

(Revelation - Part 11): The Souls Under the Alter - Who They Are

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer explores the significance of the souls under the altar in Revelation, addressing the concept of soul sleep and encouraging believers to remain steadfast in faith amidst persecution.

Duration: 41:54

Scripture: Revelation 6:9

Topics: "Book Of Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the four states of a man: lost on earth, saved on earth, waiting in heaven after death, and glorified. He emphasizes that the Lord is concerned about resurrecting everyone's bodies, both saints and non-saints. The preacher also mentions the opening of the seals in the book of Revelation, specifically focusing on the fifth seal which involves attacks on Christians through lies and abuse. He concludes by highlighting the future phenomenon in heaven when the sun, moon, and stars will be affected by God's power.

Transcript

Verse 9 and following of the chapter 6 of Revelation. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true! Dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree passeth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll, and it was rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men, the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Now, if you'll remember, in the 4th chapter, the eternal throne and one seated on the

throne, and a rainbow around the throne, and the beasts and the elders and living creatures, and then in the 5th chapter, the book and the search for someone worthy to open the book, and the finding of that one in the person of the Lamb, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah. Then he took the book and began to open the seals, and for the first four there were the four horsemen, war and antichrist and famine and plague.

Then comes the opening of the 5th seal that we read tonight, and he said, When they opened the 5th seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain, the souls of the martyrs. Now the question I suppose we should try to answer is, Is this altar on earth or in heaven? Some say this altar is on the earth because the scene is earthly. But I'd like to call your attention to something in the book of Revelation, and it is that the whole book shifts continually as though God were playing a tremendously powerful spotlight, first on the heaven and then on the earth, and then on the heaven and earth together, and then on the earth, and then on the heaven, and then on the earth, and then both together, so that it takes a great deal of careful reading and a good deal of careful exegesis to know whether a thing is on the earth or in heaven.

But this altar, I take it to be in the heavens above, and he said, I saw there the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and they were under the altar and they were waiting. And they were waiting, obviously, with not too much patience, for they said, How long, O Lord, holy and true, before you avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And God said to them, as a mother might say to her child, Now, hush, don't be impatient, because we're waiting until the rest of the brethren have died as you've died. In the meantime, take these white robes, every one of you, and wait and be patient until the time comes.

God's time isn't always known to us, and it isn't always known to us, apparently, after we're dead, because these persons were dead. Now, I want to mention a little as we go along here about these souls of the righteous. Somebody has been asking me lately about soul sleeping, what happens to a man or a Christian man when he dies, whether his soul sleeps in the ground along with his body, and the two of them shall be waked simultaneously in that great day, or whether the body only sleeps in the earth and the soul goes to be with the Lord.

You know, it's strange how you can take a truth and believe a truth for a hundred years, for 500 years, and you have your scripture for it, you have it believed by the students and scholars and Saints and hymnists and evangelists and revivalists and reformers and missionaries and prayer warriors, and you can believe it for hundreds and hundreds of years, and even a thousand years, even two thousand years, and somebody will come along and challenge it and say it never was true in the first place. And everybody gets all excited and runs around like a chicken thrown off of a nest, squawking and shaking their feathers and saying, couldn't it be possible we've been wrong all this time? Well, there's a doctrine abroad, and I'm not going to be personal tonight and name groups because you only cause trouble, and anybody that doesn't have intelligence enough to know who I'm talking about wouldn't have intelligence enough if I photographed the thing and put it up here greatly enlarged to understand what I mean. And I know there's nobody here like that, you're all a very intelligent audience.

So we'll not mention names, but we'll only point out that there are those who say that the body and the soul are inseparable, and that the body never separates from the soul, but when we die, the body and the soul sleep together in the grave. Now, I want to give you just a few little scriptures here. Look in Luke 23, verse 46, when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

And having said this, he gave up the ghost. He said, I commend my spirit to thee, Father, and he gave up the ghost, but his body hung there on the cross, and after a while they found him dead, and they took his body down and they wrapped it in cosmetics, and they put it in the tomb that Joseph had hewn out of the rock. And so there was the dead body, but where had the spirit gone? It had been commended into the hands of God.

