***Focusing on the Word of Life - PH55-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:16***

We continue studying the matter of Christians focusing on the Word of Life. I appreciate the testimonies that are regularly brought to us both through the mail by those who are on Berean tapes of the effect that the Word of God has upon their lives, and to testimony personally. Hardly a week goes by, and sometimes it's almost a daily occurrence of people coming up to me and letting me know that for the first time in their lives, when they came into the context of the Berean ministry, they began entering into a knowledge of the Word of God.

What that reflects is a very simple thing. Churches are not drawn together upon the focus of the Word of God that Paul is speaking of in this passage. It is not the intention of preachers to gather people together and say, "Now, look, this is a schoolroom, and I'm going to teach you. I want you to close your mouths; I want you to sit still; stop talking to the person next to you; stop distracting; and, pay attention to the Word of God. That's what we tell children in Berean Academy, and that's what we tell you here. Some preachers are afraid to tell you that because somebody may not come back again. Sure enough, they're right.

One man asked one of these famed ministers, "Why don't you teach your people about this area of the Word of God?" It had to do with prophecy? He said, "Oh, my, if I were to bring up that subject, half of my congregation wouldn't come back again. I can't talk about that." The man said, "Well, it's in the Bible, isn't it?" The preacher replied, "Oh, yes, that's what the Bible teaches, but I just can't talk about that."

Now, that's pathetic, but it's commonplace. So because we teach you the Word of God and because we try to do it in grace, there are some people who hold in low esteem focusing upon the Word of God. But that's the only thing that God counts. That's the only thing that's going to count with you. That is why we are studying to explain an area of doctrine to you. If you come here to be entertained, you won't be. There are no jokes here. There's nothing funny here. There are no attempt to make you feel particularly good or particularly bad–just to inform you how you can walk with God and have happiness and His hand of blessing upon you.

So I think it is significant that we have such widespread delusion among believers. You would think that the Christians would be storming out of these big churches, having their ears tickled with a few stories and a few cute remarks instead of exposition of the Word. You would think they would storm out of those places, and be storming into the place where their souls are being fed, and rewards at the Judgment Sat of Christ are being piled up for them, consequently. However, the average Christian doesn't know about that. He doesn't realize how he's being conned. He doesn't realize how he's being robbed. One of the things in your dealing with other Christians that you ought to point out to them is that they should examine for themselves to establish for a certainty that they're not being robbed of eternal rewards.

Remember that in heaven, there's no turning around. Once you die, you can't make up your mind to go to heaven or hell. That all has to be done this side of death. Once you're out in eternity, you can't turn around and say, "Now I'm going to get with it and make rewards." All that is committed. So there is a great deal at stake.

We as Christians are to be rewarded in heaven for every divine good work which we've performed on the earth. Not all the work which Christians perform originate with the Holy Spirit. A lot of the good works that Christians perform originate with the old sin nature. These God rejects as evil, and He does not reward. In Philippians 2:16, the apostle Paul, in this context, wants to be certain that he is rewarded for his service to God, because that will mean that he has not wasted his life. Obviously, if he's rewarded, that's going to indicate that he has fulfilled God's plan for his life. And he knows that he's doing this.

When God told Paul that he was going to die, he wrote his young understudy Timothy, and one of the things he said to Timothy was, "I am going to die. I am going to go home with the Lord. Nero, at this time of my second trial, is going to condemn me. But I have fought a good fight. I have run my course."

You notice that in this passage, he says, "I want to be sure that I have not run in vain." But when he got to the end of his life, he said, "I didn't. I made it. I used my life because I was oriented to doctrine. I used my life and I produced divine good."

That's the name of the game. The time of judgment and of rewards is called the day of Christ. This term, we pointed out to you, refers to the rapture of the church–the catching away to meet the Lord in the air, and to the "bema" judgment, the Judgment Seat of Christ, when our works are evaluated. Paul has faithfully taught doctrine to the Philippians so that they can be prepared to be lights in this world. Paul, therefore, looks eagerly forward to the rapture–something that we may anticipate at any moment. We as premillennialists, those who believe that Christ returns before the earth's golden age of 1,000 years begins. We premillennialists view a certain relationship between the rapture and the era of the tribulation period. We believe that we are going to be taken out of this world before God pours his wrath out upon this world in the tribulation period.

