

Preparing for Persecution and the Coming of the Lord

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the need for Christians to prepare for persecution and to live a life of holiness rooted in love for Christ, rather than fear of being caught in sin.

Duration: 11:33

Scripture: Matthew 24:29

Topics: "Tribulation", "Holiness"

Description

This sermon challenges the belief in a pre-tribulation rapture, emphasizing the need for believers to be prepared for persecution and tribulation. It highlights the importance of true holiness motivated by love for Christ and obedience to His commandments, rather than fear of being caught or the immediacy of His return. The speaker urges the congregation to perfect holiness in the fear of God and not in the fear of being caught, emphasizing the need for genuine, consistent obedience in all areas of life.

Transcript

Here is where I must tell you that Evangelical Christians have differences of opinion, and that is concerning whether Jesus Christ will come secretly for the Church before the seven year period of Great Tribulation, and then come publicly to the earth. I think about 90% of believers, born again believers, and perhaps most of you believe that Jesus Christ will come seven years before, as soon as the Tribulation starts, and secretly rapture the Church. I believed it too, as a young Christian, because I was taught that.

But as I studied the Scriptures carefully, honestly, I discovered it's not true. I searched the Scriptures, the New Testament, I could not find one verse, and I studied it for 50 years, that taught that. I discovered it was a teaching of man, that arose in England about 150 years ago.

Nobody believes it in the persecuted countries like China, or in the old communist countries, nobody would believe it. It arose in countries that had never experienced persecution for centuries. And it's a very comfortable doctrine.

Many of you have heard of Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch lady who was imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps and came out of it. She went to China, and she met some of the pastors after the communists had taken over. And they told her, the reason why many Christians lost their faith, and forsook Christ, was

because the missionaries never told us that we would go through tribulation and persecution.

They always told us, Jesus will come and take you up. We waited for Jesus to come, and instead of Jesus, the communists came. We got persecuted.

And it's not been seven years, it's been year after year after year after year, and we lost our faith. See this doctrine has not prepared people for persecution. 30 years ago, I started preaching in India.

We must prepare the church in India for persecution. Most people didn't agree with me. I said, 90% of believers, they thought it was a false doctrine.

But it's happening in India today. In the last one year, we've seen more persecution, more Christians killed in India. I've never seen it in all my 70 years.

And I believe that one way or the other, persecution is going to come to every land. And we have to be faithful to the Lord. If you're looking for a life of comfort, forget about being a Christian.

If you want to follow Jesus, remember what Jesus said in John 16, 33. In the world, you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer.

Don't get discouraged. I have overcome the world. One last thing on that before I move on.

What are the things that are going to take place when Christ comes? Let me show you. 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16. The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel.

Listen to all these things. The voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God. And we'll be caught up together to meet the Lord in the clouds.

So here it is. The Lord coming in the clouds. Angels are being taken up from all parts of the earth.

Trumpets. That is the coming of the Lord, which we know is the rapture. When Christ is going to come to take us.

Now keeping that in mind, when we turn back to Matthew 24. And in 1 Thessalonians 4, it doesn't tell us when it will happen. It tells us what will happen.

But when you go to Matthew 24, Jesus tells us when it will happen. Now listen to this. Matthew 24, verse 29.

He's just spoken about the great tribulation. In the previous verses. Verse 21.

There will be a great tribulation in those days. And then, verse 29. Immediately after the tribulation.

Not before. Immediately after the tribulation. The sun will be dark and the moon will not shine.

And then, verse 30. The Son of Man will appear in the sky. He'll come in the clouds of the sky.

Verse 31. With the angels and a trumpet. And the elect will be gathered together from the four winds.

Did Jesus know what he was talking about? As I read these words and I compared scripture with scripture. I said, how in the world did Christendom believe something else? An enemy has done this. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. I read these verses.

Verse 1 to 3. Brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And our gathering together to him. Our rapture.

2 Thessalonians 2, verse 2. Don't be shaken. Or composed or disturbed. By a message.

As if it were from us. Verse 3. This is the verse I want you to see. 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 3. Let no one deceive you.

I believe we need to hear that word. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come.

Until there is this falling away. The apostasy. Great falling away from the faith.

