***The Great Day of God the Almighty  
  
RV206-02***

Please open your Bibles once more to the great book of the Revelation 16:1-21. We are again dealing with the Word of Truth. The Word of Truth is just exactly that. ...

In the previous session, we had a set of visitors in the service. One of them was a young lady who several years ago used to attend Berean Church, and made great strides in spiritual things. She was here with her parents this morning. Afterwards, she came by and greeted me, and I remembered her. And she said, "It's so nice and refreshing once more to be where the Word of God is taught." She said, "Now, my parents aren't going to come by to greet you because they are Pentecostalists who believe in miracles, and they didn't like what you said about the cycles of miracles, and the deception of those things existing today."

I had forgotten something about her until she said that. When she said that, I remembered that her mother was a Pentecostal preacher. I wish I had known that earlier in the service. It was a great opportunity that was missed, but I wasn't lying in the bushes for her or for anybody.

However, the whole point was that the fact of cycles of miracles is a fact. We didn't get into it in great depth. I consider it to be the leading of the Holy Spirit, as I pointed out the cycling out of Paul's own effort. But I find that charismatics are never disturbed by the facts. They are convinced that they are called of God, and they have something more, and they will not be dissuaded from it. But apparently, it had irked the mother to say that we're going to find out who's right and who's wrong, and whoever is wrong in dealing with an area of truth is going to have all eternity to regret it, if that happens to be the truth. And you must have the courage to believe the truth.

On the other side of the auditorium, sat a man who came in who is an assistant pastor in a church in a nearby area. And it was very refreshing to speak to him. He said, "I minister to a black congregation. A couple or three years ago, somebody at work gave me one of your tapes, and the truth rang so out of that tape in such a magnificent way." He said, "I immediately became a taper." He gave me his name and said, "You perhaps might recognize my name because the orders come in regularly." He said, "You have given me the materials which I teach when it is my time to preach in our church to our congregation." He said, "The thing I wanted to thank you for is that you're the most accurate Bible teacher I have yet come across. What you say is backed up from Scripture, and you don't give us your opinions." And he said, "And I just looked forward to coming here today, and letting you know what your ministry is doing, and to thank you for it."

So, I thought that was interesting. What a contrast! One says, "No, I will not listen to the truth. I will go on in my blindness." And I'm sure this lady was cut to the quick when I said, "The blind leading the blind in the charismatic Pentecostal movement." That happens to be exactly what is happening. On the other hand, here's a man who feels obliged and delighted to hear the truth; to be receptive to it; and, to act upon it.

Well, the world today is on a holding pattern, waiting for the arrival of World War III at the end of the tribulation. This war will be directly triggered by the fact that people who have been told the truth have refused to believe the truth, and they will then bear the consequences that God says: "When you don't take the truth, I'll open your mind up to believing a lie." The charismatic lady, because of her resistance to the truth, is believing a great lie. The gentleman who is open to the truth is believing one great doctrinal truth of God after another.

You've had the experience as I have had – the excitement and the thrill of finding out from the Word of God what you simply didn't believe was even in there, and you had never thought of it before. There it is, suddenly. It leaps out from the Word of God – the thrill of finding a little more about how things work.

**The Great Day of God the Almighty**

The Bible calls this great coming war "the great day of God the Almighty." The location of this final battle will be the field of Armageddon. We are currently looking at Revelation 16:13-16, which describe the influence of God Himself in bringing the gentile nations to Israel for this final showdown with God. We have found that the antichrist is threatened with rebellion of his world government by the attack from the king of the South (Egypt). There is movement at the same time from the king of the North (from Russia). And there is the news that the oriental kings have formed an alliance; they've crossed the dried-up Euphrates River; and, they're on their way. The antichrist and his western kingdom, located at his capital in Babylon, gathers these forces and moves toward the Middle East himself. He moves against Egypt and conquers her.

God allows those who refuse to believe the truth, to believe a lie. At this time, world rulers are going to be given the great lie from the mouths of the false trinity: Satan; the antichrist; and, the false prophet, which are portrayed as slimy frogs. They're going to be given information that causes them to move out against the antichrist, and they're going to ultimately decide to seek battle with God, and with God's army of angels.

The road to the final conflict with Satan at Armageddon is all part of God's plan, and it was revealed in Old Testament Scripture. That is one of the most amazing things about this. This whole progression toward this great final, catastrophic conflict is revealed in the Word of God.

