

# (Revelation - Part 12): Who Are the 144,000

by A.W. Tozer

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*The sermon explores the significance of the 7th Revelation, the role of angels in the Bible, and the importance of having a supernatural perspective in Christianity.*

**Duration:** 53:37

**Scripture:** Revelation 7, Revelation 21:4, Revelation 21:9-10

**Topics:** "Book Of Revelation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the imagery of four angels standing on the four corners of the earth as described in the book of Revelation. He addresses the criticism that this implies a belief in a flat or square earth. The sermon then transitions to the seventh chapter of Revelation, where four angels are seen holding back the winds of the earth. The preacher emphasizes the sealing of the servants of God and the specific number of those sealed from each tribe of Israel. The sermon concludes with a reminder that understanding the complexities of the world and discerning right from wrong requires deeper thought and reflection.

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## Transcript

In the 7th Revelation, the 7th chapter of the Book of Revelation, After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor in any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the tree, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand were sealed. The tribe of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtholim, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. All of these were sealed, thousands of all of these tribes.

Verse 9, After this I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and thorns in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell.

They fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might. Unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, to serve him day and night in his temple.

He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Now our Lord is opening the seals, and as we have tried to point out, there is war and famine and plagues.

We saw last Sunday night the souls of the martyrs in the hand of God, underneath the altar, and the shaking of heaven and earth. And affected were the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountain, and the island, and all mankind. Now comes a breathing spell in between the sixth and the seventh seal.

John said, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth. I'd like to begin the way out and say that when you read such an expression as four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, I'd like to put a little word in here to help you Christians who may be attacked by persons who do not believe the Bible. They say there it's obvious that the person who wrote this book believed the earth was square, or at least it was flat, and that it was in such a shape that there were corners to it, and there were four of them.

These angels were standing on the four corners. Now I'd like to say to you that if you will give the Bible the benefit of the doubt and wait for a little further life, that is, if you will look for a little further life and pray for a little further life, you will always find that the Bible is right. The critic who says that this Bible couldn't have been written by a knowledgeable man, this book of the Bible couldn't have been, because he talked about the four corners of the earth.

Well, anybody knows what he means. He means the four cardinal points, north, south, east, and west. And we have talked about the four quarters of the globe so long and so often and so much, altogether apart from the scripture.

Even now we talk about it such. The four winds of heaven. There are only four winds, the north wind, the south wind, the east wind, and the west wind.

And then of course they whirl all around and come at you from an angle, but those are the major winds, and that's all that it means here, because it says that they stood on the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of heaven. Nothing mysterious about that. There are the four winds of heaven, and there were four angels holding these four winds of heaven.

Now, when I was preaching in Hebrews, I am preaching in Hebrews Sunday mornings now, but when I came to that passage about the angels, that the angels of God worship him, I took time out to preach a whole sermon on angels. As our brother Greg goes on Wednesday night, he'll come to angelology after a while and talk about the angels. But I can't skip over what is here and point out to you that we've got to face up to the fact of angels.

We have to face up to it. We're going to be believers in the Bible. We have to face up to angels.

In the book of Revelation they are mentioned 75 times, and anything that is mentioned 75 times in one Bible ought not to be skipped over by me, because I am so very learned and modern and know all about nuclear fission and therefore don't believe in angels. If I believe in the Bible and the Bible 75 times in one book talks about angels, I ought to get my eyes open a little bit and say to myself, Now, wait a minute here, boys, maybe you're skipping something. Maybe you have skipped over something that you ought to take seriously.

And the Bible talks about angels mentioned 297 times by actual count. A few times the word in our English Bible refers to human messengers, for the word means messenger. But in the vast majority of times that the word is used, it is used of a being from heaven, and that being is said usually to be large and powerful and immortal and holy and wise.

Jesus our Lord said about the angels that they would do not marry or give in marriage, said people in heaven wouldn't, because they were like the angels of God. Neither could they die anymore, so they are immortal and they are holy and they are wise, not always, but wise, and they are always closely associated with God, running and going back and forth doing the errands of the Almighty. Now, a few more facts about these angels, and I am skipping the fallen angels.

