

The Administration of God

By Alan Heslop

May 28, 2007

Hymn 275

*Our God is light: and though we go
Across a trackless wild,
Our Jesus' footsteps ever shew
The path for every child.*

*At every step afresh we prove
A sure our heavenly Guide;
The faithful and forbearing love
That never turns aside.*

*Thou weariest not, most gracious Lord,
Though we may weary grow;
In season, the sustaining word
Thou giv'st our hearts to know.*

*Death's bitter waters met our thirst,
Thy cross has made them sweet;
Then on our gladdened vision burst
God's shady, cool retreat.
(Through scenes of strife, by graves of lust,
Our desert path has been;
But here, O Lord, we've learned to trust
And love Thee, though unseen.*

*The manna and the springing well
Suffice for every need;
And Eschol's grapes the story tell
Of where Thy path doth lead.*

I'd like to turn to the book of Ezra - the 8th chapter, 21st verse.

*Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might
afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and
for our little ones, and for all our substance.*

Beloved this has been the thing that has been so much on my heart – *that we might seek a right way* – that we might know with assurance the purposes of God. In the last few months my wife and I have been privy to a lot of things that have been going on in system and it really, really concerns me that we would be affected by these things.

I would like to look at just a verse in Haggai too. Turn to the second chapter and third verse:

*Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how
do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?*

Oh, the old men cried. Haggai says “well, excuse me, but this is not the same house! Stop and think about the day of Solomon. I’ve often said to young people that when someone said to a Jew in Solomon’s day ‘where do you worship?’ – There would not be any hesitation. “That place right there,” they would say, “that building that is coated in gold.” Did you know that there was so much gold in the city of Jerusalem in the time of Solomon that silver was worthless? Consider it. There was so much gold that no one cared for silver. Is this new temple anything in comparison to Solomon’s temple? ‘It is as nothing!’ Where was the gold? Where was all that beauty? Look down at the 9th verse.

The glory of this latter house

Which house? This latter house, the little one, that didn’t have a gold coating - that one that the old men had cried over

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former

Well, how was that going to happen?

... in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

The [future] glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former.

Why? Which house was the one in which the Lord Jesus cast out the money changers in? It was this house. The glory didn’t have anything to do with the building. The glory had to do with the person. Young people I would say to you today – if you look around and you look at this assembly, and some of us come from a lot smaller assemblies, is it nothing? Compared to what the assembly was before it is as nothing. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon, believe. Shirley and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last year. I said to a young couple here, “I do not think that they will have the opportunity to do what we did.” I don’t think that they will have that opportunity - because I believe that the Lord will have come before that many years have passed. I don’t think that it will be anywhere close to 50 years from now. Think about it

the glory of this house will be greater than the glory of the former”

Now let us go on in this chapter to something a little more serious. It says in the 11th verse, the middle of the verse,

Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy?

Can you transmit holiness by association? And what is the answer?

No. ... if one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

What I would like to suggest to you, young people, is that you should be careful of your associations. I don't say that you should never have a friend amongst system, or that you shouldn't have a friend here or there ... BUT ... I would suggest that you should be careful. You have been given 'holy flesh'.

Turn with me to Ezra 1:8

Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto

We find that all of the silver and the gold, all of the vessels of the temple - ALL of them, every last one, - were delivered to be sent back to Jerusalem. When they got back to Jerusalem they weighed them all out, and they counted them all out. What did they have? How much was missing? Nothing! Not one thing was missing. Did Ezra and Nehemiah live in a day of strong things? What were we just reading about this house that was 'as nothing'? It was not as outwardly splendid, but everything associated with it was there.

Sometimes we might get discouraged and think 'What do we have left?' Young people - we have everything that was ever delivered to the church! We have the whole truth of God - ALL of it. There is nothing missing. You have been delivered 'holy flesh'. Don't defile it. Hold fast the truth - ALL of it. You cannot say "well we don't have that anymore." "The early church did this" or "the early church they ...". Well they lived in catacombs too. They didn't have ceiled houses, or wainscoted houses as Darby's translation puts it.