The prophet Joel was one of those whom God used to explain how God himself was going to challenge the gentile nations to come toward Armageddon. Please turn to Joel 3:9-14. ... This is a challenge to prepare for war at Armageddon. Joel 3:9 says, "Proclaim this among the nations." That's what the three frog spirits are doing: "Prepare a war. Rouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers draw near. Let them come up." The armies of the gentile nations are here directed to mobilize for war. This is the message which the frog spirits are giving out to the kings of the world.

Then verse 10 says, "Beat your plowshares into swords; your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, 'I am a mighty man.'" The nations are told to convert their implements of agriculture (their peacetime implements) into weapons of war. And they are told to psych themselves up, which is a New Age principle, that they are invincible. Look at yourself in the mirror, and tell yourself that you are whatever you want to be. This is a New Age deceit that what you think is what becomes reality. What you think you are is what you will become. This is widely being taught on charismatic TV programs – that your mind can produce your own reality, because you have been made in the image of God. So, you are a little god.

Verse 11 says, "Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations (the gentiles), and gather yourselves there. Bring down, O Lord, the mighty ones." The nations come from all directions, by various means of transport, in order to gather at Armageddon, while God brings down from heaven His angelic warriors.

Verse 12 says, "Let the nations arise and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat." This valley will probably be formed by the splitting of the Mount of Olives. It's not clear where this Valley of Jehoshaphat is located geographically, but that seems the most likely place. For it says, "There I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations." This valley will lead to the plain of Armageddon. So, the nations are summoned by God to be destroyed by Him.

Then verse 13 says, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is right. Come, tread, for the winepress is full, for the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great." Here you have indicated that the nations are now at white heat in their hatred of God. So, they're ready for destruction just as a ripe field of grapes is ready to be cut down and trampled on in the winepress. The people of the tribulation at this time, in spite of all that's happened to them, will still have great confidence in the power of their god, Satan, to defeat Jesus Christ. It will be their god, Satan, against the God who created Satan. What kind of madness indeed is that? The nations thus are, in fact, deluded by God to converge on Jerusalem, because that's where God will destroy them. They would not believe the truth. Now God says, "You're nothing but a field of grapes. You're a vineyard ready for me to strip to harvest – to put into a vat and to stomp upon, and the vats will overflow." The imagery here, of course, is that the vats are going to overflow with the blood of these who will be trampled to death on the field of Armageddon.

Finally, in verse 14, we read, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision. For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." The tribulation gentile nations will gather in this valley for the final battle at the field of Armageddon. They will receive God's decision in response to their decision. That's why it says the valley of decision. They made a decision. They made a decision to disobey God; to ignore His Word; and, to reject His testimony. Now God will say, "I have a decision to make about it."

The people in our world still think that they are sovereign. They think that human beings are sovereign, and that they are not under subjection to God, and that there is no God to whom they must account themselves. They are totally independent in every respect. The result is going to be that someday, they're all going to wake up and discover how our sovereign God is going to make clear just who's in charge.

The homosexuals were greatly disappointed by the poor turnout at their big parade last Sunday in Washington. Some of the liberal newspapers are outraged at CNN because CNN showed it all. CNN turned the cameras on, and let it run. If you saw what they were doing on the stage, it wasn't just some kooks in the crowd that were getting carried away. Right up there on the stage (which meant that this was what they were presenting) was the most vulgarity, filthiness, and ugliness. It really showed people what homosexuality is like; what lesbianism is like; and, what these people do. It's interesting that the liberal newspapers are howling in protest that the cameras were permitted just to run, and everything was shown without editing it out.

What little I saw set me back on my heels: the cavorting; the semi-nudity; and, the vulgarity, right there on the platform, let alone the two men who were married by this priest with his collar turned around backwards, and then giving each other one of those mouth-sucking kisses, and everything else that is characteristic of homosexuality.

Somebody recently said, "Oh, people know what homosexuals do. People know what sodomy is. People know how they really act by themselves." And, boy, that person could not be more wrong. This portrayal on the CNN cable network proves that I am ... right. ... And they showed it all. And people saw just how evil this is, and they could see now how disease-laden this lifestyle is.

At one point, two of them went through the motions of what they do in private. Why is that? Because people do not think that there's a sovereign God out there that they have to account to. This evil is going to get worse and worse and worse. When society resists something, that evil is squelched. But when, even in the highest echelons of the government, the government says, "This is something that the Bible condemns, and some evil is OK," society gradually moves over, and it accepts that vileness.

