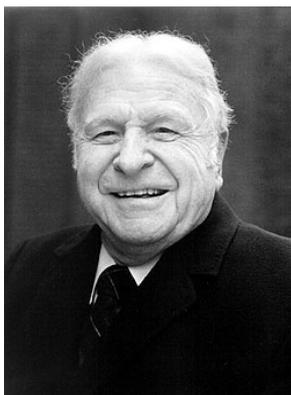


REMINDER

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GOD'S CHURCHES IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

by the late Dr. W. A. Criswell
(continued from last week)

There's not even an archangel in heaven that stands face to face to rebuke Satan. Michael, the archangel, dared not rebuke Satan, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." There is no one that can restrain the ultimate power of Satan but deity, the Holy Spirit of God Who is in this world, Who is in this church, Who is in God's people, Who is in the hearts of the believing Christians.

Paul says that there is coming a time when that Restrainer, God's Holy Spirit in God's people, when that Restrainer will be taken out of the way. When that Restrainer, the Holy Spirit of God in God's people, when He is taken out of the way, "***Then shall that wicked one be revealed, that man of sin, that son of perdition or damnation, who exalted himself above all that is called God,***" who deceives the world. God allows it because they believe a lie and had pleasure in it. That is the beginning of the Great Tribulation, when there is revealed on the world scene this ultimate Antichrist, this man of sin, this Satan incarnate.

Now just briefly to sum up the remainder of the Scriptures, they will reveal to us as we shall follow them that this man of sin, this ultimate Antichrist, appears on the world scene as a man of peace, and as a man unifying all of the diversities and divergences that divide our nations and our people. He's going to appear as the great deliverer. He will reign for seven years. At the end of the first half of it, at the end of three-and-a-half years, it is going to appear that he is a deceiver and an imposter.

The Great Tribulation is the last one-half of that seven-year period, and you're going to meet it again and again in the Word of God. It is called three-and-one-half years. It is called a time, times, and half a time. It is called time, times, and a dividing of time. It is called the 42 months. It is called the 1,260 days. You're going to meet it again and again.

This is the Antichrist, and when he appears on the world scene and Satan has him all groomed and prepared, God's people will be taken away. But that Antichrist cannot be revealed, will not be revealed, until first the Holy Spirit of God in God's people is taken away. And then shall that Antichrist appear. I think in every generation Satan has his antichrist prepared, and we'll never get beyond one that is candidate for that awesome and awful place. When you get rid of a Kaiser Bill, you got a Hitler. When you get rid of a Hitler, you got a Stalin, and when you get rid of a Stalin, you got a Khrushchev. When you get rid of a Khrushchev, you've got another one coming on the stage of history until finally, the kingdom of darkness driving hard has its ultimate and final world tyrant prepared.

When that final denouement comes, God will take His people out of the world, and the Holy Spirit among God's children will be removed from the earth. After that, then unrestrained you will see the riding of the powers of the kingdom of darkness under Satan in this earth. Then will come to pass those days of trial and trouble and sorrow and tribulation such as the world has never seen. That Antichrist organizes the nations of the world into the great last battle campaign that ends in the war of Armageddon. There, one-third of all of the people of the earth are destroyed—and all of them would be destroyed were it not for the intervention of Christ Who comes in the midst of the Battle of Armageddon with His victorious saints.

The intervention of Christ in history saved this world. And the only thing that saves it now, that restrains it now, is the presence of God's people in it. The reason the foundations of the world still stand, and the reason this world is not destroyed, is because of the presence in it of God's people. There is coming a time, says the apostle Paul, when this restraining, of the presence of the people of God and the Spirit of God in their souls, will be taken away. And then shall those awful, awesome, indescribably horrible days

(continued inside)

of judgment and of the fury of God fall upon this earth.