I don't know much about them. I probably know as much as I want to know, but there is something in there about them, too. We are talking about the holy angels, and I notice these angels are always on the side of righteousness and God, always, never find them on any other side except the fallen angels.

But the holy angels of God are always on the side of righteousness, and they are almost always on the side of man. I say almost always because there have been occasions where they couldn't go along with man because of his sin and rebellion, but when God sends them to be ministers to men, they are naturally on the side of man. I have noticed also in the scripture that the angels are more active in times of crisis and less apparent in quieter times.

It was when the morning stars sang together and the angels of God shouted for joy, God created the heaven and the earth. It was when God was giving the law that he gave it through the mediation of angels. Angels were active then.

When our Lord came to the world and was born of a woman, the angels were seen in a great multitude of the heavenly house, praising God and saying, Glory to God in on high. Then later on, when our Lord had risen from the dead, the angels were there again. When you get to the book of Revelation again and the crisis begins to churn and get tighter and fiercer, then we find angels appearing 75 times in that one book.

But they are less apparent in quieter times, I say. Now, why have we no place for angels in our thinking in modern Christianity? Because, one reason, the veil of materialism is on the modern religious American and Canadian and English and French and German Western minds. The veil of materialism is over our minds, and Christ has been linked with earthly prosperity.

I suppose that my good compatriots and friends down south of the border didn't like to hear me say it, but I have said it, that you cannot equate Christianity with Americanism. They are not the same, neither can you equate Christianity with Canadianism. I believe in nationalism, I think it's nice to hear Canadians talk up for Canada, I think it's nice to hear Americans talk up for the United States, but I don't think that we ought to

make the mistake of thinking that a fat, well-lined, toothpicking, storytelling, Christian American businessman with his Cadillac parked out in front and his summer home and his winter home and a few things like that, that's Christianity, brother.

A man could be a Christian and be that, but then he wouldn't be a very good one, but then he could be one. So we equate that with Christianity, and that we don't have any place for angels, you can't buy an angel, nor sell him, and he won't bring you anything, and it's too silly, this angel business. But God talks about them here, but we've got a materialistic mind, and so if a man is making money, amen, praise the Lord, he's a Christian, and the Lord is his co-partner.

But if he isn't making any money, then he suspects something's wrong with the fellow. Now, if I read my Bible right, that's exactly upside down to the scripture, because in the scripture it was the rich man that was having a tough time getting to heaven, and the poor man who went sailing through quite easily. So I think we'd better rethink this whole deal, for I think that we're badly off-center.

Lecture 11 Justification and Sanctification 7 Now, the popular teaching has denied or muted the supernatural, really. We're not a very supernatural people here at Avenue Road. You know, friends, I think I can say this to you, I'd say it anyhow whether you like me or not, but I think that you understand me enough that I could say it, that it's my conviction that the Lord could leave Avenue Road Church and be gone on a 6-month holiday, and when he came back, we wouldn't have missed him much, because we got everything nicely fixed up.

When we'd just turn the crank and away she rolls, everybody knows what to do, and we'd do it. The idea of the immediacy of God and the necessity for God, we don't have it here, and I haven't been very many places where it's found. In fact, we get very much worried when God becomes necessary to us.

They tell the story of a preacher who got up before his congregation and said, I have an announcement to make, my friend. On my way from my house to the church, my notes blew away and blew over the cliff, so I have no notes to preach from, and I come badly unprepared. I'll have to trust God this morning, but next Sunday I hope to do better.

Now, that's a joke they tell on the preacher, but you know that there's more truth than poetry in that story, because as soon as the church gets into a tight spot where it has to trust God, the board sweats, and the pastors walk around in circles. We all walk around in circles. As soon as the supernatural becomes necessary to us, we're miserable.

We want to know the supernatural is out there somewhere further than the farthest rocket has gone, waiting for us when we're plenty done with this world. But we want to wring all of the goody out of this world that we can. We want to squeeze every hive of honey possible and wring every sweetness out of it, and then when we're thrilled with it and we're so old and battered and lined up and calcified that we couldn't enjoy ourselves anyhow, well, we want to go to that supernatural place.