However, there is another group of premillennialists, and I want to make this clear that we are talking about premillennialists. Somebody asked me last time, "You didn't say anything about the amillennialists." Well, the amillennialists are post-tribulationists. They believe that all Christians are going to go through the hell fires of the tribulation period. We're not talking about amillennialists or postmillennialists. We're talking about our own camp–premillennialists. A large number of premillennialists do believe that we go through the tribulation, but also the majority of churches believe that Christians will go through the tribulation. That's more accurate. The majority view is that the church goes through the tribulation.

Well, the church and Israel, we pointed out to you, are two different entities in God's plan of the ages. The tribulation period is always associated with the Jewish saints. It is never associated with Christians. The tribulation period is when God deals with His nation, the Jewish people–not when God deals with the church. The tribulation period in the Bible is not the same as Christians suffering in general. The tribulation period, therefore, in the nature of what it is, is not something that anybody can look forward to with eager anticipation. Therefore, the rapture would not be a blessed hope if all it meant was that we were first going to go through the tribulation agonies. It's a blessed hope, not just because you are *released* from the tribulation agonies. That's one concept that people present. They say, "Well, we mean it's a blessed. Paul says it's a blessed hope because we're going to be *released* from the tribulation nightmare." That isn't what the Scriptures indicate. The hope lies in the fact of not being in this period at all.

**Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

Well, we hold that the Bible teaches a pre-tribulation rapture. This is why we say that:

1. **The Imminency**

The first reason is a thing called the "imminency" of the return of Christ. In John 14:3, the Lord Jesus Christ promised His disciples that He was going to return for them: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, you may be also." This describes a literal departure of Jesus Christ to heaven, and a literal return of Jesus Christ from heaven. The Lord says, "I am literally going to go to heaven, and I'm going to prepare in heaven apartments for you to live in. I'm going to prepare abiding places, and then I'm going to literally come back and take you to the place I've prepared." This promise of His return for us refers to the rapture. This is the catching away of the saints to be taken by the Lord to heaven, to a place he has prepared for us, His bride. We are going to go to that place in our physical bodies.

This could only fit the rapture event. Notice that Jesus said, "I am going to come again." From where? From heaven. "And I am going to take you to Myself so that where I am, you may be also." That is in heaven. He is in heaven. That's where He says he's going to take the believers. So we have a situation where we have the planet earth, and we have heaven. The situation we have is moving from earth to heaven. That is what is described in John 14:3.

**The Second Coming**

But when Jesus Christ comes to this earth a second time, which we refer to as the Second Coming, when he comes to set up His earthly kingdom, then we have a totally different situation. Here we have Jesus Christ and the saints coming from heaven to earth–the totally reverse thing–His coming with the saints to the earth. Whereas, the rapture that's spoken of in John 14:3 is coming from the earth to heaven.

So notice that these are two totally different directions. You can only ignore this by simply spiritually rising away the exact language. At the Second Coming, the living tribulation saints, those believers who are alive on this earth go into the millennium, which is here on earth. They don't go to heaven. This is not the situation for them. But when Christ says, "I'm going to come and take you so that where I am, you may be (when He comes in the rapture)," the Christians don't stay on earth. They go to heaven. So you've got a totally different situation from the Second Coming of Christ. There, the people do not go to heaven. They enter instead, as believers, the magnificent era of the earth's golden age under the rulership of Christ on this earth. The return of Jesus Christ for His church saints is presented as an imminent hope. That is, there is nothing that has to take place first. The second coming of Christ is not imminent.

There is a series of things which must take place before Jesus Christ can come to this earth. That series of things is worldwide in its effect, and those things are shaping up in our day. But there is nothing that prevents Jesus Christ from coming back to catch us in the air at any moment to fulfill John 14:3 to take us to be where He is. That can take place at any time.

