

My Mistake-Embracing the Pretrib Rapture

by Charles A. Stewart

The post-tribulation rapture position holds that the rapture of the Church will occur after the Great Tribulation, at the second coming of Christ, and is supported by the early Church fathers' understanding of the rapture.

Duration: 32:08

Scripture: Acts 2:38, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, Hebrews 11:39-40

Topics: "Rapture"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the gathering of the elect and the impending judgment. He emphasizes the importance of believers being alert and watchful for the coming of the Master. The speaker also addresses the concept of a secret rapture and questions its presence in the New Testament. He highlights the significance of the sign of the Son of Man and its mention in both the Old and New Testaments. The sermon concludes with a discussion on different views regarding the timing of the rapture.

Transcript

I'd like to begin the discussion of the post-tribulation rapture position by looking at Matthew chapter 24, which is, of course, the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus is answering the question about the signs of his coming. I'd like to begin reading actually down at verse 29. Jesus says, but immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet.

They will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Verse 36, but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father alone. 44, for this reason you be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think he will.

Last Sunday evening you were privileged to hear an outstanding presentation by Theron Conley of the pre-trib rapture position. It was excellently done. I am deeply indebted, as you all are as well, to Theron for such an excellent job.

We do appreciate it, Brother Theron. We love each other, enjoy discussing issues. This is not a fellowship issue.

There are several views on this doctrine. Theron has embraced the pre-tribulation rapture. That means the rapture happens before the last seven years of human history.

Then there is a mid-tribulation rapture view, which says the rapture happens at the midpoint of the last seven years and prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the last three and a half years of human history. In a sense, it is a variation of the pre-trib rapture view. But it does not enjoy the consistencies of the pre-trib rapture view.

We understand that we have a dilemma. Our dilemma is that the Church has not come to agreement on the doctrine of the last things, and that includes the timing of the resurrection and the rapture of the Church. Now, I am going to quote some pre-tribulationists, because I think they are worth quoting.

These are sincere men and women of integrity, and they love the Word of God, and I think they ought to be quoted, even though their perspective is a pre-trib rapture, not a post-trib rapture. I would like to quote Dr. John Wolvert, a prominent pre-tribulation rapture theologian, teacher at Dallas Theological Seminary. He says, Neither post-tribulationism nor pre-tribulationism is an explicit teaching of the Scriptures.

The Bible does not, in so many words, state either. I would also like to quote Dr. Richard Mayhew, dean of the Master's Seminary. He, too, is a pre-tribulation rapturous.

In his doctoral dissertation, he said, Perhaps the position of pre-tribulationism is correct, although its proof at times has been logically invalid or at least unconvincing. So here is a pre-tribulationist who is intellectually honest. He recognizes that there are tremendous weaknesses in his own position.

I was a pre-tribulation rapturous because that is what I was taught. Two years after I had been trained in pre-tribulation rapture, as a student of the Word of God, I began reading the Scriptures and began to get the sneaking suspicion and the uncomfortable feeling that the New Testament apostles expected the Church to go through the tribulation and that Jesus expected the Church to go through the tribulation. And as I just devoured Dr. Ladd's book all in one sitting because he had brought together all of these things that I was suspicioning but I wasn't enough of a scholar to be able to pull them together.

From that moment on, I began to believe that the New Testament teaches that the Church does in fact go through the period of the great tribulation and will be on earth at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at which time we will be raptured as the dead in Christ will be resurrected. We who are alive will be raptured and meet the Lord in the air. If you watch the clues of the trumpets in the New Testament, I think they will lead you to a conclusion similar to my own.

Watch the clues of the trumpets. They are all there. The trumpets of the Lord, the last trumpet, the great trumpet, the trumpet of God keep showing up in the New Testament and they're speaking of the same trumpet.

The time of the rapture. As we look for the support for this position that the Church actually goes through the three and a half years of the great tribulation, we first of all look to the early Church fathers. These are those Church leaders who lived in the second and third centuries.