Now, if there wasn't a separation of the spirit from the body, then I don't know what words mean. And it was always believed that by the Church of Christ, down the centuries, back to Paul, and so why be disturbed by somebody who comes along and says, I'm sorry, but you've been wrong all this time, I'm right. Then look at 1 Peter 3, verses 18-20, says, For Christ, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, by which also I went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which were once disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Now, here, if this teaches anything, it teaches that when our Lord Jesus Christ had died and was dead in the flesh, his spirit was quickened, and he went and preached to the spirits in prison, that is, in Sheol, in the place of the departed spirits, and he preached to those spirits in prison. And those spirits in prison were the spirits of persons who had lived back in the days of Noah, and Jesus preached to them. And look at 2 Corinthians 12, verses 2-4, I knew a man in Christ, said Paul, about fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell.

Some think Paul was talking about himself, but whoever he was talking about, he said, I knew a man, and that man was the individual, the man. And he said, I don't know whether he was in the body at the time or out of the body at the time. And then our overheated friends come and tell us that you can't leave your body, that the body and soul sleep together.

But here was a man who said that he knew a man who, whether he was in the body he didn't know, or whether he was out of the body he wasn't sure, that is, he didn't know whether the whole man had been caught up, or whether his spirit had left his body temporarily. Such a one, he said, was caught up to the third heaven, and I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth, he said, how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Now there are those that say that the soul sleeps till the resurrection, and I ask you to notice Luke 16.22, it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

And the rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes. Now here was two men, one man who was ready for heaven and one man who wasn't, and they both died. And it doesn't say that one of them was buried, but it says he died anyhow.

And he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Now I want to ask you if you think that they carried that old, sore-ridden body into Abraham's bosom. If you think they did, why, then look at the next line that says, The rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes.

He died and in hell he lifted up his eyes. He was buried after the funeral, or at the time of the funeral, or before the funeral, I don't know. In hell he lifted up his eyes.

Now, there was a burial of a man, and I'm quite sure the man they buried didn't lift up his eyes. I'm sure that body they laid away there didn't lift up its eyes, because it was dead. But this man, nevertheless, in hell, lifted up his eyes.

And of course, our overheated friends tell us that hell means the grave. They say it means Hades, and Hades means the grave. And now I ask you to note how the rich man fared in the grave.

Here is the rich man in the grave, the soul and the body can't separate and the soul sleeps until the resurrection. Here is a man in a state of deep unconsciousness, lying in the grave along with his body, sleeping away there until the resurrection. The body lifts up its eyes and he sees Abraham, and he says, Abraham, give me a drop of water to quench my thirst.

Abraham said, Son, you, while you were on earth, had all your pleasures, and now you are tormented, and this other man is comforted. Well, he said, All right, then, Abraham, if you won't comfort me, comfort my brothers who are back on the earth, because they are there, and if somebody goes to them from the dead, they will hear. And Abraham said that they wouldn't hear Moses and the prophets, they wouldn't hear anybody anyhow, because they came back from the dead.

Now, that was a man lying unconscious in the grave, and he was having a conversation, he was making suggestions, he was asking for water, and he was talking about his five brethren and all that, and yet he was lying unconscious in the grave. That's a strange thing, indeed. Paul didn't know anything like that, and Peter never mentioned it, and it isn't mentioned by our Lord any time during his talks.

And then there is Luke 23.43, Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Now the old trick that has been used by the devil is used now by the Communists. It is to stampede you and sweep you off your feet by abuse and charges of all sorts, and just sheer steam and human energy.

