

Revision of Chapters 1-3 (Continued)

The urgency of the world situation makes it a priority to be able to stand on the secure rock of the Word of God, which is why we are looking at what God has prepared for those that love Him, but equally for those who chose to ignore Him. Jesus is coming back for His bride; we are to be a prepared people. How can we do this?

Revelation 1 v 9-11

I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

The word here gives us three things that committed Christians will have to cope with in the last days: tribulation, Kingdom and perseverance. Jesus speaks of these three things on a number of occasions in the gospels and Paul also emphasises them both in the books of Romans and in his letters to Timothy. We shall look at tribulation in this study.

It is important in a battle to know our enemy and the tools that he uses to deflect us from the way of the Lord.

The book of Revelation speaks of the event of the tribulation in the very last days and Jesus warns of these times in **Matthew 24** as does Paul in **2 Timothy 3**. They refer to what will happen, what people will be like and also the place that God's word will have in our lives.

Jesus warns that we should not be misled and that there will be many false prophets who will lead people astray. Many will have fallen away during these times and grown cold in their love for the Lord and for one another.

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*SCF- Stevenage Christian Fellowship where Dennis Marshall was Pastor

Matthew 24 v 4-5

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

2 Timothy 3 v 1-5

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.

The encouragement is to stay close to the Lord and not be unaware of the subtleness of the devil. Tribulation is anything that causes us to be stressed, depressed, rejected, abused, confused, anxious, apathetic, blind or deaf, spiritually speaking. The devil has sent his spirits with names that bring about all these conditions in the lives of even God's people. The Lord wants us to be aware of our enemy and the tools that he uses to bring about his purposes in our everyday lives. The Lord also wants us to know the tools we have to defend and to defeat the common enemy of mankind.

1 John 3 v 7-8

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

What was it that Jesus used to destroy the devil's works? We can see in Matthew that it was the word of God that sent the devil packing. The devil has already persuaded many throughout the ages that the bible is a fairy story made up by pious men for the purpose of controlling people's lives, he knows the power that there is both in the word of God and in the name of Jesus.

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Matthew 4 v 1 -11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Some Christians treat the word of God with disdain, others with superstition, thinking that just by reading it excuses them from living the life that Jesus and His first disciples clearly set out in the bible. Hearing and reading and then doing it is the complete recipe that brings about the righteous lifestyle that is expected of us.

Imagine making a cake; reading the recipe and not putting any of the ingredients in the tin, then placing the tin in the oven at the right temperature and for the right length of time, only to discover then you remove it from the oven that there was no cake! Our Christian life can be like that, yet we would not be so stupid as to follow the procedure for making a cake described above, would we?

Let's go back to the word tribulation; we can see that for anyone that suffers they go through some measure of tribulation and when you think of the horrors of war or genocide tribulation can be seen to have taken place.

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However, the tribulation that Jesus is referring to is of a totally different nature and will signal the end of all pain and a glorious victory for the Lamb of God.

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