Many of them actually sat at the feet of some of the apostles, but I will be addressing several who lived somewhere between 150 and 300 A.D. They provide us some invaluable insights into what the early Church understood and believed about many things, but in the case and context of our discussion, regarding the last things and the rapture of the Church. Dr. George L. Ladd, former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, in his book, *The Blessed Hope*, has done an extensive amount of research in reading the anti-Nicene fathers. Also, others have done the same study, and Dr. Ladd comes to this conclusion.

He says on the top of page two, In this survey of the early centuries, we have found that the Antichrist was understood to be an evil ruler of the end times who would persecute the Church, afflicting her with great tribulation. Every Church father who deals with the subject expects the Church to suffer at the hands of Antichrist. Christ would save her, the Church, by his return at the end of the tribulation when he would destroy Antichrist.

We can find no trace of pre-tribulationism, that's the pre-tribulation rapture, in the early Church. And no modern pre-tribulationist has successfully proven that this particular doctrine, the pre-trib rapture, was held by any of the Church fathers or students of the Word before the 19th century, and to be very specific, before the 1800s. And around the 1830s, J. M. Darby was a tremendous and very charismatic Bible teacher, and he began to teach the pre-tribulation rapture.

And I'm not sure he was actually one of the first, but he was the first to really popularize this position. And from those very humble beginnings, it has probably become by and large and all hands down the most popular position of the timing of the rapture. But Dr. Ladd says nobody before the 19th century talks about a rapture that would allow the Church to miss the last three and a half years of human history, the great tribulation.

I'd also like to quote Dr. Charles Ryrie of Dallas Theological Seminary, himself a pre-tribulationist. In his book, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus*, he says the early Church did not spell out a pre-trib rapture. In other words, there were no Church fathers between 150 and 300 A.D. who set forth a rapture view in which they expected the Church to miss the great tribulation.

They expected, rather, to go through it. Any attempts by pre-tribulationists to find a pre-tribulation rapture in the ancient writings of the Church fathers only succeeds if they do two things. Number one, if they take the words of the Church fathers out of context.

Number two, if they fail to quote the Church fathers completely. You will look at Gundry's book, *The Church and the Tribulation*, you will see time and again where Dr. Gundry gives you not just the quote of the pre-trib professors, but he gives you the whole quote out of the early Church fathers. And it becomes very clear that what they're trying to do is to say that the expectancy of the early Church fathers is synonymous with pre-tribulation rapture, and that is not fair to the early Church fathers.

Ladd continues, If the blessed hope is a pre-tribulation rapture, then the Church has never known that hope through most of its history. For the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture did not appear in prophetic interpretation until the 19th century. The early Church and the Church right on down through the centuries up until the 19th century always expected that they were going to go through the last seven years and the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

They just expected they were going through it. That was their understanding of the Scripture. They weren't even expecting to miss it.

It seems strange to me personally that God would leave the Church in such darkness about a doctrine that could have so much importance for the last days. Pre-tribulationist Dr. John Walbert, again of Dallas Seminary, says some were undoubtedly post-tribulationist, believing a post-trib rapture, but others are not clear. So Dr. Walbert is admitting that there were Church fathers who believed the Church would go through the Great Tribulation and would be on the earth and raptured only at the second coming of Christ.

So let's look at some of these Church fathers that do speak to the subject. Justin Martyr, a Church leader of the mid-2nd century, somewhere between 150 and 200 A.D., he made this statement. He said, The man of apostasy, the Antichrist, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us, the Christians.

Now that would only be meaningful if Justin Martyr believed that Christians were going to be here during the Great Tribulation when the Antichrist is basically persecuting the Church. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, again a late 2nd century Church leader, wrote, And they, a reference to the ten kings, shall give their kingdom to the beast, that's the Antichrist, and put the Church to flight. He expects the Church to be there during the Great Tribulation.