And the poor Christian, he loves God and he is saved and he knows he is, and he trusts the Lord and he is looking forward to going to heaven, but when he suddenly gets attacked by these fellows using the old trick to lie long enough and big enough and loud enough, and you'll break down and bear down the defenses and pretty soon you'll have them believing. Now I ask you to notice, Jesus said to the thief on the cross, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. And that was all right, until somebody came along and got the notion that he wasn't going to be with Jesus in paradise, and the reason he wasn't going to be was because he was going to sleep in the grave until the resurrection.

So he had to do something with that, and you know what they did? They changed the punctuation, and here is the way they make it read, Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. In other words, they changed the punctuation. The Lord said, Today I'm going to tell you that you'll be with me in paradise.

And then the man died and slept in the grave and he's still there. Now, that's what I consider the trickiest kind of skullduggery, and I'd have no part in it at all. Now I want to give you some scriptural proof that the dead Saints go immediately to God.

Let's look at 2 Corinthians, the 5th chapter, where the man of God, Paul, says, 2 Corinthians 5, We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have the building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heaven. Now, he said, we, we, we. Here we are, we, and we've got an earthly house, and that earthly house is your body.

And he said, Now this is dissolved. And Paul knew what happens to a body, it dissolves when it dies, it decomposes, is the word we use now. Paul said, dissolved.

I know the translator said, dissolved. He said, We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heaven. For in this one we groan, he said.

Have you groaned a little recently? I've been groaning most of my life. I pray the Lord will help me to stop groaning and start praising, but you know, these bodies of ours, they make us groan sometimes. When you cut your teeth, you groan, when they pull them out, you groan, and when they ache, you groan, and when you fall and get hurt, you groan.

In this we groan. What are we groaning for? We are earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our new house. He said, You don't know it, but what you're groaning for is your new house.

You want a new body, you're the new one, you're going to get over there. If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. Now some people talk about naked souls, but I don't think there's going to be any naked souls.

For we that are in this tabernacle to groan, being burdened, not that we be unclothed. Nobody wants to be a blessed ghost. Nobody wants to be unclothed.

But he said, We want to be clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Then in Philippians 121 to 24, For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Now if a man to die was to go to sleep and sleep in the ground until the Lord comes, I want to know if that would be a gain.

To die and go to heaven would be a gain, but to die and sleep in the ground would be a specific loss temporarily anyhow. So surely Paul couldn't have had that in mind. But if I live in the flesh, he said, What does he mean, if I live in the flesh? This is the fruit of my labor.

Note he didn't say, Not if my flesh lives. But he said, If I live in my flesh. Paul had two ideas of where he was going to live, in his flesh and out of his flesh.

He was going to live in his flesh, or he was going to live with the Lord out of his flesh. He said, I don't know which I choose really, I am caught in the middle. He said, I'd like to die, but I don't want to, because I've got work to do.

For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Do you suppose that a man praying with these people and loving them and singing and worshiping with them and walking around on the earth and seeing the sunshine and breathing the air and looking at the blue sky, do you suppose that he said, I want to die and lie unconscious in the grave, which is far better? I think that's nonsense, and I think that we Christians, you Christians who have believed that when you die you go to heaven, and I think other people are wrong, and the Church has always held it, and it's only the fringe people who hold otherwise. Now I want you to beware of false teachers who come in, and they are usually more zealous than the holders of truth, and that's always been odd to me.

A man who believes the truth may take it very calmly and restfully, but the fellow who gets ahold of an error, he steams up about it, really. And these false teachers who teach soul-sleeping, that the body can't separate from the soul and we're going to lie unconscious in the grave, they tell us among other things these four things. They tell us that all Christians have been wrong throughout the centuries, and they alone are right.

Out of my mind that would be enough to prove they were wrong to start with. Anybody who would suddenly come out and say, Now here, I'm going to sweep all the Churches taught away, and I'm going to tell you what's the truth, I say, Leave him away, because that fellow, even if he was right, he'd be too humble to say that. But that's what they're saying.