So, way back here, Joel says, "This is what's coming," and God is using it all to His glory. One of the amazing predictions is in the Psalm 2. This psalm was written by King David. In the first 6 verses, this psalm is talking about the coming Messiah King, who is Jesus Christ? This psalm is speaking about the time at the end of the tribulation that we are studying in the book of the Revelation. In Psalm 1:1, David says, "Why are the nations in an uproar?" Now, you understand the near fulfillment of prophecy principle, and the far fulfillment. David himself was under this kind of attack by the nations. He was clearly identified as God's man. He was the apple of God's eye. He was a man after God's own heart. David was the one that the nations about him were zeroing in on. It was very clear by how God had dealt with David; the conquest he had achieved; the care that God had placed upon him; the wealth, the power, the prestige that God had given this man; and, the insight spiritually, that this was God's man. And David shakes his head in disbelief that these people in these pagan nations would act the way they were acting.

However, the fullest fulfillment of this is not David, but great David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, and the testimony toward Christ in the tribulation era and the millennial kingdom. So, you have to leap forward in order to make the full implication here in interpretation. Why are the nations in an uproar, and the people devising a vain thing? David expresses amazement that these gentile nations are planning a simply mindless act. What are they planning? They're planning to fight God and bring Him down. That is the same mindless thing that Satan is planning to do. They're going to do this right to the end of the tribulation.

Verse 2: "The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed." The gentile rulers deliberately joined together to take their stand against Jesus Christ. They counsel each other with speaking against God to attack Him. How's that for getting information? How often have you counseled with the wrong person? How often have you asked for guidance and spiritual things from a person who is not qualified to give you guidance, and who is out of touch with reality – somebody that you can feed upon in order to justify your own evil conduct and your own evil decisions. You have to be very careful not to counsel with people who themselves are out of step with God, and who are wrong. These people are badmouthing Jesus Christ. When they do, this verse says that they're speaking against the Lord; against Jehovah; and, against "Yahweh." When they speak against His anointed Jesus Christ (whose servant Jesus is), they speak against God the Father ("Yahweh"), whose servant the anointed Christ is.

Verse 3: "Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us." The nations want to break free of their subjection to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ. They're sick of being restricted in their evil lifestyle by the moral concepts that society may hold.

Verse 4 says that here's what God does. God is looking at all this: "He who sits in heaven laughs." The Lord scoffs at them. God is enthroned in heaven. He laughs and He scoffs at the puny gentile nations who plan to fight him at Armageddon. Can you see how the liberals would hate a verse like that – how they would how they would ridicule this kind of a concept of God? This is a God who laughs at people who are deceived; who are deluded; and, who are taking a course of action which is going to go to their own destruction. But what God laughs at is their mindless decisions. That is exactly what God does. God is not intimidated by us. When we are wrong, we are wrong, and He does not accommodate Himself to do what is evil.

We saw in the previous session, when they brought Micaiah out, they said, "Now, Micaiah, play it smart. Agree with what the prophets have told the king. Don't give him some bad news. Play ball with the game." And it is what they're asking and thinking that God would do, and instead, God scoffs at them. And the reason Ahab told Jehoshaphat that he did not want Micaiah's advice on the matter of whether they should go to war with the Assyrians, was that: "He always prophesies bad things to me." Ahab was a real yo-yo. Because the information was bad, he didn't like to hear it, and it never occurred to him that maybe Ahab was telling him the truth. Well, he found out, eventually, that he was.

Verse 5: "Then he will speak to them in His anger (God will), and terrify them in His fury." God, in His contempt for the antichrist and the gentile nations who have joined him, will speak to them in His anger, and He will terrify them.

Then verse 6 finally says, "But as for me, I have installed My king upon Zion, My holy mountain." God's message to the nations is that they could do nothing to prevent, in David's day, His ruling from Mount Zion, and the further ultimate long-range fulfillment is that they can't do anything to keep Jesus Christ from ruling over all nations from Jerusalem. That is what is going to happen. This is the near fulfillment for David. It is the final far fulfillment for Jesus Christ in the tribulation as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

So, in Revelation 16, we read these verses, as the people of the New Testament did, who were well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. And these passages that I have brought to your attention were background for them as they read about the great day of God the Almighty. In Revelation 16:15, we come to the returning Christ. Verse 15 speaks about the unexpected arrival.