And it's happening all around us today. And the antichrist. The man of sin is revealed.

The son of perdition. Destruction. Who opposes and exalts himself.

Who sits in the temple and claims to be God. Verse 4. It's after he's revealed. That the Lord will come.

I believe we need to be prepared. For the coming of Jesus Christ. But we need to be prepared.

For this time of persecution. And tribulation the church is going to face. Before that.

And this is the time when we need to strengthen ourselves. I remember we were taught in the military. That the more you sweat in peace.

The less you bleed in war. And the more we prepare ourselves. In times of peace.

The more we'll be ready to fight the battles. When the time of tribulation comes. Jesus said.

No one knows the exact day. Or the hour. But he did say.

You will know when he is near. So we will know when his coming is near. But we will not know the exact day.

Or the hour. And then people. You know try to.

Frighten people into a holy life. By saying. Don't sin because Christ might come tonight.

And you won't be ready. I'll tell you another thing. If you are engaged to somebody.

And you are keeping yourself. As a pure virgin for him. And you are keeping yourself pure.

Only because. He may suddenly land up tonight. Then I don't want him to catch me.

Fooling around with another man. I mean if that's the only reason. Why you want to be devoted to.

Your absent bridegroom. I'd say you are already a harlot. Don't you think so? I mean if it's a human.

Bridegroom you are engaged to. And the only reason you don't want to be found. With another man tonight is because.

You are afraid your bridegroom may turn up tonight. And he might catch you with another man. You are a harlot.

Through and through. So when. Your desire for purity.

Is because. Oh Christ may come tonight. I don't want him to catch me.

Watching internet pornography. While he comes. I don't want him to catch me yelling at my wife.

When he comes. And that's the reason to be holy. Brother, sister you are a harlot.

Spiritual harlot. Your only interest is that the bridegroom should not catch you. Fooling around with sin.

What if you knew that. Let's assume that in a. In an earthly engagement. You know for definite that.

Your bridegroom is away. And is not going to come back for 10 years. What are you going to do? Definitely he is not coming back for 10 years.

You are going to fool around with somebody else? That's the test. Supposing I say to you. Christ is not going to come back for another 10 years.

Brother, sister relax. So what? You are going to sin? Many people think. It's the immediacy of Christ coming.

That's going to make us holy. No, that type of holiness. Is the fear of being caught.

Not the fear of God. The bible says. In 2nd Corinthians 7. We must perfect holiness.

In the fear of God. Not in the fear of being caught. The fear of being caught.

Even a thief has. An adulterer has. Don't you think all adulterers in the world.

Have a fear of being caught? Don't you think all thieves have a fear of being caught? Don't you think all murderers have a fear of being caught? Every sinner has a fear of being caught. That's not holiness. I say to any of you.

If you are trying to be holy. Because you are afraid you will be caught. I want to say to you.

That holiness is counterfeit. You are not part of the bride. Because you want to be holy.

Because Christ may come any moment. So that is not the motivation for holiness. Certainly not for me.

Jesus said. If you love me. Keep my commandments.

And it will be sad. Of course. If you are not ready.

When Christ comes. But if you have fooled around. A lot with sin.

And just at that particular moment. When Christ comes. You don't happen to be sinning.

You are sitting in church. Singing in the choir or something. You think that's going to make you holy? It's like to use the picture of earthly engagement again.

Supposing you have been Constantly fooling around with other men. And then. At the time when the bride room lands up.

You happen to be not fooling around with anybody. Does that make you pure? Just think of that. Think of your relationship with Christ.

Exactly like. Being engaged to an absent. A bride room.

Who may come. And if. That's why I say.

The second coming of Christ. Is not the reason. Why you should live a holy life.

No. He didn't say. I may come suddenly.

So keep my commandments. No. He said in John 14, 15.

If you love me. Don't keep my commandments. Now I want to tell you.

In Jesus name. That if you keep God's commandments. In your private life.

You love Jesus. In your private life. In the areas of your life that nobody can see.

If you don't keep God's commandments. In those areas. You are a first rate hypocrite.

I want to tell you right now. You are part of Babylon the harlot. Even if you sit in this church.

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