustion engine. And the United States (while most nations of the world will not) is going to have to go back to 1990 (I think it is), in what we had in fuel and energy consumption then. So, gas will be kicked up another 50 cents or a dollar to force you to quit using it. And the whole idea is that we must preserve this earth because it is warming up, and it's not going to be able to sustain people. But the real reason is to be able to control people. This is the heart of socialism.

Yet, what God's going to do is that He's going to hit the environment. I love His sense of humor: "It's the environment that makes you want to oppose Me? Well I'll fix your environment for you." I mean, it's fun to be out in the open. Those of us who are old-time campers, out in the wilderness areas, enjoy looking up in the sky and seeing those falling stars all around you, like leaves shaken off of a tree.

1. **The Trumpet Judgments**

Moving over to Revelation 8, these are the trumpet judgments. One-third of the earth's surface is hit by an intense hailstorm, mixed with balls of fire, and blood splattering everywhere, which will burn up the trees and the green grass areas (Revelation 8:7). Here again, nature is struck by God.

1. **One-Third of the Sea Turns to Blood**

In Revelation 8:8-9, an enormous, burning meteor will fall into the saltwater seas so that one-third of the sea areas turn into blood, killing a third of the marine life on earth, and destroying one-third of the ships in the area. This is not science fiction, folks. This is what's going to happen. This is the Word of God, and it's literally going to come true. And remember why I'm calling this to your attention – so that you won't be impressed with the people who run our world today, and the people who invite you personally to be part of evil and conduct evil practices. They're fools. And they should not be given respect, because they're the enemies of our God.

1. **One-Third of the Freshwater is Poisoned**

In Revelation 8:10-11, a flaming star will suddenly fall from the heavens, and strike the freshwater rivers and springs, poisoning the water, causing death to anybody who drinks it. Now, all the time that this is taking place, people are dying, and dying, and dying by the carloads. And they can't stop it. Those of you who want a future, looking around for something to learn (a trade), become a mortician. You will become rich in the tribulation.

1. **Severe Temperature Changes**

In Revelation 8:12-13, the normal life spans to the earth of the sun, the moon, and the stars are shortened by one-third, causing severe temperature changes and other effects on the earth. All of a sudden, the light is one-third less from these heavenly bodies. You cannot imagine how that will disrupt vegetation and everything else on the earth – life cycles.

1. **Locust- / Scorpion-Like Demons**

Revelation 9:1-11 tell us that Satan will be given the key to the pit of the abyss, from which he releases hordes of demons from the center of the earth, who pour out like locusts, with scorpion-like powers to hurt unbelievers for five months, driving them man, and driving them to seek death, but none of the vegetation is touched. And the people who seek death can't die. Here you are, suffering scorpion-like stings. If you've ever been stung by a scorpion, it really hurts. And it's a shock. And here these people, for five months, are under this kind of physical stress by demonic creatures who are like locusts, and who are able to bring this kind of suffering to people everywhere. And people want to die. And Dr. Kevorkian tries to help them, but he can't. For five months they suffer. And nobody can check out of this life in spite of the suffering.

These are your friends that you're so impressed with. They're the opinion-makers; the style-makers; the people who call the plays; and, the people who tell you what's fun to do, that God says, "No, that's not fun to do. And it's wrong to do. And I don't want you to do it. But you don't think that God really means that.

1. **The Four Demon Angels are Released**

Here's a big one: Revelation 9:13-21 tell us that there are four demon angels, which at this point this morning are at the Euphrates River, being held in restraint under the authority of God and His angels. They will be released, and they will kill one-third of the remaining of mankind who are on the earth. Now, one-fourth has already been killed. People have been dying all along. Now comes another one-third, in one great blast of death, by fire, smoke, and brimstone (and probably, these are expressions for modern weapons). A third of the remaining mankind, which means about one-and-a-half billion, making a total of three billion people. Now, at some point past the middle of the tribulation, three billion out of the six billion will have been killed, minus those who went to heaven in the rapture. But these three billion – let's say that we have that many left. What will they do?

They'll say, "What those extreme-right, fundamentalist Christians told us is true. All these tapes we're listening to here from Berean – those guys knew what they were talking about. Those tapes are true, even though we can't get too many of them." The antichrist has been trying to wipe them out of existence, but we have hidden them, and we're listening to them. They were true." Is that what they're going to do? No, they are going to be, we're told here, still unrepentant of their blasphemies; of their murders; of their drug use; of their sexual immorality; and, of their stealing. Isn't that an odd combination? They are unrepentant of their blasphemy – worshiping their idol gods. They are unrepentant of their murders. We've just gone through a great experience of why somebody, who has committed a brutal murder, and now becomes a Christian should not suffer the justice of God ordained for such an act. And the drug use? This is connected with their spirit worship. In ancient times, demonic spirit worship was connected with drug use. Your friends are into drugs, so you're going to get into drugs? You're going to try it out? And God says, "People like that, I'm going to put them in the tribulation, and this is what they're going to suffer. You have to have something wrong with your head to even consider playing with something like that. The sexual immorality is so widespread and justified. And then the stealing – taking what is not yours. For Christians, as Israel was warned, don't steal from God. Christians are real quick to say, "No, I don't steal. I don't take what belongs to other people." But how about stealing from God, and from His material blessings upon you – that He has a purpose for you, as His steward, to execute verse.