I remind you again that 1 Thessalonians 1:10 tells us that we as believers are to be delivered from the wrath to come: "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." The deliverance from the wrath to come includes the wrath of the lake of fire, and the wrath of the judgment of God upon humanity in the tribulation period. John 14:1 says, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me." Then, match that against 1 Thessalonians 4:18: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Here is a call for Christians who believe in God not to have their hearts troubled because what is before them is nothing but joy. In the passage at the end of 1 Thessalonians 4, from verse 13 on, you'll see the rapture described. Paul says that this is going to be a comfort, and that you can talk to one another about the rapture as something which is before us, and which is of great comfort.

It is no comforting hope if the return of Christ first means going through the tribulation wrath-of-God period. If we have to go through the tribulation, then the return of Christ is not imminent. Here it is once more. We've had the cross. We will have the rapture to take believers out of the world. This is the age of grace, or the age of the church. It has been almost 2,000 years thus far. Then there will begin a seven-year period which is the tribulation. This is a part of Jewish history. At the end of that seven-year period, we have the Second Coming of Christ to this earth.

It is this seven-year tribulation period where God's wrath is going to be poured out, particularly upon the Jews. That's what the tribulation is all about. Following this period comes the 1,000 years of the millennium where Christ is ruling upon this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Those who are living during this period of the tribulation are looking for signs and events which will signal the near approach of the Lord's coming. For example, if you were to find yourself living in the tribulation period, one of the things that would be of great significance is that a world ruler has arisen in the Western Empire of Europe–a ten-nation confederacy–and that this man has taken responsibility for protecting the Jewish people. Right away you can say, "That is the man of sin. That's the antichrist. He's protecting the Jewish people." Then someday, during the tribulation, you will suddenly hear on television that the ruler of the Western Confederacy has just become the ruler of all the world because Russia has attacked Israel and been supernaturally destroyed from heaven by God.

Do you know these people who are called psychics and who write in newspapers and make predictions? Would you believe that they are currently making predictions that Russia is going to attack Israel and be destroyed? ... How do you like those bananas? These people are getting information from the satanic world–from the demonic world. The demons read the Bible, and they know what's coming. They also listen in to world rulers and world planning; they know what's going on; they know how the world is shaping up; and, they know everything that the communist world is planning to do in its ambition and determination to conquer the world. Therefore, they know time patterns. They know schedules which they can reveal to the psychics. It is fantastic how much the psychics are saying which is exactly what the Word of God is saying. It is as if the demons were saying, "This is coming. We know. We can't deny that, but we are going to see how much we can frustrate it."

The time is going to come (if you live in the tribulation) that you will suddenly realize that Russia has been destroyed, and now the man who ruled the Western Empire rules the whole world. Then you could say, "Well, the Bible says that happens right in the middle of the tribulation. We must have three-and-a-half years before the Second Coming of Christ." And you would be exactly right. If you live in the tribulation, you can set dates. To some degree, you could say, "This is how far along we've come." Then you could say, "It's three-and-a-half years before Christ returns," because if you saw that the antichrist set himself up as the God in the temple at Jerusalem, you would say, "That's the middle of the tribulation. That's another sign–three-and-a-half years.

Then as you read the book of the Revelation, you would find the trumpets and the bowls of wrath being poured out, and this all comes near the end of the tribulation period, like sharp hammer blows one-after-another, just pounding humanity to pieces. People are screaming in fantastic agony–horror all over this planet earth. You would know, if you're living there, that you're right down near the end. You would start looking out in space because you know the Bible says that suddenly the whole of space is going to explode in a magnificent, glorious light. There in the center is going to be Jesus Christ coming from heaven. There around Him are millions of white-robed saints, the believers who were taken up here at the rapture, coming back with Him now in His Second Coming to the earth. You would know exactly where to look and what to look for. You would know the series of events.

Therefore, we could not say that the Second Coming is imminent if we lived in the tribulation. We would have to say, "Well, no, Jesus Christ can't come back until seven years has gone by, or three-and-a-half years–until this event has taken place, and this event. These things all have to take place before He can come back. What I'm getting at is that, concerning this rapture that affects you and me as believers in the church age, there are no events which must be fulfilled first. There are no signs. There is nothing that has to take place before Jesus Christ can come back and receive us in the air, and take us back to heaven with Himself. There is nothing that has to take place. For that reason, we say the return of Christ is imminent. It can take place at any moment.