All the Christians have been wrong throughout the centuries, and we alone are right. And they say, All translations have conspired to deceive you. We alone have the right translation.

A fellow wrote me the other day in answer to my little affair there in the magazine on various translations, and he said that the King James Version is all wrong, and he said, I want you to get such and such a version because it's straightened it all out. He said, for instance, the King James Version says, Forever and ever and eternally and everlasting. He said, There's no such a meaning in the Bible.

And he said, The translators were wrong that put that in the Bible. But if you'll get this other, I forget what translation it was, it was one private one they must have had. He said, Here, that will straighten you out.

I don't know. I try to answer every letter I get, even cracked parts. Paul Rader used to say, The brighter the light, the more bugs you attract.

And I attract some very, very, very gorgeous, oversized bugs. And yet I try to answer all the fellows that are writing me. Some write me and tell me that I'm an astonishing phenomenon in this world of men, and others write me and tell me to go get lost.

And I try to write and answer both, but I think I'm going to let this fellow stew in his own grease. I don't believe I'm going to reply. Then the third thing they say is, All who teach different from us are evil, and we alone are the saints of the Most High God.

We are the latter-day saints. We are the saints of today, and everybody that teaches different from us, if you believe in heaven, you're all wet. If you believe that the soul goes to be with God, you're all wrong.

Now they tell us that for the fourth, all interpreters are wrong, and we alone have the correct interpretation. Now, there's a little question I'd like to ask, and then I'm going to leave this and go on to something else. The question is, Jesus said, By their fruit you shall know them.

I want to ask you if these people live better lives than the rest of us, if they live better lives than the Methodists did and the Presbyterians did and the Baptists did and the Quakers did and the Salvation Army did. I want to know if they live better lives. It hasn't been my observation that they do.

They don't live better lives than Augustine or Bernard or Saint Francis or the martyrs who died and said, I'll die here, but I'm going to be with the Lord. They say that martyr was foolish, all those martyrs by the millions who gave their lives and said, I'm giving my body to be burned or I'm giving my body to the lions, but my soul is going to be with God. Those poor martyrs, they were all mistaken, don't they know that's not so? Somebody said he was going to go to heaven, and he said, I'm going to see my Lord.

Stephen looked up and saw the Lord, and they say, poor Stephen, he should have had that other interpretation because there was no heaven to go to. When Stephen died, they laid him away there, and there he is, he's been unconscious for 1900 years. Now, are those better than other people, are they the sample saints, do they have love and peace and mercy and goodness and long-suffering and kindness and temperance? I don't think so.

They come barging in, cuss you out, tell you that you're a dumbbell and you're no good, and are generally abusive, hard to get along with, and generally nasty. That's been my experience with them, these teachers. Then when our people die, why do they say, now, don't get all excited and say that your dear loved one is with Jesus in heaven for the simple reason he's sleeping out there in Evergreen Park Cemetery, and he'll sleep right there until the Lord wakes him from the dead? I don't believe it.

Not for a second do I go along with Paul on this, and Peter and James and John and Jude and Christastom and Stephen and Bernard and Saint Francis and Luther and Wesley and all of them. I'm not ready to hold my hands up and surrender and say, Comrade, I give up, I'm not giving up. I still believe the Bible, brother, and I believe what it says, and I don't believe ridiculous interpretations by men who are neither scholars, saints, nor anything else.

Well, the souls of them were under the altar, the souls of the martyrs, from Stephen to the latest one. I don't know who the latest martyr is, but whoever he is, these souls were under the altar. And why hadn't they been heard from before? Why hadn't these martyred people, for you know when you martyr a man, when the world martyrs a saint, the world commits a frightful act of injustice, a frightful, unspeakable act of iniquity.

Why weren't these saints heard from before? I'll tell you why. Because nobody had opened that book, no, those seals were still closed. Nobody had opened the book, they hadn't found anybody that could.