Now, the third reason why I do not think that God's people, God's churches, will go through this terrible Tribulation is because of the types, the illustrations, that are used in the Word of God. And of the many, I choose one our Saviour said in *Luke 17*, "**As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the appearing of the coming of the Son of Man.**"

Also - "**As it was in the days of Lot, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.**"

Now, when the Lord destroyed this world in the judgment day of the Flood, first Enoch was raptured before it, Noah was saved through it, and the unbelieving wicked people were destroyed in it - which would be as the Lord uses it here, "**As it was**"—the type of it, the figure of it, the simile of it, the picture of it: God's people taken out of the world before the judgment comes, the remnant saved in it. You are going to find out as we study the Revelation, that there are uncounted thousands of people who turn to the Lord in the midst of those awful trials and visitations—Noah, who was saved through it. Then the unbelieving, the blaspheming, the wicked who were destroyed in it. So the type of the picture is that God's people are taken out before it and the remnant are saved through it.

Now, the second illustration the Lord uses, "**As it was in the days of Lot.**" Lot was a compromised, carnal Christian. The Book says that he vexed his soul with the filthy living of the Sodomites. But Lot was a child of God, and when the angel said, "Escape!" Lot demurred. So, the angel took hold of him and snatched him out before the fire and the brimstone fell upon Sodom. "**For,**" said the angel, "**I can do nothing until thou be come hither.**" As long as Lot was in Sodom, the judgment could not fall. The fire could not fall. "**First,**" said the angel, "**I must take thee out. I can do nothing until thou be come hither.**"

So it is with the people of God in this world. That great final judgment will not come, and the fire and the fury and the wrath of the Almighty will not fall upon this world until first God's people be taken out of it.

Now if both of those men, Enoch and Lot, are very typical of God's people in this earth now.

Enoch - a glorious man who walked with God and was not, for God took him—Enoch was raptured, he was taken out before the judgment of the flood came.

Lot - a carnal, compromised Christian vexing his soul with all of the filthy life of the Sodomites, Lot was taken out also before the great judgment day of God came.

Glorious Enoch translated, taken out in the fullness of his spiritual life. Lot, compromised and worldly in the midst of Sodom, yet also taken out before the judgment of God came. It is thus before the great day of the Tribulation and the visitation finally of the wrath of God. All of God's people—even the worldly ones—those who have placed their trust in Him, they all will be taken out before that awful day comes.

That's why the Bible says, in I Corinthians chapter 3, "**We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**"

Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "**To receive the things done in this flesh.**" Those of us who have built with gold and silver and precious stones, when that day of trial shall come, our work shall stand and we shall receive a reward. But those of us who have built this life out of wood and hay and stubble, it all will be burned, yet we ourselves will be saved yet so as by fire, just by the skin of our teeth. That's why we can send our treasures and our inheritance ahead of us - these gold and silver and precious stones.

That's the work. That's the stewardship. That's the godliness of the child of the Lord. We're all going to be saved; some of us just barely, like a man running out of his house naked with nothing. Some of us are going to have a rich and glorious inheritance in the Lord. But all of us are going to be saved, raptured, taken away, before that great and awful visitation of the judgment of God that is called in the Bible **he- thlipsis he-megale-**, the Great Tribulation.

Now, the fourth reason. The first reason was the structural outline of the Apocalypse, how God made it and how it conforms to the structural outline of all of the Scriptures.

The second reason was the exposition of Paul in II Thessalonians that before the man of sin is revealed, first God's people—the Holy Spirit in their hearts—God's people must be taken away. The great Restrainer of this world must be taken away. The third reason is that the types and the figures and the comparisons and the similes and the examples in the Scriptures all portray that same truth that God's people—as Enoch and Lot—must be taken away first before God's judgment falls.

Now, the fourth and the last reason is this: **What is the hope and the comfort to the Christian as the Bible speaks to its soul?** What are we to look for and to wait for and to yearn for and to hope for? What are we to look forward to?

Well, there are some who are looking for the man of sin, and the child of damnation, and the great ultimate Antichrist. There are others who are looking for the beasts and the false prophet. There are others who are looking for the great and final Battle of Armageddon. There are others who are looking for the days of trial and tribulation.