As you read through this little set of parentheses in verses 13-16, you come to verse 15, and you may have the feeling that it seems out of place, and it does feel like that, and in a way, it is out of place. And that's why you will notice that it is put in parentheses (brackets), because verse 16 is what finishes verse 14. If you'll read through verse 14, and then skip over to verse 16, you'll see that they flow together. They are the ones that should be side by side. But God interrupts this sequence in order to give you something that is of importance. Verse 14 describes the gathering of the gentile armies for battle with Jesus Christ at Armageddon at His Second Coming. When God the Holy Spirit brought that up in verse 14, He pauses for a moment before He goes on to speak in verse 16 about the field of Armageddon. He pauses to say something to tribulation believers. This is not to church-age believers, but to tribulation believers, because He needs to give them a direct, special caution to be prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

So, He says in verse 15, "Behold." This is from the Greek word "eidon." The word "eidon" is a word that God the Holy Spirit uses in the New Testament to call attention to something that is very important. It is in the aorist tense, which means that it's at some point in time that something important is to be observed. It is in the middle voice, which means that: "If you observe this, it will be to your personal benefit. It will come back to you." And interestingly, it is a command. It's in imperative mood. God is not inviting you to pay attention to something important. He is commanding you to pay attention to something extremely important. And the person who is speaking is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, "Behold." Attention. On guard. Listen. Open your ears: "I am coming. This refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This does not refer to the rapture of the church when He comes to take the believers to back to heaven with Him. This rapture of the church will have already taken place before the tribulation period began. Now, it will be almost a full seven years later after the rapture. Jesus here says, "I am coming." He cannot be referring to the rapture. That has already passed. What He is referring to is when He actually touches down on this earth at His Second Coming. He did not touch down on this earth when He came in the rapture event. He just met the believers in the air.

What this refers to is what was described at his departure to heaven in Acts 1:9-11, after He had informed the disciples that they would now be His witnesses, and the 40-day time period after the resurrection was now completed, and then it was the time for Him to leave. And He pointed out to them that, in 10 days, something very dramatic was going to happen; namely, the substitute representative of the Trinity would come to this earth, in the person of God the Holy Spirit, who would be there now in His presence, as He has always been in His omnipresence, and that He would replace Jesus Christ as their Helper. And that is what would happen on the day of Pentecost, and the church age would begin.

So, Acts 1:9 says, "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky, while He was departing, behold, two men (namely angels) in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? He's gone. This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." As Jesus physically left, Jesus is physically going to return.

So, Jesus says here in Revelation 16:15, "Pay attention. Here's an important principle. I am coming." He is referring to this promise of Acts 1, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth, amazingly, until about 250 years ago, even among Christians, was not a doctrine that was often discussed. It was the revival of the Plymouth Brethren, and the return to Bible study that made the connection between the difference between Israel and the church, and the connection of the church as a distinctive body of believers, that suddenly realized the difference between the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. And the whole doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ exploded with new intensity upon the minds of believers. It's hard to think that centuries went by, and hardly anybody thought about Jesus' coming again. That was something they very seldom thought about.

Here He says, "I am coming," and He says, "I'm going to do it in this way. I'm going to do this like something," in order to give them a frame of reference of how He would return. He says that He's going to come like a "kleptes." A "kleptes" is a "thief." I think you can readily see that, from this word, we get our English word "kleptomaniac" – somebody who can't keep from stealing things. Well, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is compared to the coming of a thief to steal. What that means is that a thief comes upon us unexpectedly, and he comes upon us suddenly. We don't look for someone to be coming along to steal something. The return of Jesus Christ is going to be an unexpected event. People are just not going to be ready for it.

Notice that even in the specific seven-year time period of the tribulation, the precise moment of the Second Coming is not known. Please note Matthew 24:42. This records the need for tribulation believers to be prepared for the unexpected arrival on the earth of Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. In Matthew 24:42-44, Jesus says, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." This is not speaking of the rapture. At this point, in this context, He's talking about the Second Coming: "But be sure of this – that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason, you be ready too. For the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."