And when they found Jesus Christ the Lord, were they to open the book? Why, the book was opened and the seals, and then they heard from them. Now, it's a solemn thought that the blood of every martyr and every murdered saint cries from the ground and their soul cries from the altar. History is all mixed up, but the omniscient God knows, and he knows where everybody is.

He knows where all the bones of the saints are, and he knows where all the dust of the saints is. He knows it all. He said, then, that white robes were given to them.

Now, there are four states of a ransomed man, four states, I want you to get this. There is a time when he is lost on earth, he is lost on earth. He is not a saint yet, but I'm talking about and taking the broad view of him.

He is lost on earth, he is without hope and without God in the world, his sins are piled on him, and he has the judgment of death on him, and he is lost. Then he passes out of that through the door into the kingdom, and he is saved on earth. He walks around on the earth for a while, saved on earth.

I have a dear old friend out on the West Coast, a dear brother, F.H. Rossiter, he is 99 years old, 99 years old! I feel like an adolescent when I talk to him, and he is 99 years old. He's been around a long time, he was converted when he was in his teens, and here he is 99 and I think he'll probably make it to the 100 mark. He is still able to write letters and talk, and is still a preacher, he's a preacher.

99 years old, he's been a long time, he's waiting on the earth. Then when the man dies, that same man dies, he waits in heaven. And then when the Lord returns, he is glorified in heaven.

There are four states of a man. He's lost on earth, he's saved on earth, he dies, and he is waiting in heaven, and then he is glorified. You say, what about the body? Well, the Lord isn't as much concerned about the body as people are, but the Lord is concerned enough that he's going to resurrect everybody.

He's going to resurrect the body of the Saints, and he's going to resurrect the body of those who weren't Saints. And we're going to get our bodies back. So don't complain about your body and take good care of it, as good as you can, if you need to give it up for the Lord, give it up, the Lord will take care of that and have a better body for you.

And then comes the opening of the sixth seal, and we'll cut through all the extras and say that these people they saw there in that place, it says that there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars fell out of heaven upon the earth, and as a fig tree cast her untimely fig, and the heaven departed as a scroll, and then the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bondman and freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne. Now, here's something you can expect, just when I do not know it. There have been those who have tried to predict and they always get in trouble because the Lord told us not to predict.

He said he knows that, that the Father knows that, and for us not to waste our time predicting or trying to pin down time and seasons. But there is something you may be sure of, that we are going to see heavenly phenomena. We are going to see things.

Did you hear about what happened yesterday or the day before yesterday? They sent up a rocket to go around the world and went into orbit, and there were 30 million copper needles, and what they were supposed to do was to distribute themselves in little shields all around the earth. Up there a few hundred feet away were 30 million copper needles distributed all around the earth. And if the old boy over in the Kremlin puts off his 50 mega-typhoon flare, that will make a little noise up there, too.

And they are already up there now, you know, the heavens are getting as noisy as the earth. You'll have to have a traffic man up there before long. They keep throwing stuff.

I think that the United States has sent up 35 or so hunks of metal, and Russia has sent up a lot. And they are up there, and I don't know whether they can talk or not without an interpreter, but here they go around there. But that isn't anything but as insidious compared to what we are going to see, the phenomenon in the heavens one of these days, because the sun and the moon haven't been affected, and the stars and their courses, but they are going to be.

God is going to take things out of the human hand. The awesome picture that he gives us here of the people and their like us, those people that he calls great men and all that, their people with families, they could put their picture in the paper there, there's a fatal mistake we're making now to put our trust in men. I don't know whether I should say this or not, because some of these are going to be released out on the West Coast.

Anyhow, I had breakfast with a senator down in St. Paul, a state senator, and he's a Democrat, and I was sitting there eating ham and eggs, and I said, well, Senator, I'd like to ask you a question. I'd like to ask you now that you've had lots of time to think it over, what do you think of Jack? Democrat or not, he shook his head, he said, really, I don't know, I don't know. He's a Christian man, and he talks with Christians.

