

Encouraging Words To "Church Age" Saints

We, the church of Jesus Christ, have committed our full lives to the Lord Jesus. At the moment we were saved by His precious blood, *He sealed us with promise* (Eph. 1:13; Ezek. 9); we are *sitting with Christ Jesus in heavenly places*, even now (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). We are now *espoused /engaged* to Him (Eph. 5:32); and we are being tested by trials and tribulations—preparing to stand before Him at the *Judgment Seat of Christ* as is written in Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. And finally, we are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*;...(1 Peter 2:9). Therefore, "...God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, *whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*" (1 Thes. 5:9). Much better news follows just for His Church!

³⁵*For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth¹.* ³⁶*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* (Luke 21:35, 36).

Comment: Jesus concludes His prophetic message by admonishing His followers not to be so pre-occupied with the pleasures and cares of this world that they fail to be prepared for His coming. **1)** These words are intended for all God's people of all ages, not just those living during the last days of tribulation. The demand for spiritual faithfulness is critical in the light of Jesus' teaching that He will return for the faithful believers at an unexpected time. Since the time of His coming for His church cannot be determined, believers must always be ready (see Matthew 24: 40, 42; and John 14:3). **2)** Christ's rapture of the faithful in His churches (1 Thes. 4:16,17) delivers us (the church) from the "wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:10), in order that we might "escape all these things that shall come to pass" upon the earth—to all them that dwell on the whole earth. (vv. 35-36; compare vv. 25-26; (see Revelation 3:10).

Followers of Christ must guard against sin and pray that their love toward Christ will not diminish, in order they might receive grace and strength to persevere in faith and righteousness in Jesus Christ. Only by such perseverance will they be able to "escape" all the terrible things coming upon the world in these last days. Many believe the means of "escape" for those who faithfully keep on praying is the rapture.

1) As certain as Christ went to heaven, so He will return from His Father's presence and take His followers to be with Him in heaven...to the place prepared for them (see John 14:1-3). This is the hope of all believers. The ultimate purpose of the Lord's return is that believers may forever be with Him. **2)** The words "*receive you unto Myself*" refer to the rapture, when all living believers "*shall be caught up together...in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*". **3)** Christ's coming for His faithful will enable them to escape the future hour of testing "*that will come upon the whole world, to them that dwell on the face of the whole earth*". **4)** This eternal reunion is a doctrine of comfort for all followers of Jesus who desire to "ever be with the Lord". Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18).

The Church At Philadelphia:

¹⁰*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation², which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth³.* (Revelation 3:10).

¹**Double Underscore.** "*them that dwell upon the earth*". Both Testaments strongly indicate these are evil men who refuse to repent of their sin even to the end. Please confirm this by completing a biblical electronic search on Gateway.com to learn who the earth dwellers really are. Use KJV for accuracy, and type into the search box "Dwellers of earth", "inhabiters of earth", etc., and you will find confirmation through the Word.

²**"the hour of temptation"**—the "full appointed" *season* of affliction and temptation (so in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#) the plagues are called "the temptations of Egypt"), literally, "*the temptation*": the sore temptation which is coming on: the time of great tribulation before Christ's 2d coming.

Comment: Philadelphia was a faithful church that kept Christ's Word, and never denied Him. They endured persecution from the world and resisted the evil trends of other churches, yet persevered in loyalty to Christ and the truth of the gospel (vv. 7-10). Because of their perseverance, God promised to deliver them from the hour (hour = 7 years⁴) of trial. This deliverance of the faithful in Philadelphia from the *hour of trial* is identical to Paul's promise to the Thessalonians that they would be delivered from the "wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:10); it extends to all of God's faithful throughout the ages (vv.13, 22). This hour includes the divine appointed time of trial, wrath, and tribulation that will come on "all the world, to all them that dwell on the earth.

The Church At Pergamos:

¹⁴*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* ¹⁵*So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.* ¹⁶*Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth⁵.* (Revelation 2:14-16).

From Matthew Henry Commentary: v. 16. Observe here, (1.) Repentance is the duty of saints as well as sinners; it is a gospel duty. (2.) It is the duty of churches and communities as well as particular persons; those who sin together should repent together. (3.) It is the duty of Christian societies to repent of other men's sins, as far as they have been accessory to them, though but so much as by connivance. (4.) When God comes to punish the corrupt members of a church, he rebukes that church itself for allowing such to continue in its communion, and some drops of the storm fall upon the whole society. (5.) No sword cuts so deep, nor inflicts so mortal a wound, as the sword of Christ's mouth. Let but the threatenings of the word be set home upon the conscience of a sinner, and he will soon be a terror to himself; let these threatenings be executed, and the sinner is utterly cut off. The word of God will take hold of sinners, sooner or later, either for their conviction or their confusion⁶.

