

REMINDER

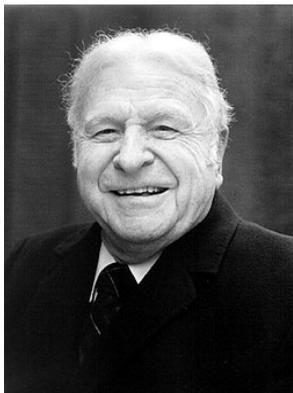
Volume XV

March 15, 2009

Number 11

GOD'S CHURCHES IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

by the late Dr. W. A. Criswell



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In Matthew 24:21, and in Revelation 7:14, we find the Tribulation mentioned: *he-thlipsis he-megale-*, “the tribulation, the great.”

“In the world ye shall have tribulation,” says Christ. But the trials and the sorrows that we know in this life are not even comparable, not even the beginning, to be mentioned in the same breath with this era, this period of time that shall precede the ultimate climatic consummation of history.

There is coming, says the Lord God, a time of infinite trial and judgment upon this world. And practically all of the Book of the Revelation is concerned with that final denouement, that great end period of unprecedented sorrow and tribulation.

Now, the question arises, *Shall we go through it?* Will the people of God be in it? Or does God take us away before that time of indescribable judgment and trial is poured out in wrath and fury upon this earth?

I do not believe that God's churches will not go through that awful, awesome, indescribable trial and time of sorrow and judgment. And the reason for my belief is to be found in these four propositions by which I have summarized the best I know how the teaching of the Word of God.

The first one is this:

God's people, God's churches will not go through that period of Tribulation *because the structural outline of the Book of the Apocalypse forbids it.*

God gives His own outline of the Revelation in the first chapter and in the nineteenth verse. He commanded John, “*Write the things which thou hast seen.*” And John wrote them down: the vision of the incomparable risen, glorified Lord.

Second, “*and write the things which are.*”

“*The things which are*” are His churches. Just like now, “*the things that are*” are the churches that pertain and belong to Jesus. Here is a church, yonder is one, there is one.

It was just like this in the days of John the seer. There was a church at Ephesus, one at Smyrna. There was one at Pergamos and another at Thyatira. There was one in Sardis and one in Philadelphia. There was one at Laodicea. So he wrote down the things which are. And you find that in the second and the third chapters of the book.

Then God said the third, “*And write the things which shall be meta tauta*” - “*Write the things that shall be after these things,*” - *after* the things of the churches.

So when I come to the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, I read, “*After this I looked, . . . a door, . . . a voice saying, ‘Come up hither, and I will show thee things which shall be meta tauta’*” —after the things of the churches. John faithfully followed that outline given him by the Lord.

(continued inside)

So, when I come to the end of Chapter 3, I come to the end of the churches. There are no more churches. Heretofore, the church of our Lord has been in the center of the stage, and the messages that Christ has delivered have been to His people. But at the end of the churches, the church is never mentioned again. It's never referred to. It's not seen in this earth. And the next time the church appears is in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation when the Lord comes at the end of the Battle of Armageddon in glory and in triumph and His church, His bride, appears with Him.

How did she get up there? Because at the end of chapter 3 and before the awful day and trial of the Tribulation, God *raptured*—the old English word for “took away”—God took away His people from the earth and took her unto Himself. And then the great judgment and wrath of the Almighty fell upon this world.

Now, that structural outline that you find in the Revelation is the structural outline you'll find in all of the Word of God - for the Scriptures say that His people will not face the judgment. God's people are delivered from the wrath and the fury of the judgment of God.

The *only* judgment that the churches, that God's people, shall ever know is the judgment of reward. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, ***“For we must all stand at the judgment seat of Christ, that each one of us may receive the things that [are done] in the body whether good or bad.”*** But the great judgment and the wrath of God upon blasphemy and sin and iniquity and an unbelieving world, all of that has been assumed and carried for us by our Savior on the cross. And the judgments that should have fallen upon us, fell upon Him. And to those who receive our Lord, the judgment day is past.

Nothing waits for us but to appear before our Savior to receive the reward of the good of our life. And that is in keeping with all of the Scriptures. Revelation and Romans 8:1, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation, no judgment, to them who are in Christ Jesus.”*** In John 5:24, Jesus says, ***“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me shall have everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, shall not come into condemnation”***—Into the wrath and fury and tribulation of God—***“but is passed out of death into life.”***

In the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, Paul is talking about the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, which includes this Tribulation. And as he speaks to that Day of the Lord, he says to us, ***“But we are not appointed unto that wrath and judgment of God, but to attain salvation from it by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** Or as the Lord said in Revelation 3:10, ***“Because thou hast kept my word, I also will keep thee from the great hour of trial that shall come upon the whole world.”***

So as we follow the structural outline of the Revelation, we find the church taken away before that awful day of the wrath and visitation and fury of God. And what we find in the Revelation,

we find in all of the structural outlines of the Holy Scriptures. God's people are delivered from it. The judgment, the wrath, the fury, the tribulation, the awesome vials and trumpets and seals wherein God pours out His judgment upon this world, that's not for God's people. They're taken away **before** it.