He said, I don't know. Well, we'll put our trust in Jack. And Jack smiled and gave us that accent from New England, and shook his bushy head, and he said, we've got our boy.

And now he's just as badly messed up as all the rest of them have been. And that's the way it always is. Don't blame him at all.

Nobody could do it. If you wanted somebody to come out here and lift the Royal York Hotel up on his hand like a waitress, as a waitress lifts up a platter, why, no matter who you sent down there, he couldn't do it. No matter what his political party was, he couldn't do it.

And the world's too big for any man to carry around. Nobody can do it. They managed to talk as if they were doing it, and I've always thought that was amazing, how the politicians are able to do that.

But here we find when the stars begin to fall, and the glory begins to shine, and the souls of the martyrs begin to plead, and God begins to speak, and the seals begin to be unloosed, the politicians are going to stop making speeches and cry for the rocks and the mountains. And the great men, and those are the heavy thinkers. We've got them heavy thinkers, you know, big dome boys who sit around and think up great ideas, and they put them to work, and those ideas blow up in their faces.

Long before they ever sent those poor, poor people around the world, those poor little kids not dry behind the ears, who don't know their right hand from their left, sent them out there among the wolves. One little girl wrote a postcard home, and she got bounced. And they're going to bounce them, you'll see the whole thing blow up.

These heavy thinkers with their big domes and their ideas, they're going to cry for the rocks and the mountains. And these rich men, these lords of finance, these men that can write big checks, these chief captains, those are the militarists, I guess we ought to call it, if you want to pronounce it correctly, and these chief captains, and these freemen, I suppose you'd call that the west, and the bondmen, I suppose those are behind the iron curtains. Now, all the curtains disappear, and there aren't any bamboo curtains, and there's silk curtains, no iron curtains, but rich men, and great men, and chief captains, and kings, and freemen, and bondmen, and all like cry out and say, will fall on us to hide us from the wrath of the Lamb.

They used the name of the Lamb in curse words while everything was going their way, but now they're crying for God to save them from the wrath of the Lamb. They don't have a place in all the United Nations where the name of Jesus Christ is honored, not a place. I understand they were going to have a spot in there where you could come in and pray, if you wanted to pray, if you were a Buddhist and wanted to tell your beads, or if you were a yogi and wanted to stand on your head, or whatever you wanted to do, you were supposed to go there and do it.

But there isn't any place dedicated to Jesus, the Lamb, to take away the sins of the world. But there will be the day when the United Nations, whether it's in New York, or Berlin, or Moscow, or wherever it is, there will be a day when everybody in it will forget who they are, and they'll cry to the heavens above and call on a God in whom they didn't believe before, or a God whom they neglected. And they will say, Fall on us to hide us from the wrath of the Lamb, for the day of his wrath is coming.

My friends, this is the day of his mercy. This is the day now when his mercy is all over the earth, that the day of his wrath is coming. The wrath of the Lamb, the wrath of the Lamb we could expect, but the wrath of the Lamb, the outraged Lamb rises in his wrath, and the heavens are shaken and depart as a scroll, and the mountains and the islands are moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich and the mighty men call on God.

And there will be a prayer meeting. And the day when Billy Sunday was preaching, he used to sing a song, The Great Judgment Morning. I had dreamed that the Great Judgment Morning had dawned, and then one stanza or one verse of the thing says, The rich man was there, but his money, when that time came, it all passed away.

And the great man was there, but his greatness had all passed away. There wasn't anything left, and the righteous man was there, but his righteousness had all passed away. And all they had left was these filthy garments full of holes in the presence of an orphaned God.

And they asked the question, Who shall be able to stand? Who shall be able to stand? Well, I bring this to a close by saying that he shall be able to stand whose foot is thin. The reason these great men and kings and rich men and peace men and free men and bondmen, the reason they are in such terror is they love their kin. I heard of a woman out in Kansas.