But in the meantime, we'd rather God wouldn't bother us, because trusting the supernatural is an edgy, sensitive thing, and we don't want to do it. And a preacher has that same temptation to fight. Don't think I'm standing up here flapping my wax wings.

I'm not. I'm one of you, and we're all alike. But it's a sad thing, my friends, when we have denied or muted the supernatural to a point where we've confined every miracle to another generation.

They talk about healing in the Christian Missionary Alliance an awful lot, or at least they used to, and I've been criticized a little because I don't talk more about it. But I find out the people who talk about it run for a pill just as soon as they feel the first twinge of a headache. I've found that we preach about healing and anoint people and then go take pills.

So I'm not sure we're believing in the supernatural any too strongly. We're believing in our belief in the supernatural rather than in the supernatural. Well, I don't know why the Lord ever didn't button up my mouth and not let me say some of the things that I say, but I've said it now, and I've said it in an Alliance church, the day when everybody from 260 to 490 will all begin to trust the Lord for their bodies, then I'll begin to preach more about healing.

But in the meantime, I like to be practical and preach in line with what I see as well as what I hear. So I believe in divine healing, and I pray for this sake. I have seen a few people healed in answer to prayer.

I've seen some of them die, but I've seen some of them healed and will be walking around yet in answer to prayer. So I believe in it all right, but I don't want anybody to stampede me or rush me and say, Now, hold on there, closer, what's the matter with you? Why don't you go home and get rid of your pills and then come back and talk to me? The mighty scene here in heaven, I think this is one of the most wonderful scenes that I've possibly read about or seen with my mind's eye. These four angels are holding the four winds of heaven as though God is dramatically waiting.

You know what God is doing? I've been telling you since the 5th chapter what God is doing. God is jarring man and the earth loose from mankind's control. Man has his roots in, you know.

He has driven his stakes in. Man belongs to the earth, or the earth belongs to man. God says the earth doesn't belong to man, the earth belongs to the man, the man Christ Jesus, the man that is worthy, who has earned his right to hold the earth.

So he's shaking the earth loose. I'm glad for this, very happily glad for this. I'll be glad for the time when all these border crises will be over with.

One fellow says, I own this. Another fellow says, I own this. And it's been a standing joke through the centuries that one farmer puts the line fence over with four inches on the other farmer's ground, and he goes to the expense of having it surveyed to prove he's over four inches.

And so they have a feud on and shoot across the fence at each other for 40 years, never speak to each other because one fellow's got four inches that belongs to the other fellow and won't change the fence. Our trouble is we think we own something. Brother, you don't own anything at all, I'd like to tell you that.

Naked came you into the world and naked you're going out again. You ought to thank God he let you borrow an outfit so you wouldn't have to run around naked. You ought to thank God he allowed you to borrow a house so you wouldn't have to sleep out on the lot.

You ought to thank God he let you borrow a car so you can drive to your work or drive wherever you go. You ought to thank God. You don't own a thing, not a thing.

And if Russia thinks they own Russia, or the United States thinks they own the United States, or Canada thinks they own this great sprawling half a continent here, we don't own a thing, brother, we just think we do. There's only one that owns it, and he's the one that bled for it and gave himself, and it all belongs to

him, and God's going to shake it loose so that nobody can say, this is mine, this is mine. He's going to turn it back over to the one to whom it belongs, the one who carried around with him the form of a man and whose body was made of the very elements that the earth gave him.

And so these four angels are holding the four winds of heaven. God's waiting now for the four winds of heaven to begin their destructive work on the earth. They help jar the earth loose from mankind's control.

And the angel has, an angel comes out with the seal of God, and he cries out now with a loud voice, and he says to these four angels, he's evidently capable of giving orders to these four angels, there are gradations of angels, the idea of a cookie-cutter uniformity in heaven is one of the greatest errors and heresies that I know about, why the Bible says that in heaven men shall differ from each other as star differs from star in glory. And the Bible talks about angels and archangels and principalities and powers and mights and dominions, why those are gradations having greater authority, this idea that everybody's put in a sack and shaken up and that we all come out exactly alike. It's all wrong, my brothers, all wrong.