**The Day of the Lord**

Tribulation believers need to be ready for the Second Coming. That principle, of course, does apply to us also. The passage of 1 Thessalonians 5:2 indicates a little more specifically the time pattern here: "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night." Here, the specific term is "the day of the Lord." That is the day which begins immediately after the rapture. When the rapture is finished, then we have a technical period called "the day of the Lord." The return for the church is unexpected. We have to be prepared. The people in the tribulation will have entered the period of the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord is in two segments. First, it is a day of judgment. That's the tribulation period. Then, it is a period of blessing, and that's the millennium. The day of the Lord is described, for example, in Isaiah 13:9-11. Isaiah says, "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming." I want you to notice that phrase "the day of the Lord." It's a technical term. It's a very specific period of time. The day of the Lord is coming. It starts with the tribulation: "Cruel with fury, and burning with anger, to make the land a desolation. And He will exterminate its sinners from it." Obviously, this is the tribulation part of the day of the Lord: "For the stars of heaven and their constellation will not flash forth their light." Well, we've heard that – the darkness that will be come upon them. The sun will be dark when it rises. The moon will not shed its light."

All the things that we're reading as plagues in the Revelation, God has been telling for centuries that this is what He's going to do: "And I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless."

In Zephaniah 3:14-15, you have the other part of the day of the Lord – the blessing part: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion. Shout in triumphal Israel. Rejoice and exalt with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away His judgments against you. He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. You will fear disaster no more." The King of Israel, the Lord" is clearly speaking about Christ having returned, and we're talking here about the millennium. You'll notice this is part of the day of the Lord.

So, the day of the Lord is a period of direct intervention in world affairs by God Himself. And when He does that, 2 Peter 3:10 tells us that it's going to result in the destruction of what we know as the heaven and the earth now. What will happen will be the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. Revelation 21:1 tells us that. This will happen at the end of the day of the Lord. But the day of the Lord, which follows the rapture of the church, comes with an unexpectedness of a thief in the night, as one would come to rob a homeowner. 2 Peter 3:10 refers to the same thing.

So, when we're told this in the book of the Revelation, there is some Old Testament background upon this concept of coming like a thief in the night. Jesus says, "Behold, I'm coming at My Second Coming like a thief. You are not going to expect Me. You should be prepared for Me." Of course, the same principle of constant preparedness for the return of Christ applies to church-age believers in the rapture event, in this respect: How much time do you have to do the things that you should do for God; that you're capable of doing; and, that He has laid upon your heart to do? You don't know how much time you have, and the way things are shaping up in the world, it's obvious that we're moving very rapidly in that direction.

So, He says, "I'm coming like a thief. Blessed." That is the Greek word "makarios." That means "happy:" "Happy is the person who stays awake." This word means to be vigilant instead of lax and indifferent. It connotes a mental attitude of expectancy which will guide one's conduct and decisions. So, He says, "I'm coming at any moment like a thief. You won't know what to expect Me. But I will say this: that the person is going to be very happy who stays awake in respect to looking forward and anticipating My coming." Again I remind you that this is the people who are believers in the tribulation – not church-age saints. And He's warning them to be prepared for the fact that Christ is about to return.

In Luke 12:35-40, we have this warning: Jesus said, "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait upon them. Whether He comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. And be sure of this: that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed the house to be broken into. You too (tribulation believers) be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

I think this is stressed, in part, if you put yourself in the place of these poor people in the tribulation, they've gone through a lot of suffering. They've taken a lot of beating. They've taken a lot of frightful treatment. And when you get pressure on you, and you keep getting ground away, you finally tend to give up. These people might say, "Well, maybe we better go along with our society. It is evil. We don't approve of it. Maybe we better play ball. If we stand here and sound off, and speak out against it, they're not going to welcome us. They're going to make things harder on us. They have the levers of power."

**Have your Garment Ready**

Of course, this is the thing about which Jesus says, "Don't give in. Never give in." His encouragement is that He reminds them that He is at the door. He is coming, and they should remember that. What He says to them is that the person who stays awake and keeps his garments." The clothing in New Testament Times was a single robe-like garment that a person wrapped around the body, and then secured in some way. This outer garment was taken off to sleep at night, and it was put back on in the morning upon awakening. The point here is to go to bed and have your garment available, and have it on when Jesus Christ returns it the Second Coming so that you are not caught unclothed. This is a poetic expression: "Lest he walk about naked, and men see His shame." Have your garment ready.