Now, the second reason why it seems to me that the churches of Christ, God's people, will not go through that awesome terrible, indescribable Tribulation is found in the exposition of the apostle Paul concerning it -

The church at Thessalonica, the children of God, the Christians at Thessalonica were in great sorrow. They were in trial and persecution. They thought that they were in that great Day of the Lord—that the Tribulation had come and they were in it. And they couldn't understand, for Paul had taught them that the churches, God's children would not go through the Tribulation. But they were in it, they thought, because of the awful persecution they were enduring. So they asked Paul about it. And in the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians, Paul has an exposition on that great Day of the Lord. In the second verse in my King James Version it's called ***“the day of Christ.”*** But these manuscripts that follow the text earlier and exactly say ***“the day of the Lord.”*** And the Day of the Lord is that great final time of the judgment and wrath of the Almighty that we call the **Great Tribulation.**

Now, Paul says to these Christians who are suffering, “Don't you be shaken in your mind or be deceived or troubled, as to that day of the Lord, that day of trial is already come and you're in it.”

“For,” he says, ***“that day will not come, except first there be a taking away, and the man of sin be revealed, that son of damnation and perdition, Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only the one that restrains and prevents now restrains and prevents until he be taken out of the way.”***

But when He shall be taken out of the way, the restrainer, the preventer, ***“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 parousia, with his presence, with his appearing, with his coming. Him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.”*** And on and on he describes that man of sin, that son of perdition called the ultimate and final Antichrist.

Paul says that the mystery of iniquity has been working for these hundreds of years. But he says that great, final, energized kingdom of Satan and that ultimate and final devil incarnate, the Antichrist, the man of sin, that he will not be revealed.

And he is revealed at the beginning of this Great Tribulation, this Day of the Lord. He will not be revealed until the Restrainer is taken out of the way. ***“The mystery of iniquity doth work now; only he that letteth, he that restraineth, restrains until he be taken out of the way.”***

(continued, next week)

BE PLANNING NOW TO BRING SOMEONE TO HEAR -

EVANGELIST MALCOM ELLIS

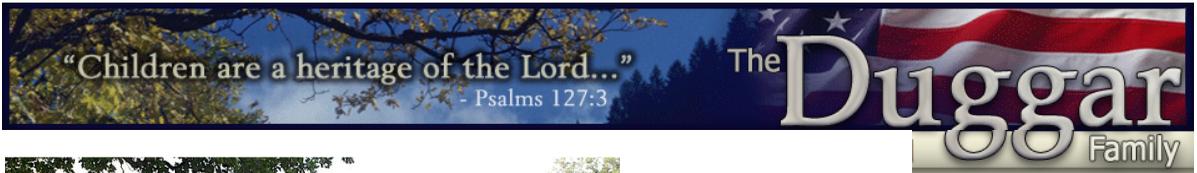
Wednesday, April 8 - Sunday, April 12



- Old-Fashioned Bible Preaching*
- Old-Fashioned Singing By Kent Buttram*
- Old-Fashioned Revival Services*

PLAN NOW TO BE HERE!

BE PLANNING NOW TO BRING SOMEONE TO HEAR -



**Sunday Morning
June 28, 2009**

- Duggar-family Musicians Will Play and Sing For Our Service!*
- Jim Bob Duggar To Bring The Morning Message!*
- Michelle Duggar To Give Devotional At Rebekah White's Baby Shower*
At 1:30 p.m.

PLAN NOW TO BE HERE!

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Larry Byars
 Cradle Roll 2: Mary Byars
 Floater: Justin Geroux

6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Kristi Hooper
 Cradle Roll 2: Kelsey Moreno
 Floater: Andrea Hooper

Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Nathaniel White
 Cradle Roll 2: Rebekah White
 Floater: Shirley White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of March 8, 2009

Sunday School ----- 24
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 47
 Evening Service ----- 31
 Wed. Eve. Service, 03/11/09 ----- 25

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of March 8, 2009

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 938.00
 Love Off'g, Malcome Ellis (we're saving up) ----- \$ 74.00
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 10.00
Total Received for Week of 03/08/09: \$ 1,022.00

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
 to operate the church
 EACH WEEK,
 as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00**

FUND DRIVE REPORTS

NEW HYMNAL FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 1,190.00

NEW PIANO FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 560.00

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND

Total Received, To Date: \$ 304.00

**DON'T FORGET TO GO TO OUR WEBSITE & STUDY
 THE BIBLE THROUGH OUR MEDIA MINISTRY!**

Bible Book Studies Currently Available Online:

- * Daniel (all) * Romans (all) * I Corinthians (all)
- * Ephesians (all-through current)
- * Revelation (all)

southheightsbaptist.com/mediaministry.html

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. **Admit that you are a sinner.**
2. **Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.**
3. **Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.**
4. **You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).**
5. **By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.**



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today** - OK? Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Nathaniel & Rebekah White ----- Outreach
 Jamie Davis ----- Sound Technician