There are going to be degrees, there are going to be rewards, some big, some little, some not at all. There are going to be people who have earned a right by their sufferings and tears to rule over five cities. There are going to be others who get in by the skin of their teeth, so as by fire.

This idea that everybody that's born again is equal to everybody else that is born again is just as silly as it's possible to be. You might as well tell me that the little black boy born in the bayous of Mississippi and never heard of out of his own parish, county parish, they call it in Louisiana at least, out of his own little county, never heard of, you might as well tell me that he has just as much authority as Prime Minister Diefenbaker. No, my brothers, there is difference of degrees because there is difference in abilities and difference in size.

So here is one angel who has authority over these four angels, and he says, Don't hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. Now, this sealing is not an unusual thing, at least it's not unprecedented. For back in Ezekiel 9, he cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.

And behold, as six men came from the way of the higher gate which lie toward the north, and every man a slaughter-weapon in his hand, and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a rider's ink-horn by his side. And they went in and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of God of Israel was gone up from the cherub whereon he was.

And he called to the man clothed with linen, and he said, The Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all abomination that be done in the midst thereof. Not unusual, I say, for God to mark out certain men. To this man will I look, says God, who trembles and weeps at my word.

Well, so they sealed the hundred and forty and four thousand. Now, who are the hundred and forty and four thousand? Well, the cults all have the answer. And if everybody said he was a hundred and forty and four thousand, you'd have to multiply that by about twenty in order to get enough people to go around.

The cults have the answer. Always remember that there are some people that are cult-minded. That is, they have a mind, well, if they are not Christians, they are superstitious, and if they are Christians, they are

cultists, usually.

Some people run toward a cult just as smoothly as my old German grandmother ran toward superstition. She had a dream book, and every morning that she'd get up, she'd go read to try to find out what the dream meant. She believed that if a dog howled outside your window, that somebody near to you was going to die.

When our first boy was born, Loa, forty years ago, last April 26, I think, or 3rd or something, some of the dear old ladies told my wife in order to comfort her, they said, Now, if a baby is born with a blue mark over its nose, it'll die before it's a year old. She ran and looked, and sure enough, Loa had a little blue mark on his nose. Thank God we were Christians, and so we didn't pay any attention to the blue mark.

Forty years ago, he still had his blue mark. I haven't looked lately, I haven't seen him for 8 years. But I guess he still got it, and as far as I know, he's going strong, getting healthier as he gets older.

But these comforting old sisters that tell us those things. When they get religion, they run to cults just as naturally as it can be, because something queer and funny and offbeat, uh, they have to find that or they're not happy. They're the ones that'll come to you seriously and say, uh, who was Melchizedek? And where else they'll say, uh, could you tell me who are the hundred and forty-four thousand? Or they'll, they'll have, they'll say, was Moses' wife a colored woman? They have, they won't ask questions and all, they're cultists.

I've, I've run, been among them. I have never joined them and I never believed with them. I believe, uh, in spite of what I said a while ago, that we are materialistic minded and that we ought to get spiritually minded and begin to think spiritually.

I also believe that a good, uh, fresh, uh, clean, uh, little squirt of skepticism won't hurt you a bit if it's turned in the right direction. I got lots of letters. Boy, if I joined everything I've been invited to join, I'd just be all over this continent, joining this and joining that.

I grew up, that is, I came up through that long stretch when we had, um, little boy preachers and little girl preachers. God bless the little fellas. I used to see them, pity them, stand them on a box, you know, little chaps as small as Mrs. Morrison's little fella down here, five, six years old.

Stand them on a box and they'd stand up there with the Bible, you know, in their little high treble voice, they'd preach the gospel. Poor little fella. And they'd get a little girl and they'd stand her on a box and she'd preach.

And they got to preaching about the gospel in the stars. And they said that there was a gospel in the great pyramid of Chios. Well, I prayed to God when he filled me with the Holy Ghost to give me a spirit of discernment.