What this garment refers to is the symbol of righteousness for the believer. It is not used here for eternal fellowship. God has provided that kind of garment indeed – a garment that establishes our eternal fellowship with God. For Adam and Eve, He did that by shedding the blood of an animal, and making clothing out of the skins of that animal. The animal clothing symbolized the covering that would be for their sin through the shedding of blood when Jesus Christ came. But Adam and Eve believed God's promise of a Savior to come. They were born-again. Therefore, God symbolized this by giving them clothing.

This was in contrast to their own clothing. Do you remember what they used for to make some clothing that they felt they needed for covering? Obviously, they didn't need this covering between themselves as husband and wife. They needed this because God was there looking, and they were ashamed in His presence. So, they decided to make their clothing a fig leaves. This included no shedding of blood. This was a human effort at covering their sin. And Isaiah 64:6 says that all those kinds of human efforts (or human righteousness) are filthy rags.

The fig leaf clothing could not possibly stand up even in use. After a few days, they would have dried up, and the first time you sat down, there goes your clothing, as the stuff all breaks up. Here you are, in the midst of a party, and you don't have your clothes on anymore. That can be downright embarrassing. It was a stupid move. It didn't work. God came in and said, "I'm going to show you how to do it right. My way is the right way. Your way is wrong. Your human effort is pointless."

So, the garments in verse 15 relate to what? Have you figured it out? To the believer's experiential righteousness, which he maintains with his temporal fellowship with God the Father. The admonition here to these tribulation believers is to be true to the Word of God, and to refuse to compromise with the antichrist. The antichrist may even offer amnesty to those who have refused his mark, if they'll cooperate with the society's effort. The pressure is going to be very great upon these believers to go along with the excitement and the high hopes of the time which is stimulated by the antichrist – that he is going to create a brave new world, where the problems of human suffering and needs are solved.

The believers, however, are to maintain their clothing of temple fellowship, and they're not to be swayed by the deceptive propaganda of the antichrist. If they are, first 15 says, "You will then run the great potential of walking about." This is the Greek word "peripateo." "Peri" means "about," and "pateo" means "walk," so "peripateo" means "to walk about." This refers to your daily life pattern. You will be tempted, as believers, to compromise with evil, and therefore to lose the garment of your temporal fellowship.

Adam and Eve had a great garment of light. That's what covered their bodies before they sinned. That's why they knew that something drastic had happened to them, because suddenly the light garment was gone. Adam knew immediately, when he came home that day, that something had happened to Eve. Suddenly the light garment that she wore was gone. And when he joined her in the sin, he lost his. Therefore, what they had lost was their walk with God in time. In their case, they had lost their eternal fellowship with Him too, because they were now condemned by their sin.

So, the call here is to keep the faith, and not to lose hope by being worn down by the antichrist and to join him. Otherwise, God says, "You will end up being "gumnos" – being naked. And this is the result of not being clothed with the garment of temporal fellowship. Revelation 19:8 indicates that to us: "And it was given to her (to the church) to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." So, here is the indication to us that what we're talking about here is clothing that is the result of how the tribulation saints conduct themselves, so that they have a temporal fellowship garment.

To lose your temporal fellowship garment is the result of unconfessed sin – compromising with evil in a society for one reason or another. So, believers who live out of temporal fellowship are going to be faced with sin that they refuse to recognize in themselves, and they refuse to confess. So, they are naked before God.

**The Laodiceans**

We have seen that this was true of church-age believers as well in Revelation 3:17-18. A lot of people find this a very difficult passage to attribute to Christians. They want this to be true of unbelievers. But it is exactly illustrative of what we're talking about here. This is the letter to the Laodicean church. The Laodicean church was a very rich church. It was the church in the final end times of the church page. Noticed Revelation 3:17-18: "Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked." The contrast here is obviously between these well-off Laodiceans, who were sophisticated Christians; who were financially well-supplied; who were very cultured in every respect; and, who were well-dressed. It was a showpiece every time they came to church on Sunday. But when God looked at them, he said, "You make me want to vomit." You have this horrible picture of a vomiting God.

What was it that so disgusted God? It was because He saw them naked. How could God see them naked when they were so proud of their garments? Because what God did not see was the garment of their temporal fellowship – the garment of their divine good righteousness provided by their divine good works.

So, in verse 18, God says, "I advise you Christians to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed – an eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see." This was a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

So, there is an eternal loss to believers who are not clothed with temporal fellowship righteousness when Jesus Christ returns. Noah's neighbors were so foolish as to ignore the warnings that he gave them, for 120 years, that a great catastrophic flood was coming that was going to cover the whole world, and they would all be destroyed. These people did not realize (and it was a sophisticated civilization) that as God looked upon them, they were totally naked, and they walked in shame.