Paul says to Timothy "*rightly [divide] the Word of Truth*" or Mr. Darby's translations puts it "*cutting in a straight line the Word of Truth*"

Sometimes in modern building a laser beam is used as a guide to what is perfectly straight or level. We used to use a string to get a straight line. The string sometimes would catch up on something or be pushed aside by some obstruction making the line not quite straight and true. Now we have a laser beam. That laser is EXACTLY straight. There's no doubt about it. There's no wiggle, it doesn't move up and down, it is straight and true. God's Word is a standard like the laser beam - straight and true - unerring. I know a brother that is a tool and die maker. At work he had a 'true surface' that was accurate to less than 1/10,000th of an inch. If you wanted to see if something was straight you could put it on the straight surface and you would see if it was straight to less than 1/10,000th of an inch. When they built the wall in Nehemiah's day I don't suppose that that wall wiggled around back and forth to include this or exclude that. They built the wall. If your house happened to be on the outside of the wall, you were on the outside. And if it was on the inside of the wall, you were on the inside. They built the wall in a straight line.

Let us turn to Nehemiah chapter three. The third chapter of Nehemiah is a wonderful chapter even though it is full of names.

□1

Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto

the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

□2

And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

□

□4*And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.*

□5*And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their LORD.*

□

□7

And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river.

□8

Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.

□9

And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

□10*And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah.*

□11*Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.*

□12*And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.*

□

□14*But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.*

□

□16*After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty.*

□17*After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him*

repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part.

□18*After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.*

□19*And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning of the wall.*

□20*After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.*

□21*After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib.*

□22*And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.*

□23*After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house.*

□24*After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner.*

□25*Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh.*

□26*Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.*

□27*After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.*

□28*From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.*

□29*After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.*

□30*After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.*

31*After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.*

32*And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.*

There is a lot about Eliashib the high priest in this chapter about the building of the wall. It becomes apparent that he didn't really want the wall. I think that it was that his daughter was

married to the son of Tobiah - the enemy, but that is another subject.

The priests built the sheep gate, but they missed something. They didn't put any locks on the gate, they didn't put any bars on it. The gate would close but there was nothing to keep it closed.

In the 3rd verse they built the fish gate.

But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

In the 6th verse they built the old gate.

Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

The 13th verse they built the valley and the dung gate.

The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.

The 15th verse they built the fountain gate.

But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

Now I want to come down to another gate – this gate is really, really important. The 26th verse.

Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

Who built the water gate? Go back and read it again. Who built the water gate? NO ONE! The water gate was never destroyed. There is another interesting thing about this passage. I wonder how many would understand when it says about the tower that lieth out. What is a 'tower out'? If you have ever been to Dover Castle in England, you have seen a 'tower out'. A 'tower out' is a round tower that stands outside of the wall. The idea of a 'tower out' is that when someone is attacking the wall, the defenders in the tower can shoot at them from the tower along the outside of the wall. There is a tunnel that goes from the 'tower out' under the wall and into the castle. At Dover Castle there is actually a draw bridge inside that passageway. It is a very secure, powerful place. What is it associated with? - With the Water Gate. Why would we have the 'tower out' associated with the Water Gate? It is the place of power.

Here we have a picture of the Word of God that has never changed. It has never been destroyed.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

The Water Gate remained. The Water Gate was in association with the 'tower out'. The Word of God is what we need to hold onto. There was a brother who lived in Seattle, he's with the Lord now, but of all of the brethren that I've ever met, I don't think I could ever say that I met someone who could quote the Word of God so rapidly. Once there was a man attacking him as to his faith. Every time he would attack him, the brother would reply by quoting a verse from scripture. Finally in frustration this man who was attacking him said, "If you would get out from behind your Bible, I could get at you." The Water Gate – that is the place of power. If you want defense, stay close to the Water Gate.