So I never fell into any of those traps. I always was able to see a cultist and smell a cultist. Now, literally, quite literally, I can smell a cultist.

When I, when he comes toward me, I sniff and I know, I don't mean with my olfactory muscles or, it isn't your muscles, it's your nerve, that's right. My olfactory nerves, but it's with something in my heart that says, watch him, because he's a cultist. They write me letters and try to get me to come over on their side.

I had, I have a fella who's very faithful in sending me literature and he's a, he's of the Order of Aaron. He's of the Latter-day Saints, a Mormon. Oh, look at me, I'm no Mormon, he just sends me his stuff.

But you know, if you have, if you have read the scriptures until you got used to them and got the feel of them, you know as soon as it doesn't feel right, you know, as soon as it doesn't feel right, you know it. It's like, it's like your hat. You reach up carelessly talking to your friend and grab a hat off the rack and a rest and put it on and immediately you'll know it isn't your hat because it doesn't feel, it hasn't taken the paint, you know, hasn't got the bumps.

And it's not your hat. You don't have to examine it, it just, it just isn't your hat. And so if you, you'll get to know your friend, for instance.

You see Jim Johnson coming down, you grew up with him in school and fought with him and played with him and studied with him in the grades and on up into high school, and he's your friend, you know him. And you see somebody coming down the street and your wife says, there comes Jim Jones. You say, that's not Jim Jones.

You know better. Still, for the man, you know, well, you can do the same thing. You can go to the scriptures and learn it and love it and you don't understand it all.

But the sense of it and the spirit of it and the flavor of it and the texture of it and the shine of it and the color of it, it becomes second nature with you. And when the cultist comes along, you just know he's a cultist. You don't have to know why.

I've had the experience many a time, I think I told you before, of knowing something was wrong and not knowing why for a long time afterwards. The Holy Ghost lets you know why. Well, I said all this because I know that this 144,000 thing has caused a lot of people to dip a lot of ink horns in a lot of ink wells and smear up a lot of otherwise clean, white, virgin paper that should have been left alone.

And they tell us about who these are. Well, the cults can't, they can't, one fellow, one cult says, we're the 144,000. Another cult says, we're the 144,000.

That makes 288,000. And another cult comes along and says, no, we're the 144,000. Multiply that by three.

And another cult says, we are multiplied by four. And pretty soon you're running into the millions. And it says 144,000.

I'd like to know why we fool around with anything as clear as this is. This is one of the few times in the scriptures where the Lord gave us a long list of names. He said, I heard the number of them that were sealed.

And there were sealed 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Unless you get the notion that that means spiritual tribes. Why, the Holy Ghost says, now wait a minute, of the tribe of Judah, 12,000.

Of the tribe of Reuben, 12,000. Of the tribe of Gad, 12,000. And so as somebody says to you, I'm going to have five men at my house tomorrow night for a little supper, dinner.

I'm going to have Mr. Jones, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Brown. And I'll say, well, I don't know any of those men. Explain, who are they? Well, they tell me who they are, where they live, and

all about their marital state and their financial situation, and I get quite a rundown on them.

They even show me their pictures. And then the next day the man says, I'm having a party at my place tonight, I think I told you. And I say, yes.

Who are the five? Well, he says, I thought I told you, Smith, Brown, Robertson, Robertson, and who else was it? And I say, well, now just a minute, am I to understand that spiritually or poetically or literally or figuratively? He said, I thought I told you who my five friends are from Detroit, and they're coming up to see me. I used to know their Aunt Mabel out in Alberta, and they're coming up to see me. And he pins it down, names them, and then I stand bug-eyed and say, who are they? And that's what we're doing here.

We're writing books on who the 144,000 are, and God told us who they are. He says they're people saved out of the twelve tribes of Israel. And then in case we might think he meant somebody else, he names the tribes, substituting Joseph for Ephraim, and we have it, twelve tribes of Israel.

These, then, are the Jews who will be converted yet. Now, I believe that. I understand that isn't popular doctrine in the City of Toronto, that some of the leading preachers and good, godly men, too, find no future for Israel.

