

SOME GOLDEN DAYBREAK

17 Sermons on the Second Coming of CHRIST

by Lee Roberson, D. D.

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CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

Matthew 24:21, 22

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

We will consider in a moment some things which will take place when JESUS comes for the saints. But first, I want to point out some things which will not happen.

1. The world will not come to an end.

Some people tie together the coming of JESUS with the end of the world. They are not at the same time. In II Peter 3 we read of the day when **"the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."** But this occurrence will not be until after the reign of the Lord JESUS on the earth.

***BBB NOTE: Up until the moment of the LORD's return (this old earth has at least 1,007 years remaining. The end of the world is a fair piece off yet.

2. The unsaved dead will not be raised when CHRIST comes for His own. **"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"** (Revelation 20:5). When JESUS comes, the dead in CHRIST shall be raised, but the lost dead will not be raised until after the millennial reign of CHRIST.

3. The church will not be left on this earth to go through the tribulation. For the sake of emphasis, I am repeating the truth I gave you on last study.

A picture of the translation of living saints is given in Genesis 5:24: **"And Enoch walked with GOD: and he was not; for God took him."** This interesting verse is further explained in Hebrews 11:5: **"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because GOD had translated him: FOR BEFORE HIS TRANSLATION HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY, THAT HE PLEASSED GOD."**

As Enoch was translated before the judgment of the flood, so will we be translated before the tribulation comes on the earth. Revelation 3:10 gives the promise that we will be kept from the hour of trial or tribulation. **"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation [or trial] which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."**

These are a few of the things which will not happen when JESUS comes. And now may we turn to the positive side and see the great and important things which will happen when He comes.

1. The saints will be caught up.

"For the LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD" (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

This promise for the resurrection and translation of the saints is also given in I Corinthians 15:51, 52:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

2. The HOLY SPIRIT will be taken out of the world.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (II Thessalonians 2:7). Evil is hindered now by the SPIRIT, but He will be taken away and then terrible things will happen. After the HOLY SPIRIT is taken up, then the Antichrist will be revealed.

For one hundred and twenty years, during the ministry of Noah, the SPIRIT strove with men, and held back the evil of the world. For two thousand years, during this age of grace, the SPIRIT has been striving to lead men to faith in the SON OF GOD, seeking to convict of the sin of unbelief and using His infinite power to hold back and restrain iniquity.

The HOLY SPIRIT dwells in believers, and when believers are taken out, He, too, will be taken away. He cannot be separated from believers, for JESUS said, **"He [will] abide with you for ever."**

3. The tribulation will begin when the saints and the SPIRIT are taken out.

What is the Great Tribulation? It is the time of GOD's great and sore judgment upon the world for the rejection of His SON. Daniel 12:1 calls it **"a time of trouble."** Jeremiah 30:7 calls it **"the time of Jacob's trouble."**

The full length of the Great Tribulation will be seven years, for we read in Daniel 9:27, **"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall**

cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The context reveals that one week is seven years. This is known as the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.

The intensity of the tribulation will be for three and one-half years. The last portion is called in particular "**the great tribulation.**"

Where do we find a description of the things which shall come to pass? The fullest description is found in the book of Revelation, chapters 6 to 18. In the tribulation seven seals will be opened and peace will be taken from the earth. Famine will cover the earth, and death will strike a fourth part of the population. The seven trumpets will be sounded and hail and fire will visit the earth. Waters will become bitter, and many will die. The sun will be darkened and locusts will plague and kill many.

A good description of the awfulness of the tribulation is found in Revelation 9:6, "**And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.**"

In Revelation 16 the seven vials of the wrath of GOD will be poured out. Boils will come upon men and the sea will become as blood. The sun will burn and scorch men. Darkness will cover the earth and a great earthquake, such as was never known, will be felt.

These are just a few of the things to come. "Hell on earth" is the best description of the three years and a half of tribulation time. War and bloodshed will be the order of the day.

In the light of these solemn facts, there are three things that I call to your attention.

I. THE WORLD FACES DARK AND FEARFUL DAYS

The world does not face peace and prosperity as some would tell us. The chief characteristic of this age is war and rumors of wars, and all of this war will culminate in the wars of the tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon.

For some time to come, men will be beating their plowshares into swords, and their pruninghooks into spears. It is foolishness to cry peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming. In tribulation days all peace will be taken from the earth.

Terrible and trying times are coming upon the world. There can be no real abiding peace until JESUS, the PRINCE OF PEACE, Himself will come. There will be no world-wide peace until the LORD comes and puts the Devil into the bottomless pit, and puts away all opposition to the work of GOD. JESUS will establish a peace, based on righteousness, the only foundation on which it can abide.

Peace made by sinful men cannot stand. Therefore all peace treaties are but scraps of paper. The work of peace organizations can do nothing more than secure a lull in the bloodshed which is sure to come and continue until JESUS sets up His kingdom upon the earth.

II. THIS IS THE TIME FOR PROFESSORS TO MAKE SURE THAT THEIR NAMES ARE IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE

Every person who belongs to this church professes to know CHRIST. But among professors there are two classes (those who profess only, and those who profess and possess everlasting life in CHRIST. Do you possess eternal life? What a terrible thing to belong to the church and to make a profession, but you discover when He comes that you are lost and left outside. Make sure now that your soul is safe in CHRIST JESUS.

III. THIS IS THE TIME TO GO AFTER THE LOST AND WIN THEM TO CHRIST

The days are few. Opportunities are slipping away. Souls are falling into Hell. CHRIST is coming. The great separation will occur. The tribulation will begin. What a fearful prospect for those who know not CHRIST.

If we love the Lord JESUS and love lost souls, let us get them to CHRIST. Let us get them ready to go up in the rapture of the saints. One day the door of grace will be shut. The day is coming when all opportunities to be saved will be gone forever.

Accept JESUS CHRIST and you need not fear the Great Tribulation or the coming judgment of the lost, or the eternal Hell prepared for the Devil and his angels and CHRIST-rejecters.

~ end of chapter 4 ~