Tertullian, another Church leader in the late 2nd century, taught, quote, that the beast Antichrist, with his false prophet, may wage war on the Church of God. And then Hippolytus, whom Jack Van Inty loves to quote, as far as the six-day theory of creation, he was the Bishop of Rome in the early 3rd century, he said, Now concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, that refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days, that's the three and a half years, the last half of the week of Jacob's trouble, during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church. I just commend to you these quotes by early Church fathers who were speaking and teaching specifically on the issue of the Antichrist and the Church in the period of the Great Tribulation.

Many of the early Church fathers demonstrated an attitude of expectancy, as I have mentioned before, but that is not the same thing as a pre-tribulation rapture. The fact then seems to be that the post-tribulation rapture concept is the oldest known and most widely held rapture position of the early Church fathers. Now that statement almost concedes too much because it said it's the oldest and most widely held view of the early Church fathers when in fact, if I really want to state the truth, it's the only view that is propounded by the early Church fathers.

And it gives this interpretation something the pre-trib and mid-trib positions do not have, and that is the weight of the early Church fathers. The pre-tribulation position is not invalidated by this point, but it is a point of great strength for the post-tribulation rapture that the early Church fathers were teaching this, and we hope and would assume that they were very close to understanding the teaching of the apostles. I mentioned to you early on that when the pre-tribulationists come to the Scriptures, he or she brings the lenses of dispensationalism, whereas when I come, I bring the lenses of a more reformed theology.

When the dispensationalists come to the Scriptures, you heard this very clearly stated last week, that Israel and the Church are two different entities. And for the dispensationalists, that is how dramatic the distinction is between Israel and the Church. So when a dispensationalist comes to the Scripture with this kind of absolute dichotomy, because the Church and Israel are two different entities, Israel goes through the last seven years, it belongs to them, it does not belong to the Church, boom, so the Church is out.

There is no need for the Church to be there. Do you see how logical that is? If you accept the premise, those who are not in the dispensationalist camp would not embrace that understanding of the Scripture. Your belief in the timing of the rapture will be determined more by your understanding of the Church and Israel than anything else.

Now let me quote again Dr. Walvert. He states, if the term Church includes saints of all ages, then it is self-evident that the Church will go through the tribulation as all pre-trib, post-tribbers alike agree that there will be saints in this time of trouble. In other words, there are saints who are in the tribulation.

Pre-tribbers, post-tribbers agree with that. The question is, who are these saints? Are they part of the body of Christ, the Church, or are they part of a separate entity called Israel? Well, if a genuine continuity exists, is what Dr. Walvert is saying, between Israel and the Church, then the believers who find themselves in the tribulation would actually be part of the body of Christ, the Church. Now again, he is a dispensationalist, so he sees no continuity between them whatsoever.

So when he comes to Revelation and he sees saints in the tribulation, he immediately says, these are not Christians. These people do not belong to the body of Christ. Why? Because the Church is not there.

The Great Tribulation belongs to Israel. You see how that works? You kind of get into a circular argument there. That's what I mean when I say we bring our understanding and our prejudices to the Scriptures.

Now, is there any continuity between Israel and the Church? I want you to know, first of all, that for the early Church fathers that we quoted a few minutes ago, they had absolutely no difficulty in describing believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, who experienced the Great Tribulation as the Church. Did you notice that? They called whoever the believers were being persecuted by Antichrist, they called them the Church. So these Church fathers who were teaching from 150 to 300 A.D., they were teaching people that the believers in the Tribulation were the Church.

They said there's a continuity there. They saw no discontinuity between Israel and the Church. If you're saved by the blood of Jesus, you're part of the family of faith.

And those who were in the Tribulation were the Church, the body of Christ, according to the Church fathers. Dr. William E. Bell of Dallas Baptist University states in his doctoral dissertation on the post-Tribulation rapture, he says, the New Testament actually speaks not so much of the Old Testament saints being admitted to the Church but of the Gentile believers of the New Testament age being admitted to Israel. The Old and New Testament saints comprise a single group known after Pentecost as the Church.

What are some of the points of continuity between Israel and the Church? Let's just look at some. First of all, the New Covenant promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31 has become the heritage of the Church. Every one of you are under the New Covenant.