I would like to turn to the 22nd of Genesis for a minute. I am going to show you two pictures that encompass the whole history of the time. Then we are going to talk a little more in detail.

Genesis 22 and starting at verse 6.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of:

In Luke's gospel, it says

And when they had come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. Luke 23:33

Here we have the whole Old Testament history. When did it begin? When was the Passover lamb taken? - On the tenth day. 10 in scripture speaks of man's responsibility before God. The sacrifice was already prepared. It had been there and the Passover was taken on the 10th day and kept up until the 14th day. How many days is that? Four days. Peter says

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" 2 Peter 2:8 (

Look at this story of Abraham and Isaac. They went three days' journey and saw the place afar off. The young men stayed. I believe Abraham and Isaac went another day's journey. It's 4004 years from Adam to Christ – the 4 days of the Old Testament.

Now turn to John's gospel chapter 1. This picture is going to take us from the cross until the millennium. The 29th verse.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

The 35th verse

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

The 43rd verse

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him,

We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Nazareth was a despised city in Isreal.

Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Isrealite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou was under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou are the Son of God; thou are the King of Isreal.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou?

Second chapter:

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; ...

And both Jesus was called and his disciples, to the marriage.

Two days. The first day John sees Jesus twice - verses 29 and 36 are the same day. The 43rd verse is the second day. The third day – the marriage in Cana of Galilee - is a picture of Christ being

united with his earthly bride, Israel. This is the beginning of the millennium. And in between these – this little article about Nathanael – is a picture of the faithful remnant of Israel.

Rabbi, Thou are the Son of God, thou are the King of Israel

With these two portions, in Genesis 22 and John 1, we have a picture of all of time. Abraham and Isaac went together to the cross. It took them 4000 years to get there and that was all time of man's testing. From then on, it is all what Christ has done.

I happened to hear a radio program probably a bit more than a year ago – by a man that calls himself “The Bible Answer Man”, Hank Hanigraf. Someone asked him about dispensations, and he mocked. He said that dispensationalism was something invented by some guy by the name of Mr. Darby a hundred years ago. Well, young people, I want to tell you very seriously that if we don't understand dispensations, we are going to go astray.

The word DISPENSATION means administration – that is how God is dealing with man at a particular time in the history of mankind.

Turn with me to Proverbs 24. My son and I build houses. The first thing that you want to do when you build a house is to get a set of plans. Read the 3rd verse.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

I'm not a house designer. I can say, “Well, I would like the house to have this or I would like it to have that,” but I have no idea how to design a house. I have no idea what size foundations are needed. I don't know all of the various things about designing a house. It takes wisdom to design a house. You don't just go to the lumberyard and get a pile of 2 by 4's and a hammer and nails and start putting them together to build a house. You start out with someone who understands - has wisdom - in drawing up a set of plans.

Even after I get a set of plans on my desk I have no idea where to start to change that set of plans into a structure. *By understanding it is established.* I hire a man to do the foundations and then I hire a framer to put the frame up. And then I hire someone to do the sheet rock and I hire someone to put on a roof and I hire someone to do the finish work. In the end I have a house.

By wisdom is an house builded, by understanding it is established.

by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

When I move into the house would I set up the dining room table in the bathroom? Would I take the bedroom suite and put it in the living room? How about the pots and pans? Do they go in the walk in closet in the master bedroom? If you walked in a house like that you'd say, “These guys don't know what they're doing.” The pots and pans are put in the kitchen. The bedroom furniture goes in the bedroom. You would put the dining room table in the dining room, and the living room furniture in the living room. Walking into that house and you would say, “This is a beautiful place.”

What does all this have to do with what we have been talking about? If you don't understand the way that God has built the house, you will not know how to furnish it. Understanding dispensations is critical.

I am going first summarize dispensations very quickly for you. The first dispensation is

Innocence. God dealt with man in innocence. He gave man the wonderful Garden of Eden to enjoy. Adam and Eve disobeyed by eating the fruit and gaining a conscience (the second dispensation) – they were no longer innocent.