1. **Sores**

Revelation 16:1-2: A loathsome malignant disease of sores which rot the flesh hits those who have the mark of the beast. Here we have that disease factor again that we're hearing so much about. There's an extensive book written about this very kind of disease that has been very prominent in New Guinea, and the research since the 1960s that have been done on it. And it is astounding how they're just coming to where they can begin to figure out what this is, and how little they can do about it. That is what the medical people are seeing brought in to them. And they look at that, and they see this body being eaten up, and they don't know what to do to stop it. Now, God is going to give this to everybody.

1. **All Saltwater is Turned to Blood**

All the salt sea areas will be turned into congealed blood, like the blood of a dead person, killing all marine life (Revelation 16:3). That's the rest of the salt areas that are now also turned to blood.

1. **All Freshwater is Turned to Blood**

In Revelation 16:4-7, we're told that all freshwater areas are turned into blood for those to drink who have persecuted and shed the blood of the saints of God.

1. **The Sun Becomes Scorching**

In Revelation 16:8-9, the sun, which mankind has been worshiping as its god, has its heat intensified, descends scorching fire on mankind, which, in response, blasphemes God, and refuses to repent and to worship Him. Talk about the earth warming! You thought the government was wrong. Oh, boy, the earth is really going to warm up. They're right. There is a problem with earth warming. There is a greenhouse effect. God's going to say, "Do you want a greenhouse effect. I'll give you a greenhouse effect." I love His humor. He'll give it, along with the wrath of His justice.

1. **Darkness**

The world of the antichrist and his world government is covered with darkness, driving people to madness. In their agony, they chew on their tongues, but they refuse to repent again of their evil ways. And they blaspheme God (Revelation 16:10-11).

1. **The Euphrates River Dries Up**

The Euphrates River is dried up by an act of God to permit the rapid crossing of the troops of the kings of the Orient to the Battle of Armageddon, along with other nations, in rebellion against the antichrist (Revelation 16:12-16). The final, enormous disturbances then are turned loose in nature. These are part of the bowl judgments, and they come within a couple of months (if not weeks) to the end, because these are so severe, that mankind could not survive them very long. But now God is doing this to the people that you admire, out in the world system of Satan, who are going to be left behind when you go up in the rapture, and they're going to be left behind to suffer this kind of consequence. This is what God thinks of them.

1. **Earthquakes**

There will be a final, enormous disturbance in nature of lightning, thunder, and earthquakes, splitting Jerusalem, or probably Babylon itself, on the Euphrates from which the antichrist operates as Satan's man. Islands in the sea will disappear. The mountains will crumble. The earth will be hit with a final barrage of hailstones weighing 100 pounds each, and on those people who are still left, but who still continue to blaspheme God, and they're negative to the truth of the Word of God (Revelation 16:17-21).

1. **The Second Coming of Christ**

Finally, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to fight the United Nations army at Armageddon. These are the armies of all the nations of the world, gathered under the United Nations, whom Christ turns in to carrion – dead meat on the battlefield for the birds to feed upon. He snatches the antichrist and the false prophet by the top of their hair, and he throws them into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:11-21).

That's a quick review of what the tribulation holds in store as the expression of the wrath of God upon the people who run our world today, who are in prominent positions of esteem, and who speak with the words of human wisdom of Satan, and we listen to them, and are impressed by them. We play ball with them. We go along with them. We want them to be our friends. We want them to give us their favors instead of looking upon them with loathing, the way God looks upon those who thumb their noses at Him and His Word. God has made you holy. He has made you blameless. He's made you without reproach, in heaven's throne room. And you want to be friends with people who are going to end up under these kinds of judgments?

There was a time in Israel when this sort of a decision of choice had to be made. We conclude this morning with the words of Joshua on that occasion. In Joshua 24:14-15, He's put it on the line to Israel: you're going to make your choice: which God you will follow; and, to whom you will be loyal, as you must make your choice to whom you will be loyal. Joshua concludes his remarks by saying, "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth. And put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river in Egypt (those who were serving the gods of Egypt – their forefathers served those gods). And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourself today whom you will serve, whether the God which your fathers served, which were beyond the river (that is, the Euphrates River – the gods which the ancestors of Abraham served back there in Ur of the Chaldees), or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living (or the gods of this Canaanite civilization that God has led us to conquer, and who are very attractive to you). You decide. Do you want to serve the gods of old Babylon? Do you want to serve the gods here in Canaan? But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." So, make your choice to whom you will be loyal.

God, our Father, we thank You for the Word of God, and for its explicit instruction to us on what we should do, and for its wonderful preview of what is coming ahead in history. We Christians, who are trained in the Word of God, know where history is moving. We know what is ahead. And we pray for our youngsters; for our children; for our adults; and, for all of us, that we would not be in love with the world, and that we would not be impressed by the people in the world who indeed hold the positions of power and of influence. They are headed for their worst days, and we must pity them, as they make their confident pronouncements, and as they go about creating their own millennium, which God is going to expose for what it is, in those seven horrible years of the tribulation. The bottom line for them will be death. But the bottom line for us is eternal life. Thank You for that in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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