The twister was coming a great funnel a mile high. They saw it coming. They saw a little lake, and they had a storm cellar.

They suspected those things, and they had a storm cellar a little up there below the surface of the ground. When the wind came, it just blew over, and they were safe down there. She was afraid her house would blow away.

She got her children down there, and her husband was down there and the rest of the family. But she decided that there was, I forget what, back in the house. She said, I don't want that to be destroyed and take the house from down.

And she dashed back to get that little knick-knack that she wanted to keep. And while she was in the house, the twister struck, and they found her all torn and bleeding and dying among the rubble after the twister had passed. And who shall be able to stand? Those who have given up their trinkets.

Those who have quit loving this world. Those who have given up the hope that anything down here is permanent. Those who hate their sin as God hates it.

They'll stand all right in that day. The first psalm says the righteous shall stand in the judgment, but the wicked shall not. No one who has not put his trust in Christ shall be able to stand in that day.

No one who has not forsaken the world shall be able to stand in that day. And the one who has overcome. What has he overcome? He's overcome the temptation to quit.

The devil came along and said, you've been serving God now for ten years, and you've had nothing but trouble, and you lost your job, and your wife broke her leg, and your baby got serious, and your car ran off the road and piled up, and you've never had anything but trouble. Well, now he started serving the Lord. We listen to the blandishments of the devil and decide what to use.

Start, stop tithing, stop going to church, stop going to prayer meetings, pretty soon stop praying. That's the business of the devil. But the man who knows God in reality, he doesn't listen to those blandishments.

He says, if naked came I into the world, and naked I'll go out, and if God takes away everything I have, I'll love him anyhow. I'll praise him even if he slays me. You've got to overcome, brothers and sisters.

The overcomer will be able to stand in that day. What a terrible, terrible day. I've never been in an earthquake.

But they tell me that the terror of an earthquake is your sudden loss of confidence in the earth. Always when you walk around on the earth, it stands up on you. You walk down the sidewalk, it's there.

You walk out on the ground, it's there. And always you can orientate yourself. Here you are, standing on your two feet, and here's the earth, and there's the clouds of the sky, and here you are.

And you're sure of yourself. But when the earthquake comes, everything begins to rock and dance. The floor, you can't trust the floor anymore, and the floor and the wall get all mixed up with the ceiling.

And they say that's a terrible psychological shock. And everything gets mixed up. I told you, we were riding a plane here where we got into a little trouble.

And the thing was doing such shenanigans that I couldn't even find my mouth. I tried to take a glass of a cup of coffee, and the thing went up here instead of coming in here. And I couldn't find the horizon.

I didn't know which part was up quite literally. Well, I don't suppose that the men out in the cockpit thought it was bad, but for an old landlubber like me, I thought it was pretty bad. And that's what's shocking, you know.

Not to be able to find your feet, not to be able to put your feet down and say, here's something I can trust. And that's a terrible day. And stars don't act like stars.

And the sun doesn't act like the sun anymore. And the moon doesn't act like the moon anymore. And the north and the south get mixed up with the east and the west.

And the earthquake shocks. Men and cities go down. Oh, brother, you will wish you were a Christian in that.

You will wish in that day you knew the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. When the Lamb of God who comes with his hyssop to cleanse your soul turns into the Lamb of God who comes in his fury to pronounce wrath upon a world that has rejected him. Who shall be able to stand? I trust you will.

I trust you will. I believe I will. I hope you will.

And if you're not ready to stand, this is the night. Without any doubt, this is the night. God help us all.

This is a swift formation of things. And I certainly haven't given all the details. But I want to ask the question, who shall be able to stand? Are you among them? If not, you might as well not have been born.

And if you're never among them, you'd better never have been born. But it's so easy. Turn from our wicked ways unto Jesus Christ our Lord and become one of those protected and shielded ones forever and forever guaranteed by the Lamb of God.

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