The post-tribulation Christians must deny the imminence of Christ. You can see that, and they do. They hit it with a vengeance. They attack this more than any other point of pre-millennial pre-tribulation rapture view. They attack that the return of Christ is imminent. I mean famous men in evangelical circles, whom you would recognize immediately if I were to call their names out to you, do not believe in the imminency of the return of Jesus Christ–that it can come at any moment, because they believe that Christians have to go through the fires of the tribulation. So, the imminency of Christ is the first reason why we hold to a pre-tribulation rapture.

1. **God the Holy Spirit**

There's another reason. We've already shown you that this fits the schedule and the planning of the Word of God. The second reason is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the church age. There was a tremendous change that took place in the work of God the Holy Spirit during the age of the church from the day of Pentecost on. This is described for us in John 14:16-17 when the Lord said, And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter like Myself, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it sees Him not, neither knows him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you."

Notice the two prepositions. Before Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit in His omnipresence, dwelt *with* the believers: leading them; guiding them; and, empowering them. But after Pentecost, a different relationship took place because the church age had now begun. Now a different relationship of believers to the Spirit of God took place, which was that He was now *in* them. So the apostle Paul explains to us that we have become the temple of God the Holy Spirit. In this room right now, God the Holy Spirit is present. When this service is over, and the last believer has walked out the door, God the Holy Spirit will no longer be in this building. He is never in any church building. He is only in church buildings as long as believers are there. That's why no church building is a sacred place. The temple was a sacred place in the Old Testament because God dwelt in the holy of holies–dwelling in the form of the Shekinah glory over the mercy seat.

But God the Holy Spirit now lives in you and me as individual believers in our bodies. Therefore, this is a tremendous change from the Old Testament. Furthermore, His indwelling is permanent. In the Old Testament, God would come up to a believer that He was going to do something with, and He would come into this believer, but not permanently. For example, maybe this believer had a job to build something on the temple–a craftsman. Along came God, and He gave these people tremendous ability to build some particular thing on the temple. When they were through, the Holy Spirit left. God would take a leader up, maybe one of the judges, and He had a job for him before Him. God the Holy Spirit would come upon that man; He might lead that man in a terrific battle; He would accomplish a terrific victory of some kind; and, then God the Holy Spirit would leave him. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would move in and out of believers.

In the church age, the picture is this: The Holy Spirit enters a believer, and He never leaves again. It is a permanent indwelling of the Spirit of God. It is important that you understand that that's one of the characteristics of the church age. Then it will help you to see, in a moment, why you and I could not go into the tribulation under any condition because of the fact that we are permanently indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

The reason for this is in the 2 Thessalonians 2:6. Paul says, "And now you know what restrains that He might be revealed in His time, for the mystery of iniquity does already work, only He who now hinders will continue to hinder until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

Here's what the situation was in Thessalonica. Paul had come to Thessalonica, and he had been there for a period of about six weeks. He knew that his time was limited, so he thought to himself, "What on earth am I going to teach these people? What must I critically teach these people in the short time I'm there?" The thing, interestingly enough, that he decided to teach them was prophecy. He taught them where history was moving. Having done that, he left. These people knew all about the man of sin.

**The Day of the Lord**

They knew about the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord has two sections. Let's get that straight. You know what the Day of Christ is. That's the rapture. But the Day of the Lord has two segments. It is divided up into the tribulation period and the millennium. These two together constitute the Day of the Lord. Because these people understood that Christians have to leave this world before the Day of the Lord, or before the tribulation begins, they were concerned with the outburst of persecution against Christians. They lived under a very horrendous condition in the Roman Empire under emperors like Nero.

So somebody said, "You know what? The rapture has taken place. We're in the tribulation. We missed it." So Paul writes this letter to clear this up for these people. What he says to them is, "Listen, you cannot be in the tribulation because the man of sin is not on the scene. The man of sin, the world ruler, cannot come into power on the world scene until the Holy Spirit is gone and the tribulation begins. So look to Western Europe. The antichrist is not there. Therefore, you are not in the Day of the Lord. The tribulation has not begun."