He gave man government and he corrupted it. He gave him a promise and everything about it man has ruined. He gave man the law and man corrupted even those things. Then Christ came and died for us. Can anyone hold up their hand and say “I have done everything right”? Look around us. Is the church one? Is the gospel going forth on every street corner? We have to hang our heads and say we have ruined the day of Grace. Christ is coming and he is going to set up his kingdom. That kingdom will be a thousand years of righteous rule on this earth. He will judge the world every morning so that it is a pure place. At the end of it all man will rise up against the Christ. The depravity of man is complete. It’s the Grace of God

There’s one verse that you might be interested to look up because it’s both New and Old Testament. It says:

The just shall live by faith. (Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11)

By faith. Why did a man offer an offering in the Old Testament? Because he had faith that it would be accepted. *The Just shall live by faith.* The principles of God never change.

It is ‘administrations’ – the way that God has dealt with man. Every time God has proven the failure of man. In every case - even the millennium. Man rises up in rebellion against the Christ at the end.

Now, more detail. The first dispensation was Innocence. God created man. He put man in the Garden of Eden and gave him everything that he could possibly want. He gave them all of the wonderful things and a life of beauty and ease. He gave them just one warning or restriction. He said, “There is one tree – the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – don’t eat of its fruit.” He didn’t say “don’t touch it” – that is what Eve said – he said “don’t eat of it.” How long do you suppose the dispensation of Innocence lasted? It says in Genesis that God rested on the seventh day. Turn with me to the fifth chapter of John’s gospel for a minute.

The Lord Jesus was healing people on the Sabbath day, and the Jews didn’t like that idea because he was breaking the Sabbath. Look at the 17th verse.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

How long did Innocence last? Possibly not a day. It could very well be that the Father’s work began the very first Sabbath. At the maximum, it would be a week, but very likely Innocence didn’t last a day. The Father had to begin the work. He and His Son went together to the cross of Calvary. How terrible. And then what did God do? Remember what Satan said to Eve? He said
in the day that ye eat thereof ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

In other words, you will have a conscience.

What did man do when man was tried under the regime or administration of Conscience? When it comes to the time of Noah and it says

The thought of man’s heart was only evil continually. And it repented God that he had made man on the earth.

God told Noah to build a boat. Was it to be just a row boat? No. Noah was to build a ship – an ocean going sized ship. Where did he build it? Did he go down to the Mediterranean? No, he built it out in the middle of the dessert. Was he insane to build a boat there? Why would you build a ship in the dessert? Because he believed God! I could just imagine a picture of this. Here is this big

ship being built out in the middle of the dessert. If it happened today what would they do? They would be running tour buses by to show people what this ‘nut’ was doing. “... and he says it’s going to rain.” – something that it had never done before. Could you not picture that?

Noah built the ark. He pitched it within and without. He did everything that he was told to do. There are two men that scripture says ‘walked with God’. Only two. One was Enoch – *he walked with God and was not for God took him* - and the other was Noah. Enoch is a picture of the church – whom God took before the flood (tribulation). Noah went through the flood. Noah is a picture of the faithful remnant of Israel who will go through the flood – through the tribulation.

Noah was God’s man. At the end of the flood, God gave Noah government on the earth. This is the third dispensation - Government. If I were to talk about politics, or politicians, I think that we would have the idea that it’s not a very great subject. Politicians are not noted as being the most upstanding, honest people. This morning we were praying about the darkness coming in. Why? – we can’t depend on government.

Promise is the next dispensation – the Promise was given to Abraham. God promised Abraham that his seed would be as the dust of the earth (Gen 12:2) If you look in Galatians 3 – it’s not as seeds, plural, but seed, singular. That seed is the Lord Jesus. One time God says that Abraham’s offspring would be ‘as the sand that is by the seashore’. A second time he says that they would be ‘as the stars that are in the heavens’. And the last time it is both. See Gen 12:2, 13:15-16, 15:5, 17:4, 22:17-18 & Gal 3:16.