The New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 was given to Israel. Go back and look at it. You and I have gotten in on their covenant.

Number two, all New Testament believers along with Old Testament Jews have become the eternal sons of Abraham who inherit the promises by faith. That's what Galatians 3 is all about. Paul is saying, hey, not everybody descended of Abraham is really Abraham.

It's those who embrace the faith of Abraham who are the seed of Abraham. So we have become, like the Old Testament believing Jews, the sons and daughters of Abraham. Number three, believers of the Church have become grafted into Abraham, the olive tree of faith as a part of God's continuing program for believing Israel.

Romans chapter 11. In fact, Romans 9, 10, and 11 is an area that dispensationalists have all kind of problems. In their commentaries, you can look at them consistently.

They are straining. They are doing all kind of mental theological gymnastics trying to wrestle with the truths of Romans 9, 10, and 11. Why? Because in chapter 11, Paul says that God has taken you and me, wild olive branches, and has grafted us into Abraham, the true olive.

Israel, the true people of faith. So what do you do in the Bible that says we've been grafted into Abraham? It is tough on dispensational theology. Also, number four, the Church will inherit the better things of Hebrews 11, 39, and 40, along with the Old Testament believers of Israel because of the completed work of Christ.

We don't get the better things apart from them, and they don't get the better things apart from us. We come together to receive the better things, according to Hebrews 11. Number five, the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 is called the Bride.

It is called the Wife of the Lamb. Now, who's called the Bride and the Wife of the Lamb? The Church. Alright, now we see that the New Jerusalem is called the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb.

And yet, even pre-tribulationists will admit that there are Jews and Gentile believers in the New Jerusalem. It's very interesting in Revelation 21 and verse 12, it says, "...and it has a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at the twelve gates twelve angels, and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel." Twelve tribes, the twelve apostles, you have a blending of Old Testament believers, the Old Testament Israel, and New Testament believers, all blended and finding themselves present in the New Jerusalem. We all inherit that together.

Number six, the Church has inherited the promise of the Holy Spirit. That was given. Peter says, "...repent and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, which was promised to you and to your children." It was a promise to Jewish people, and we, the Church, have gotten in on their blessing.

Number seven, New Testament believers, through faith in Christ, have joined the commonwealth of Israel, and are fellow citizens with the Old Testament saints, are of the household of God with them. We inherit the teachings of the apostles and the prophets, and are no longer strangers to, but participants in, I want to point out the plural, covenants, plural, not just the New Covenant, but the covenants of promise. And that is in Ephesians chapter two, the writings of Paul.

Number eight, the Church also shares titles which once were reserved exclusively for Old Testament Israel, such as, the Israel of God, the circumcision, the dispersion, holy nation, chosen race, royal priesthood, the people of God, my people, sons of the living God. All of that. Finally, you may have thought that when Jesus said in Matthew 16.60, when he said, Who do you say that I am? Peter said, You're the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And on this confession, I will build my church.

You may have been taught that that is the first time the word church shows up. And then just a couple of chapters later, in Matthew 18, Jesus says, in the ministry of reconciliation, if a brother sins against you, go to him. If you refuse to hear, take a couple of witnesses, if you refuse to hear them, then take it to the church.

Twice there in just two chapters, 16 and 18. This is an Old Testament term. I'm going to have to get technical with you for just a moment, but I want you to follow me carefully here.

Even our term church, which in the New Testament Greek is ecclesia, which can be translated assembly, congregation, or church. In the New Testament, Jesus would have said, Simon, on this confession, I will build my ecclesia. And you and I translate that church.

It could be translated assembly or congregation, either one. When he said, if he fails to listen to you, then take it to the ecclesia. It could be translated congregation, assembly, or church.

Any one of those is appropriate. Now, how familiar were the disciples with this term ecclesia? For over 200 years before Christ walked the face of the earth, the most popular and one of the most widely used translations of the Hebrew Old Testament was called the Septuagint. Now, let me explain to you what happened.