But you will never in one instance find that in the Word of God. In the Word of God, in the Holy Scriptures, there is only one thing that you'll find the Christian is asked to wait for and to yearn for and to pray for and to look for. Atypical instance of it is Paul's writing in Titus 2:13, "**Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**" That is what the Christian is looking for.

We're not looking for the Tribulation. We're not looking for the man of damnation. We're not looking for the Battle of Armageddon. We're not waiting for the beast and the false prophet and the Antichrist and all of the fury of the judgments of God. God's people are looking for their Lord!

Now - anybody that interposes anything between the coming of the Lord and the fulfillment of that promise is denying and turning aside from the clear teaching of the Holy Book! He may come any day, any hour, any moment. He may come at noonday. He may come at twilight. It may be at midnight. It may be at the dawn of the morrow.

There is no program, there are no years, there is no Tribulation, there is no battle, there's no anything that a man can think of that could intervene between the coming of our Lord and the fulfilling of His promise any day, any moment, for we are commanded of the Lord to live in the imminency of the return of our Saviour.

The apostles lived in the imminency of the coming of Christ, and we are commanded to live in that same imminency. He will come without a sign for us. His coming will not be announced, as a thief in the night to steal away His jewels, the pearl of price He purchased with His own blood—His people in the earth. He will come suddenly, miraculously, noiselessly, silently, furtively, clandestinely. He will come to take His people away just as He came for Enoch who was translated. Just suddenly, miraculously, silently, and he was gone.

So it is with the people of the Lord. Any day, any hour, any moment, the Lord may call for His own. And when He does and we're taken away, that is the great signal for the beginning of that awful time of trial that the Book calls the Great Tribulation. So the comfort and the hope of God's people is not for any of these tragic and awesome things. But what God's people are to look for and to yearn for and to hope for and to expect is the appearing of

the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

The door of the Philadelphian age has closed. In the Laodicean age in which we now live, the door is closed and Christ is on the outside [seeking], knocking at the end of "*the things that are.*" But when the door is finally closed in this world, the fourth chapter of the Revelation begins and a door is opened in heaven. When it closes here, it opens there.

John, a representative Christian, in type and in symbol, when the door was opened in heaven John heard the voice as of a trumpet saying, "Come up hither." And John, in symbol and in type as a Christian, through that open door was raptured, was taken up with his Lord. And then follows those awful days of the visitation of the judgments of God.

The Lord says we are ambassadors in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it. Our home is in glory. Before any nation declares war, first they bring their ambassadors home, and it is thus when the judgments of God are visited on this evil unbelieving world, God calls the ambassadors home. ■

LADIES!

***DON'T FORGET TO BE HERE
TOMORROW NIGHT AT 7:00 P.M.
FOR OUR MONTHLY LADIES
MINISTRY MEETING!***

BE PLANNING NOW TO BRING SOMEONE TO HEAR -

EVANGELIST MALCOM ELLIS

NEW DATES -

Sunday, April 12 - Wednesday, April 15



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



PLAN NOW TO BE HERE!

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Merri Geroux
 Cradle Roll 2: Steve Geroux
 Floater: Shirley White

6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Charity Crawford
 Cradle Roll 2: Brian Crawford
 Floater: Justin Geroux

Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Seth White
 Cradle Roll 2: LeAnna White
 Floater: Shirley White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of March 15, 2009

Sunday School ----- 38
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 52
 Evening Service ----- 32
 Wed. Eve. Service, 03/18/09 ----- 28

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of March 15, 2009

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,029.00
 Love Off'g, Malcome Ellis (we're saving up) ----- \$ 15.00
 Love Offering, Pastor ----- \$ 2.00
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 10.00

Total Received for Week of 03/15/09: \$ 1,056.00

**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: \$ 1,200.00

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 * Amos * Romans * I Corinthians * Revelation
- * Ephesians (all-through current)
- * Also Messages by R. G. Lee & J. Harold Smith

www.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