I find a future for Israel. I couldn't read my Bible at all and not believe there is a future for Israel. I could not read Romans 9 and not believe there was a future for Israel in 10.

I believe it in 11, read them and see. Yes, there is. So I think we've identified them, and it's a very disappointing thing, because I know that you wanted me to say abracadabra, spin around three times, look very spiritual and come up with a weird answer, but I don't want to do it, because why should I when God has named them for us and told us about them and said the judgments of God coming upon the earth are going to spare these people? Don't ask me whether I believe and know whether.

Israel, over there is the Israel that is to be restored. I don't know for sure about that, but I do know that Israel will come from the north and the south and the east and the west, and they will be restored again to the land which God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God never lied to Abraham, and when God said Abraham could have the land from the river to the sea and to the cedars of Lebanon down to the borders of Egypt and Arabia, he meant exactly what he said.

And you know the story of their sins and their idolatry and their unbelief and their judgments, and you know it as I know it, one judgment after another. Back in the book of Deuteronomy, it tells us there about the Jews, that the day will come when they will plead, O God, send the morning, and when the night comes and when the day comes, they'll say, O God, send the night, and they will plead, read the terrible stories of Eichmann, the terrible stories of the Spanish Jews in their day, read the sufferings of Israel down the centuries, and you'll see it fulfilled as clear as a photographic plate. Now that takes care of 144,000, but after this I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.

Here we have now not Jews, understand he has specifically set these apart and said, Here are the Christians out of the tribes of Israel at a specific time. But he says, Now here is another multitude, I want you to see a bigger multitude, a great multitude. You can number these, but you can't number this multitude, all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.

I say once again to you that the Bible has 150,000 miles ahead of the NAPC, 150,000 miles ahead of those who are telling us now that we ought to have a united nation because all men are one. Didn't the Bible tell us that, that all men were created of one blood to dwell upon the face of the earth? If we had listened to our Bible we would have known that all the time. So God has these people out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, and they stand before the throne.

Now the Jews, the 144,000 sealed ones, are on the earth, but this great multitude is before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, and all the angels stood around the throne, and the elders and the four beasts fell before the throne on their faces, and they worshiped God and said, Amen, and blessed, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might unto our God forever and ever. I'd like to stop right here and quit preaching prophecy and intersperse a bracket of truth here that I want to leave with you and you ought to get a hold of.

If you think you can untangle things so that you'll understand them in the world today and know who's side to be on, and who's right and who's wrong, you're going to have to think again. You can't do it. If you think that you're going to be able to explain why one man is rich and atheistic and another man is poor and holy, why one person lives to be 97 years old and a woman dies of cancer in her 30s, if you think you can figure it all out, and if you think you can figure it all out, brother, you can never figure it all out, I'm telling you that.

But there's one thing you can do. When you reach a place where you can't get the answer, you can look up and say, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

And if you keep on saying that enough, why, and long enough, your heart will leap up and you'll be on top of the thing even if you can't explain the thing. We'll never be able to explain things, but we can praise God for things. One of the elders said to me, What are these that are arrayed in white robes? I smiled when I read that a while ago because I thought of us Bible teachers.

We'd never let an opportunity like that pass. John had more humility than we. Anybody of class asked us any question, we'd come through with the answer, whether it was the right one or not.

But John said, Sir, you know, I don't know about this. But John, you're an Apostle! I know, but I'm an awful poor Apostle, Sir. He said to that elder, I don't know, Sir.

He said, You know, I don't know, Sir. Imagine that, the Apostle. Here he was, the Apostle.

Nowadays they talk about him that he was enthroned, so-and-so, a big ecclesiastical big shot. He gets a throne, and he has all of this different paraphernalia. When they don't die, sheer suffocation, the robes and chains and all the rest they have to wear to prove what they are.

And they get kissing rings and kissing toes and all that sort of thing. And here was a man who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and when somebody asked him a Bible question, he couldn't answer it. He said, I don't know, Sir.

You know. Oh, John, what a wonderful brother you are, and how I'd like to be like you. Have your humility, and not try to look wise when I'm not wise at all.