More than 200 years before the time of Christ, many of the Jews were losing their command of Hebrew. They knew Greek better than they knew Hebrew, particularly those who were scattered throughout the Gentile world. What the Jews did is they commissioned 70 some odd scholars to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek.

And the Hebrew translation into Greek became known as the Septuagint. It means 70. For more than 200 years, it was one of the most popular translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.

And there is ample evidence in the New Testament that on occasions the New Testament apostles are paraphrasing from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is a fascinating study, the impact of the Septuagint on the New Testament. So for more than 200 years, the Septuagint was in Jewish hands.

And more than 100 times the Septuagint translated ecclesia from the Hebrew word which meant the congregation or the assembly of God. If this is the case, if there is a spiritual continuity between Israel and the Church, then there is no theological requirement for the Church not to be here during the last seven years of human history, which would include the last three and a half years known as the Great Tribulation. But one of the most convincing things to me, and really one of the things that began to make me even think about a post-tribulation rapture was Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24.

I take Jesus very literally and straightforwardly here in his instruction. If you will notice, let's just walk through this. You've got your Bible.

In verse 10, he talks about an apostasy. Many will fall away. In verse 15, he talks about the abomination of desolation when the lawless man is revealed and commits the abomination of desolation.

That's when he goes onto the Temple Mount, stops the animal sacrifices, declares himself God, and erects a statue in honor of himself. Then you notice the period of Great Tribulation commences in verse 21, and then there will be a Great Tribulation. That's very consistent with everything pre-tribbers,

mid-tribbers, post-tribbers believe.

No disagreement there. This period is cut short, however, the period of the Great Tribulation, for the sake of the elect. Notice in verse 22, unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved.

Then notice, after the period is cut short, the sun and the moon will be darkened as the powers of heaven are shaken, down in verse 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the Great Tribulation is completed. Then the sun is darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, the powers of the heavens are shaken.

Now let me just say this to you. If you will take verse 29, you can take that through all the Old Testament and through the New Testament and it will always bring you back to the same thing. That is the sign of the end.

It's picked up throughout the Old Testament prophets. It's picked up by Jesus, picked up by the other New Testament writers who speak on this subject. It is the sign of His coming.

And then notice, after the heavens are shaken, the sun is darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars fall from the heavens. Then in verse 30, the sign of the Son of Man appears in the heavens. And then the peoples of the world witness this awesome sign and flee from the Son of Man in verse 30.

Then notice, verse 31, with a great trumpet, Jesus sends out His angels to gather to Himself His people, the elect, from around the world. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds from one end of the sky to the other. After the sign of the Son of Man, the gathering of the elect, if you'll drop down to verses 40 and 41, He says that the nature of this gathering of the elect will be some will be taken, others will not be taken.

And also, it will involve a divine judgment which follows this deliverance of the elect and the judgment will come just as in the days of Noah. So, question, is this angelic in-gathering of verse 31, the resurrection of believers of the ages and the rapture of the church? First of all, I would go to the Apostle Paul who clearly associates the resurrection of the saints and the rapture of the church with the trumpet of God. That's from 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16.

And the last trumpet, which is the resurrection, in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 56. So you have in 1 Thessalonians 4 the trumpet of God which we know is the rapture of the church and then over in 1 Corinthians 15, you have the last trumpet which is the sign of the resurrection of the dead and a careful search of the Olivet Discourse discovers only one reference to a trumpet. And that happens in verse 31.

He will send forth his angel with a great trumpet. Do you think the trumpet of God is the great trumpet of Matthew 24? Do you think the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15 is the great trumpet of Matthew 24? I suggest to you that they are one and the same and that therefore, Jesus is referring to the elect. Jesus and his disciple Paul, if they're consistent with the trumpets, I think they are referring to the resurrection of the saints and the rapture of the church.

But I also want you to notice this happens after the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation is over in verse 29. The rapture and resurrection would occur in verse 31.