That sand which is by the seashore. We were just down in Fort Meyers Beach, Florida and I got looking at sand by the seashore. It was fine - the grains were very tiny and innumerable. If you were to count the grains of sand you would be a whole lifetime counting the grains in just a small piece of the beach.

Think of the stars of the sky. Every time a bigger telescope is built, scientists find more stars - and those are only the stars in the Milky Way. That isn’t all of the stars out there. God is eternal. And he spoke. I think that it is so marvelous. He gives us all of the details about bringing man into the world. Then he makes a comment – it is almost off hand as if insignificant – he says *He made the stars also*. We look out there – and if you get away from the city – and look up into the heavens it is hard to believe. There are so many stars in the sky. Can you imagine if we could look through a giant telescope like the Hubble Telescope we would see millions more stars.

There are two companies to come into blessing. There is God’s company on earth – they will come into blessing in the millennium through Israel. That is the sand that is by the seashore. And there is the heavenly company - the church and the Old Testament saints - that are a heavenly company. ... and they are innumerable. God will have the preeminence. In Corinthians it says *All the promises of God are in Him yea and amen*. He is going to complete it all.

Then we have the Law.

*“The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
John 1:17*

Let us look just for a minute at Romans chapter 3. We might ask “Why did God give the law? What was his purpose in all of this? In Romans 3, the 10th verse

It is written, There is none righteous, no not one:

*There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after
God.*

If you would turn back to the 14th Psalm and the 53rd Psalm you would find those exact words twice.

God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and did seek God.

What was his conclusion?

There is none righteous, no not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no wisdom

No-one seeks God. I have heard some people talking about being sensitive to ‘seekers’, but the Bible says, *There is none that seeketh after God. No not one.* The work of salvation is entirely the work of Christ and the Spirit of God. It has nothing to do with man. Nothing at all. God is the one that does the seeking. The Spirit is the one who gives life. God is the one who imparts faith. Salvation is entirely God’s work. Entirely! There is no cause for boasting. Nothing that we have done ourselves!

The 20th verse

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:

Now notice this last phrase

By the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20

God has provided His standard. We talked about ‘cutting in a straight line the Word of Truth’. He has provided his standard. If I were to ask, “Have you ever told a lie?” I would suggest that if everybody didn’t put their hand up, the one who didn’t put their hand up is the liar. I’m sure that everybody here has told a lie – even a partial truth - sometime in their life. Has anybody here not coveted something? Some of you have seen me with million dollar bills. Why do people accept these tracts so readily? It is because of covetousness. “I wish,” they say to themselves, “that I had a million dollars.” Has anyone here never said or thought, “I wish that I had...” Well, those are only two of the Ten Commandments. Everybody is guilty before God. But ...

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him SHOULD NOT PERISH. John 3:16

Do you know what perish means? Pass Eternally Ruined Into a Sinner’s Hell. Is that what you want? Terrible thought isn’t it. He gave the law to prove the depravity of man. Up to this point everything has been what man has done.

Now the Lord Jesus has come – the dispensation of Grace. I’d like to talk about 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Let’s start at verse 14.

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again,

Stop there for a moment. What assurance do we have that He rose again? If the Roman army or the Jewish priests and Sanhedrin had the slightest hope of finding the body of Jesus, they would have searched the countryside. They would not have left a pebble unturned until they found Him. What would they have done then? They would have hung him up in the town square and said

“Look here – here is what happened to this imposter.” They could not do it.