Interestingly enough, one of the psychics has publicly stated recently that a man has been born in the Middle East who is going to be a ruler over Western Europe, and he will bring the nations together. This psychic says that he was born in 1962, and he has grown up. Well, whether the demonic world is giving true information or not, the point is that if we are coming close to the rapture, then indeed the man of sin is already on the scene at this very moment someplace in the world.

The thing that Paul wants to point out to these people is that the Holy Spirit is the person who restrains evil on this earth. This man cannot do his job of releasing unmitigated evil. Right now, there is this condition that exists in the world: There is this dam that in effect exists. For over the centuries, behind this dam has been building up sin and evil. It has been mounting, and this dam has been holding back. There is a restraining hand–a restrainer. The question is, who is the restrainer? Who is holding back evil from just breaking out and flooding this planet openly?

We don't have open evil yet. One of the psychics apparently indicates that open evil is coming. One of them said that soon ... all houses will be made of glass, and all personal acts, sexual and otherwise, will be openly done in the streets in an open context. The thing that's interesting about that is that that's exactly the kind of a thing that would represent an unrestrained evil.

You have to sit and think for a while and say, "Now what would unrestrained evil be like? What would it be like to live in a world where there's unrestrained evil?" And pretty soon, if you follow this line (and I don't recommend you do it), what you find is that you get viler in your thinking because you keep trying to get down lower to imagine just how much the old sin nature could express itself if nobody was holding the thing back. Who could hold evil back? Behind this evil is Satan. Who has the power to hold Satan back?

Sometimes people come along with the inane idea that it's government. I'm here to tell you today, folks, if there's one thing the government can't hold back, it's evil. The government can't keep from doing evil, as a matter of fact. That's one of the things that it does better than anything else, let alone to be a restrainer of evil. The people who specialize in evil all go into government. That's why they're in there. If they couldn't do evil, they wouldn't be in government. We don't elect people to government who can't do evil.

I have a relative who's a member of the Teamsters Union. One time he said to me, "This Hoffa is a bad guy, you know. He steals, but he leaves enough for the rest of us." So the reason they elected him is because he was an evil man who could put the screws on the employer and raise the wages. He steals like crazy, but he leaves enough for everybody else. Now, that's honor among thieves.

Who's going to hold back evil in this world? Government? Ridiculous. Government is supposed to restrain evil, and part of the divine laws of establishment is that government is for holding back evil. As long as government is oriented to divine viewpoint, as we once were in this nation, governments contributed greatly to restraining evil. However, it was only because they had the power of God behind them. As governments have deviated from doctrinal principles, they become less able to restrain evil. Our attorney general bemoans the fact that we cannot control crime in this country because the courts of this land have been flooded with idiots who are judges of the liberal mentality. As fast as policemen endanger their lives to bring the criminals in off the streets, the judges, in their pseudo compassion, turn them loose. So governments are not holding back evil. Even our courts are not holding it back. There's only one element–only one person who can hold back evil, and that is God the Holy Spirit. His job, characteristically, is to hold back evil. He is the dam that is holding back the flooding of this planet with evil.

However, we are told that the time is coming when this restrainer, of whom Paul speaks of here in 2 Thessalonians 2, is going to be removed. When that restrainer is removed, then look out. Down comes the dam, and now the world is engulfed with the most open vilest expression of evil that the human mind can come up with. It'll be far worse than it was even in the days before Noah. We are told that before the flood, every thought and imagination of men's heart was only evil continually. It will be far worse than that.

When does the Holy Spirit leave? Well, when the Holy Spirit leaves, somebody has to go with Him. If you and I, as believers, are permanently indwelt now by God the Holy Spirit, then when He leaves, we have to go with Him. That's exactly what happens. It is at the time of the rapture, before the tribulation period, when the Spirit of God leaves this world and we go with Him. God the Holy Spirit, who is now resident as a person in this world in the bodies of believers, takes His residence back to heaven, as did Jesus Christ when He completed His work. Now, as Jesus Christ is present in His omnipresence, His deity, so the Spirit of God will be present in His omnipresence as deity. But the Holy Spirit will no longer be present in His person as Christ was before His ascension. When He goes, we go with Him.