Sir, thou knowest. And so the elder who was in on the thing, he said, Well, John, I'm going to tell you then, if you don't know, I do. These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Now, they are up there, you know. They are not down here. These 144 are down here, but they are up there.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. Oh, how beautiful this is, how beautiful.

I recommend that you, particularly you older people, you quit reading so much that isn't doing you any good, and you begin to bone up a little bit on where you're going. I think this is wonderful. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple.

And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Now, that's a specific company, but what is true of that specific company is true of all the children of God.

Don't believe it, read on to the 21st and 22nd chapters of the book of Revelation. Now I have one or two things that I'd like to say that I want you to get. According to this, there is a time of frightful tribulation coming, a time of violence and suffering and terror, and a time of upset of nations and dislocations and pains, a time when God Almighty shall shake the earth worse than an earthquake.

And then, too, there is going to be a radical reduction of the earth's population, as is found here in the book of Revelation. But that radical reduction of the earth's population is not going to be the result of anything man does, it's going to be from heaven itself. If you read this, you will find that this in the 7th chapter, here in the 6th chapter, when the King Heaven departed like a scroll, the mountains were moved out of their places, the kings of the earth and the great men fled to the rocks in the mountains, man had nothing to do with that.

No atom bomb, no missiles, no rockets, God was doing this. When we come to the 7th chapter and read of the holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the sea or earth or tree, why, that's God Almighty that's doing that. When we come to the 8th chapter and see God hurling down the fire on the earth, and this follows hail and fire mingled with blood, has nothing, not anything whatsoever to do with cruise ships, has nothing to do with Cape Canaveral, has nothing to do with nuclear wars.

Let's get that straight. There is going to be a reduction of the earth's population. I think it's a terrible, terrible thing what we're hearing now everywhere.

Politicians are saying it, sociologists are saying it, scientists are saying it, they're saying there's too many people in the earth, too many people, they're being bred too fast. Something's got to be done to shut off the stream of human beings that are being born into the world. One fellow over here in the white or smock is finding ways to keep babies alive.

The man over here is writing a book to prove there are too many babies anyhow, and then they want me to believe that they know the answer. They don't know the answer, they're worse confused than the cults,

only that's the scientific cult. Anyhow, there's going to be a radical reduction of the earth's population, for the Bible doesn't hesitate to say one-third of the people of the earth were slain in one instance.

It's not going to be the result of nuclear fission. So if you get a little dust on your car, go run home and say to your husband, Honey, I'm afraid it's fallout. No, it didn't fall out.

It didn't sweep the streets right. Don't worry about it, don't worry about it. Again, the human race is going to survive this radical reduction, it's going to survive it, the human race is going to come through, and it's going to come through the human race, not a sub-human race, but the human race.

Fourth, Christians will come through that period, and there will be some believers in that period. There will be believers among the Jews, and there will be also among the Gentiles, as we'll learn here. But because of the frightful situation that's on in the earth, they will come through only by suffering, persecution, pain, martyrdom, many of them.

It will cost them everything. This is the glory that is theirs, that their place at the right hand of God, their place there where they hunger no more and thirst no more, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne feeds them and leads them into living fountains of waters, their place there they had to win by giving up everything they had. Their place there they had to take by surrendering every earthly thing and going through the tribulation of terror and loss.

What bothers me, my brothers and sisters, is how much our religion is costing us. It really isn't costing us very much at all. It isn't costing us very much.

The average evangelical who claims to be born again and have eternal life and have it forever isn't doing as much to propagate his faith as Jehovah's Witnesses are doing down here on the corner selling their papers. They are not willing to take the spit and the blow and the abuse that they get. They are not giving as much time to it.

They are not giving as much as the Mormons are giving to it. They are not giving as much time and sacrifice as the Seventh-day Adventists are giving to it. I've been ashamed of myself now for years that every time I look at a government affair that tells how many different religious people denominations are giving, the Adventists stand at the top.