Now I want to show you something that to me is absolutely startling. If you compare 1 Thessalonians 4-5 which everybody agrees are in fact the rapture of the church to Jesus' Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24, you

see some of the most amazing parallels. Paul was following Jesus' outline almost exactly.

Both of them talk about Christ returning from heaven with a shout, although Jesus says in power. Jesus is accompanied by his angels with a trumpet. Believers are gathered into the clouds.

The time is unknown. He comes as a thief. There is impending judgment.

Believers are not to be deceived. Believers are to be alert and watchful for the coming of the Master. And in both of these discourses they are warned against drunkenness.

I think it is abundantly clear that Paul is building his discourse on Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24. J. Sidlow Baxter comments, Nothing can disguise to an honest eye the parallel between Matthew 24, 30 and 31 and 1 Thessalonians 4, 15 through 18. I also want to just point out Great Tribulation raptures typically teach a secret rapture.

We're gone and nobody knows what happened. I just ask a simple question. Where is a secret rapture in the New Testament? Jesus says that the sun is going to be darkened along with the moon.

The stars fall from the skies. All the tribes of the earth will see the sign of the Son of Man. They will mourn and hide from him and his great glory and power.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 4 that at the rapture of the church he will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and the blast of the trumpet of God. Does that seem to anybody here like that's a secret rapture? It doesn't to me. It sounds to me like everybody is supposed to know it.

It's a great, glorious event and everyone is supposed to be clued in as to what is happening. Also, I encourage you to look at 2 Thessalonians 1, 2 Thessalonians 2. What you will notice there is it seems clear enough that Paul expected the believers to be relieved of their affliction only at the coming of Christ when he comes with his mighty angels inflaming fire, dealing out retribution on those who do not know God. That sounds to me like the second coming.

That is when they should expect relief, not seven years sooner. Also, 2 Thessalonians 2, the natural grammatical meaning of the words where Paul is saying, now, concerning the pericy of the Lord and our gathering together with him. The gathering together is the rapture of the church.

He says, concerning the pericy and our gathering together with him. Now, if Paul was a pre-tribulation, as he should have said, concerning our gathering together with the Lord and our Lord's pericy. He should have reversed the order, but by saying, concerning the pericy of the Lord and our gathering together with him, the grammatical way in which he stated that joins those two events.

He is saying that the pericy of the Lord, the coming, the second coming of Christ, and our gathering together with him, he is saying that those are, in essence, the same event. I've also provided with you there some information on Revelation 3.10, a very powerful, powerful verse for the pre-tribulation rapture, and they love to appeal to that verse. What I would point out to you is that the Greek word ek, according to standard Greek lexicons, such as the Greek English lexicon of the New Testament and other early literature, means out of which someone is brought, and they actually cite Revelation 3.10 as an example of this very basic and fundamental use of the word ek.

When Jesus said in Revelation 3.10, because you kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing. From is the word ek there, and pre-tribulations like to say that means that you stay away from it. It indicates a place from which separation will take place.

And then I'd like to quote a Baptist scholar from Akan, Dr. A.T. Robertson, in his commentary on Revelation 3.16, says, in Revelation 3.10, we seem to have the picture of general temptation with the perseverance of the saints. The word means out of and from within. In this case, what Jesus is saying to his faithful saints in Revelation 3.10 is, I will keep you throughout the period of temptation.

In other words, it would be appropriate for you as you leave this church to say you're going from the church. Ek would be the appropriate preposition in the Greek. Why? Because you're in the church and you are going from.

This is the source of origin and you're departing from it. If we do go through the period of the great tribulation, or whoever the saints are on the earth at that time, I believe the Bible indicates God will pour out his spirit according to Joel 2 in such a mighty and wonderful way that it will out-Pentecost Pentecost. And that mighty outpouring of God's spirit will be more than sufficient to make even the weakest and most timid of saints, valiant men and women of war.

For greater is he who is within us than he who is within the world. And I conclude with this statement from Paul who says, There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day. And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearance.

That includes everyone who looks with longing for the coming of the Lord Jesus when he will set up his kingdom on the earth.

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