It is necessary for Him to leave this earth in order for the dam to break, and for the man of sin, then, to be revealed. That's what Paul is telling these people in Thessalonica. The man of sin cannot be revealed until the dam holding back evil breaks. The dam holding back evil will not break until God the Holy Spirit, who is the restrainer, leaves this world. When He leaves, you Christians, whom He dwells, must go with Him. Therefore, this is strong evidence that you and I do not go through the tribulation, and that we go to heaven before the earth's darkest hour comes upon it.

Satan does not restrain evil in the world. He merely disguises it. Governments are under Satan's rule, and they don't really restrain evil. God the Holy Spirit only could restrain evil. Genesis 6:3 shows us that this is His characteristic rule.

So the order of events places the rapture before the tribulation. The restrainer indeed is now holding back evil in its maximum expression. He is removed in the future. After the restrainer is gone, then and only then can the man of sin come to power as described in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. This man of sin is identified in Daniel 9:26 as the ruler of the Western European Confederacy during the tribulation. He is called the prince that shall come. He is the same man that is spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. So for the man of sin to rule during the tribulation, the Holy Spirit has to depart and permit evil to come upon the world.

The covenant which is made at the beginning of the tribulation to protect the Jewish nation is predicted in Scripture to be made by this man of sin. Obviously, this man could not make a covenant with the Jewish nation unless he were first permitted to come to power. He cannot come to power until God the Holy Spirit, who is now pushing and holding him back, releases His restraint. The Holy Spirit will not release His restraint until he has gone to heaven with the believers, taking the believers with Him.

So it's easy to identify the man of sin. He's the man who becomes Israel's protector. So it's easy to identify the beginning of the tribulation period, because when you see the man who rules Western Europe taking the Jew under his worldwide protection, then you know the tribulation has begun.

1. **The Time Factor**

There is another factor to add to why we believe we will not be in the tribulation. That is a time factor. This time factor has to do with the period between the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. There has to be a time period. Remember that we've shown you that Christ first comes *for* His saints. That's the rapture. Then He comes *with* His saints at the second coming. The Bible constantly distinguishes between the two.

When He comes for His saints and takes them back to heaven, something is going to take place in heaven. During the seven-year tribulation period on earth, something is happening in heaven. That period is necessary because in heaven there's to be the Judgment Seat of Christ to which we've been referring. We have that declared in 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad."

We all (by the context, we Christians who form the body of Christ) must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. What's the purpose of this judgment? As we've indicated, and as we've already studied, it is to give us rewards for our service (1 Corinthians 3:14-15, Revelation 22:12). Revelation 4:4 speaks about 24 elders who are already in heaven. Those 24 elders represent the church saints. You will notice that they already have crowns on their heads in Revelation 4:4, indicating that the rapture has passed, and that they have experienced the Judgment Seat of Christ, where they have faced the judge sitting on his throne on the "bema." There the rewards have been given out while life on earth in the tribulation has been going on.

Because the "bema," in any case, is an individual judgment, it's going to take time to judge every believer. You will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ one-at-a-time. Because of the rapidity with which divine processes can take place, while it is individual, yet it will be very fast. So there will be ample time in this seven-year period for every believer personally to be judged for his works and receive his reward. But it will take some time, even at the supernatural speed at which God will perform it.

There is time needed for events on the earth between the rapture and the second coming. The rapture includes every believer on earth. When this happens, who's left on earth? The only people left on earth in the tribulation are people who are lost. Only the unbelievers are left behind. Yet, when you come to the millennium, you discover that there are two major judgments that God performs on the earth. One is toward the Jewish people, and the other is toward the gentile people. In this judgment, at the Second Coming of Christ, when He's actually on earth, He looks at this group of gentiles and says, "You are born again. You go into the millennium. You are lost. You're going to be put to death." He separates them. Those who are to be put to death are called goats. Those who are to be allowed to enter the millennium in their natural bodies are called sheep.