We who have the truth and know what it is to have our sins beautifully and sweetly washed away by the blood of the Lamb, we stand ashamed before these cultists who are out putting us to shame by their zeal and their effort to make converts. But there will be a great multitude that no man can number, and it will have cost that multitude everything. Now, I realize that the pass to heaven or the ticket to heaven is not something you do.

The entree into the kingdom of God is by the blood of the Lamb. Somebody else paid for it, but I also know that the world being such a world as it is, as soon as you begin to take God seriously, the world starts to jump on you. And as soon as the world gets in a place where it can, that multitude that no man can number, the Christians of that period are persecuted unto death.

And they weren't on earth, they were in heaven waiting before the throne of God and before the Lamb. And therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him in the temple day and night. Dear friends, we claim to be Christians, we say we are Christians, but I wonder how much our Christianity costs us.

It's a disgrace and a shame that any church should ever be in the red financially. It's a disgrace and a shame that a missionary society should be \$165,000 in arrears as ours is. It's a disgrace and a shame.

We waste enough to keep the church moving. We waste enough if we had a sense of the urgency of this whole thing on us. Very little sense of urgency.

To church and back to church and back. I went to church and sang a hymn and home again did go, and that's that. And then we're ready to say, well, we're Christians and I don't say we're not.

But oh, how far we are from revival and how far we are from having the urgency of the Holy Ghost on us. Brother and sister, we ought to take this seriously. No man ever ought to ask, how much is it going to cost me? He only ought to ask, what's my duty before God? No Christian ever ought to say, what will be the consequences if I take this direction? They came up out of great tribulations.

They could have sneaked out of it if they would. They could have collaborated with the enemy, but they didn't. They took the firing squad first, or the sword, or whatever they used.

Therefore are they before the throne, and their poor bodies were thrown out and burned and tossed into a lime pit and gotten rid of as these devil-mad people moved over the face of the earth, trying to hold on to that which God was trying to shake loose from them in that terrible period that's ahead. They said, all right, we'll serve Jesus Christ no matter. And they did.

It does me good occasionally when I hear of somebody, maybe in China, maybe in Indonesia, maybe in Africa, or some other place, some simple-hearted native, as we call them, somebody born there of another race than ours, who hears about the Christ that the white race has known about for 2,000 years, and undergoes such a tremendous transformation, and becomes so enraptured with the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that they allow themselves to be killed for Christ's sake, slain for Christ's sake. They're keeping it away from them. They're not telling it.

But in the country of Colombia alone, the Christian Missionary Alliance has lost by murder, that is, by martyrdom, some pastors and a large number of Christians. But the State Department doesn't want to know, and the Catholic Church, with their squeeze on and their tremendous ability to choke off news, we don't know about it. It's being done.

Some come out and tell us. Thank God for them. Thank God for them.

I don't know what I would do. Peter said he wouldn't deny the Lord, and he denied him, so I don't want to make any boast at all. But if I could have my brothers take my choice before God this night, I'd rather be one of them down there, have my home attacked and bombed, be chopped to pieces with cutlets, than to be a too-rich, too-comfortable, too-well-fed, too-well-off white man taking his Christianity for granted.

Brothers and sisters, they didn't take it for granted there. It cost them everything, even their lives. Therefore are they before the throne of God, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

I believe it's time that we ought to rise up and get out of our rut and routine and begin to take our Christian faith seriously. Listen to me. If these few hundred listening to me tonight were to begin to take this whole thing in dead seriousness, and would dare, dare, dare to go down before God and say, O God, I hereby give myself to thee, and my family to thee, and my business to thee.

Take it, Lord, take me, and if it's necessary that for thy sake I should lose everything, let me lose it, Lord. Don't ask what price it is. I'll pay the price, but I want to be all I ought to be.

If just this church full of people would get that serious, you'd never hear the last of it. It would spring out and the news of it would go everywhere like birds on the wings. There would be such a revival, such a renaissance of New Testament, first century Christianity as you didn't dream could be.

My God delivers, delivers from this easygoing, smooth, comfortable, fat, greasy, oily Christianity that always is careful never to let the truth get a hold of us and embarrass us. It costs them everything, what's it costing us? Let's pray.

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