Matthew 24 tells us the kind of treatment that Noah received for his preaching. Noah was right, however, and Noah was faithful to his call. In Matthew 24:37-39, Jesus says, "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah." He's talking about His Second Coming: "For as in those days, which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking. They were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away. So shall the coming of the Son of Man be." That's an amazing statement. They never made the connection. ...

Noah was telling them that: "What's going to happen is that I'm making this big boat. It's 450 feet long; 75 feet wide; and, 45 feet tall. I mean, this thing is going to float, and it's going to be a zoo on the inside, but it's going to be safe. And God is going to cover this whole territory with water. And this boat is going to float off, and there's going to be such a flood that when you get up to the highest mountain anywhere, it's not going to do you any good. God is going to bring a flood that is going to cover all that, and then He's going to keep it like that for a year. You can float around for a little bit (and some of them did), but pretty soon, you're going to run out of anything to eat. You're going to lose your strength. And one-by-one, you're going to fall off your float, and you're going to drown."

That's exactly what happened. Jesus said, "They never made the connection until the flood came." Then they said, "Oh, this is what you mean." By that time, it was too late. That's exactly what's going to happen here with Jesus Christ at the Second Coming.

In Daniel 12:10, Daniel says, "Many will be purged, purified, and refined. But the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand." See? They don't make the connection. But those who have insight will understand. Who has insight? Those who choose to believe the Word of God – those who choose to believe the truth that is given to them. If you believe it, it is all going to come together.

The sad thing about this is, that I thought was rather startling, is that people who, at that time, as in our day, who do not have a garment of temporal fellowship, are going to be seen by others for what they are, and they're going to see their shame. This word "shame" in the Greek means "indecently exposed." Please remember that public nudity in the Bible is classified as a great shame. What we have here is a principle which is enunciated for us in 1 John 2:28: "And now, little children, abide in Him, so when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." This, of course, is directed to Christians. Why do you want to be ashamed when Jesus Christ returns, and He begins to evaluate what you're doing? But isn't it interesting that even in our day, when we see Christians who are out of temporal fellowship, they are naked spiritually in our eyes, and there's a shame upon them? There is nothing that is commendable about a Christian who is out of temporal fellowship. You have a sorry, sad, and almost an embarrassing feeling, as you look at these people, because you're looking right through them, and seeing the nakedness of their spiritual shame.

So, John is led by the Holy Spirit to interject verse 15 which does not belong in there in connection with verse 14 and 16, which go together. But what he does is he says, "I want to remind you believers in the tribulation that you need to be on guard not to get carried away with the evils of the tribulation society. And above all, people, keep your sins confessed to God, and keep your temple fellowship intact; that is, the covering of you spiritually. And it does affect the way people see you. When people look upon you, and you do not have temporal fellowship, they see your shame by the way you act; the way you talk; the way you think; the places you go to; and, the things you do. They see your shameful deeds, because you lack temporal fellowship. When you're in temporal fellowship, you do not come to that.

With verse 16, this interruption (this small set of parentheses) is completed. Here we have the word which was used by General MacArthur on the battleship Missouri after the Japanese had signed the documents of surrender. General MacArthur stood up and made the speech that the disagreements between the nations have now been settled upon the field of combat, and that we now have a new era of weaponry with the development of the atom bomb, which brought that conflict to an end. Those of you that were in the military service at that time may remember that the Operation Olympic was now on the calendar. We were going to go, in November of that year, into the southern island of Japan, Kyushu, and the Marines were going to go in to secure the foothold there, and secure the beachhead there, to pour in as many American troops as we could to establish the base there. Then would come the full pressure against Japan. They were prepared to die. They were cutting sticks to have spears and anything they could fight with, as ridiculous as that might seem, but they were going to fight, just like the men in the islands had done, to the last person. It would have been a terrible slaughter. They expected at least a million (if not more) Americans to die there alone in taking the home islands.

Now it was all brought to an end by the atom bomb, and any further war would be worse than ever. So, General MacArthur said, "If mankind does not learn now to resolve its differences by peaceful means, then Harmagedon is upon us." He was quoting Revelation 16:16 because he was a good student of the Word of God. It's the Hebrew term for Armageddon. We shall look at that final climactic battle next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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