He goes to the Jews. He lines them up. The Bible describes that every kind of means of transportation will be used to bring the Jew from all over the world back to Palestine. Then God goes one-by-one. He says, "You're lost. You're saved. You're lost. You're saved. You who are lost are over here." And they take them out into the wilderness and they put him to death. "You who are saved, check in here." You become citizens of the kingdom of God on earth.

All believers are taken out of this world. That is, all born again people are taken out of this world at the rapture. Where are you going to get people who are believers among Jews and gentiles to be sent into the millennium in their living physical bodies, their mortal bodies–not their glorified bodies? Everybody who is taken out of the rapture has a glorified body. Those who are left on earth to go into the millennial kingdom have mortal bodies. They can still die. They bear children. They work. They eat food. They can even get sick.

Well, the post-tribulationist puts both the rapture and the Second Coming together at the same time. You say, "Well, how can that be?" Well, here's how they explain it. They say, "Here's the rapture event, at the end of the tribulation. So Jesus Christ comes here, and He catches up the living Christians out of the tribulation. They meet Him in the air. He takes them to heaven; they turn right around; and, they come right back down to earth. It's just a fast space trip." That's how they say we can get the rapture and the Second Coming together.

However, if you've taken all of the believers out of the world, how is Jesus Christ going to have anybody who is a believer, Jew or gentile, to take into the millennial kingdom? There is no way. This is a point on which the post-tribulation rapture person just looks at you and squirms because you have impaled him on an impossible situation. In desperation, he spiritualizes away the language. That's the only answer. There is no way to answer, how is Christ going to have believers in the millennium?

So there is time necessary between the rapture and the Second Coming for a new generation of gentile and Jewish believers to be born again (to come into being). The 144,000 Jewish evangelists which are raised up by God are the source of the gospel information by which countless numbers of Jews and gentiles are born again. They form the nucleus, seven years later, to begin the Kingdom of God on this earth, with Christ ruling from the throne in Jerusalem, in their pre-glorified living bodies. There is time needed for such a judgment to take place. If the rapture is at the end of the tribulation, there would be no way for living believers to rise up again upon the earth.

Remember that these people in these two judgments are sent into the millennium. They have their same old bodies–not new and different bodies. This is a totally new generation. Post-tribulationists answer this problem in this way: They ignore it. We shall see that our position is even stronger than this. The Bible tells you that you can comfort yourself with the fact that you will never face what is coming upon this world. You can see what is happening in our world today–how things are beginning to come to a total collapse.

The problem with most of you is that you have never been in a desperate society. You have never been in a mob that's fighting to stay alive. You have never been in a situation where people are faced with life and death, and therefore, the raging animal that will come to the surface. You have never been in a situation like that, so all we can do is describe that to you. You don't know what it is to look into the wild eyes of a human being who will tear your throat out in order to survive himself. But that is what is going to come in the tribulation period. Thank God that is not for us.

If you are a child of God today, within the family of God and within the body of Christ, you are going before any of this takes place. If you're not a child of God, then you will indeed possibly go through it, if you're alive at that time. So we urge upon you the receiving of Christ as personal Savior, receiving the provision He has made for you to escape this, as well as the lake of fire for all eternity. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It's as simple as that. It's accepting God's provision, and taking His righteousness to your account. You just say, "I receive it. I accept it. I believe that." The moment you do, God places the righteousness of Christ to your account. If you do not, then beware.

For the Word of God tells us that if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. "For this is the witness, the testimony of God, which he has given concerning His Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. He that believes not God (concerning Jesus Christ and eternal life through Him) has made Him a liar because he doesn't believe the record that God gave of His Son. This is the record that God has given to us: eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life. He that doesn't have the Son of God does not have life."

You couldn't say it any more simply or any more clearly. It is a matter of having Jesus Christ. If you have Him, your any-moment destiny is heaven. It will never be the agonies of the tribulation. If you do not have Him, there is no hope. If you reject this testimony of God, while you believe what people tell you all the time, the Bible says you are a fool, and you will lose your own soul, even though you may have gained in the process the whole world. Receive Christ right now, where you sit, by simply accepting the provision that God has given you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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