A man by the name of Greenleaf - who established the Harvard Law School - said that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the most perfectly attested fact in history. Interesting! He was saying that you could take the testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ into a court of law and prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that He had risen from the dead.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

In other words - we will not go before. From the day of Pentecost until the Lord's coming is the church period. It is about 2000 years. Harrod said that he would see Jesus and he said “Go and tell that fox that today and tomorrow I do miracles. The third day I shall be perfected.” Exodus 19 when the Lord said *prepare the people against the third day. For in the third day I shall come down in the sight of all the people.* The church is about 2000 years. It is very likely that, because man has not been incredibly accurate in keeping track of time, that we have no clue the date actually is today. It is awfully close to 2000 years. That is why I can say that I do not believe that that young couple will be able to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Lord's coming is at hand.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,

or really ‘with archangel voice’. What is the difference? Michael is the chief angel, if you like, who leads the armies of heaven. His voice is the voice of the authority of heaven. When the Lord Jesus shouts with archangel voice, it is a shout with all of the authority of heaven. I like what it says in the Song of Solomon. It may not be what the Lord will say, but Song of Solomon says “*rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.*” Isn't that what we want to hear? *Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away!*

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

That is the end of the day of Grace.

Turn over to Matthew 25. Beginning at verse 31.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate

them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: ...

Verse 41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

This is after the tribulation period. 1 Thessalonians 4 was before the tribulation period. This is paramount that you lay hold of these things. In Revelations chapter 3 he says to the church at Philadelphia

“I will keep thee FROM the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

The tribulation has nothing to do with the church. Enoch, who is a picture of the church - actually it takes both Enoch and Methuselah to picture the church. Enoch was taken. *He was not for God took him.* Methuselah's name means 'when I am gone, it will come'. And when you and I are gone, it will come. The tribulation will fall upon this earth.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7 it says

And you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Think about this. Let's look at another picture in Revelation 19. This is one of the most incredible word pictures. Verse 11.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat

upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Look at one more passage in Malachi. God isn't short of descriptive language. Malachi chapter 4, verse 1.

Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

That sounds like total destruction, right? Not quite – look at the 2nd verse.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Oh, what a wonderful difference. Here think about the Lord Jesus. May he be *revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wow. And the armies which were in heaven followed him on white horses.* Who are the armies in heaven? You are. What kind of horses? White horses. What kind of clothing? Linen – that's the righteousnesses of saints. Here are the saints of God coming with their bridegroom. He is coming to the saints on earth. That is going back to the second chapter of John, there is going to be a marriage in Cana of Galilee. They are going to *grow up as calves of the stall.*

The poor nation of Israel is going to be beaten down.

Let us turn for just a minute to Daniel chapter 9, verse 24.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, [1] to finish the transgression, and [2] to make an end of sins, and [3] to make reconciliation for iniquity, and [4] to bring in everlasting righteousness, and [5] to seal up the vision and prophesy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Now go to the 26th verse

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come [notice prince is in a small letter] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

After three score and two weeks - so that's 483 years - shall Messiah be cut off. God leaves us no room for doubt. So how marvelous to know, young people, that we shall not go through the tribulation, and we are not here to establish the kingdom. We are here as those who have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ and we are on our road to the heavens. We are not here to make the earth a better place to live in.

Hymn 244

That bright and blessed morn is near
When He, the Bridegroom, shall appear,
And call His bride away.
Her blessing then shall be complete,
When with her Lord she takes her seat
In everlasting day.

The days and nights are gliding past,
Soon shall be heard the trumpet's blast
Which wakes the sleeping saints.
The dead in Christ in glory rise,
When we with them shall reach the skies
Where Jesus for us waits.

What wonder, joy, and glad surprise
Shall fill our hearts as thus we rise
To meet Him in the air;
To see His face, to hear His voice,
And in His perfect love rejoice,
Whose glory then we'll share.

No more deferred our hope shall be,
No longer through a glass we'll see,
But clearly face to face.
We'll dwell with Jesus then above,
Whom absent we have learned to love,
Blest samples of His grace.

O may this hope our spirits cheer,
While waiting for our Saviour here;
 He'll quickly come again.
O may our hearts look for that day,
And to His word responsive say,
 "Come, Jesus, Lord, Amen."