The Church At Thyatira:

²⁰*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* ²¹*And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.* ²²*Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.* (Revelation 2:20-22)

Comment By Matthew Henry: The punishment of this seducer, this Jezebel, v. 22, v. 23, in which is couched a prediction of the fall of Babylon. (1.) *I will cast her into a bed*, into a bed of pain, not of pleasure, into a bed of flames (great tribulation); and those who have sinned with her shall suffer with her; but this may yet be prevented by their repentance. (2.) *I will kill her children with death*; that is, the second death, which does the work effectually, and leaves no hope of future life, no resurrection for those that are killed by the second death, but only to shame and everlasting contempt.⁴ The design of Christ in the destruction of these wicked seducers, and this was the instruction of others, especially of his churches: All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works. God is known by *the judgments that he executes*; and, by this revenge taken upon seducers, he would make known. . .

⁴ **The hour of Temptation**—the *appointed season* of affliction and temptation (Deuteronomy 4:34 the plagues are called "the temptations of Egypt"), literally, "the temptation": the sore temptation which is coming on: the time of great tribulation before Christ's second coming.

⁵ **Sword Of My Mouth**—Matthew Henry. No sword cuts so deep, nor inflicts so mortal a wound, as the sword of Christ's mouth *let these threatenings be executed, and the sinner is utterly cut off. The word of God will take hold of sinners, either for their conviction or destruction.*

⁶ **great tribuation (KJV)**—I will cast her into a bed, into a bed of pain, not of pleasure, into a bed of flames (great tribulation—KJV); and those who have sinned with her shall suffer with her; but this may yet be prevented by their repentance—*during the tribulation.*

Matthew Henry Commentary (Revelation 3:10):

"the hour of temptation"—the "full appointed" *season* of affliction and temptation (so in [Deuteronomy 4:34](#) the plagues are called "the temptations of Egypt"), literally, "the temptation": the sore temptation which is coming on: the time of great tribulation before Christ's second coming.

"to try them that "dwell" upon the earth"/also "inhabiters" of earth—those who are of earth, earthy ([Rev. 8:13](#)). "Dwell" implies that their home is earth, not heaven. *All mankind, except the elect* ([Rev. 13:8](#), [Rev. 13:14](#)). The temptation brings out the fidelity of those *kept* by Christ and hardens the unbelieving reprobates ([Rev. 9:20](#), [Rev. 9:21](#), [Rev. 16:11](#), [Rev. 16:21](#)). The particular persecutions which befell Philadelphia shortly after, were the earnest of the great last tribulation before Christ's coming, to which the Church's attention in all ages is directed.

Biblical Scriptures referring to "all those who dwell/inhabit the earth". Who Are They...Really?⁷

Old Testament	New Testament
Psalm 75: 2, 3	Luke 21:35-36
Isaiah 18:3	Acts 17:26
Isaiah 24:1; 5, 6	Revelation 3: 9,10
Isaiah 26: 21	Revelation 6:10
Isaiah 51:6	Revelation 8:13
Jeremiah 25:29, 30	Revelation 11:10
Daniel 4:35	Revelation 12:11-12
Nahum 1:5	Revelation 13:8
	Revelation 13:12
	Revelation 13:14
	Revelation 14:6
	Revelation 17:2
	Revelation 17:8
	Revelation 18:3

Please take note that among those who are dwelling on earth, there are multitudes of new believers who will measure the benefits of The Christ over the terrors of the antichrist; they will then come to Jesus Christ in Masse—ever showing their faithfulness. They will never forsake their Savior. They are the multitudes who are saved during the Great Tribulation—and called *saints*. They called *saints* because they are the *only* saints who dwell on earth during the great tribulation. They are being killed/martyred on earth during the seven year great tribulation period.

Apostle John was raptured into heaven in Revelation 4:1-4, with the Church. In Revelation 7:9-14, we see John still *in heaven* speaking with another Elder *in heaven* concerning this multitude of saints they saw before the throne. This multitude was "*standing before the throne, before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*" ([Rev. 7:9](#)). Then *in verses 13-17*, the unnamed elder asked John, "*Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?*" John is answered, "*Sir, thou knowest.*" This uncountable group is not the church.

"*Yes, I do know. 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...*" ([Revelation 7:9-17](#)). This is a great revelation from the Holy Spirit.

Blessings from Tom and Linda Stephens
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⁷Need scripture texts in this chart, with a description of who they are "who dwell on the earth", especially during the seven year Tribulation Period? Go to the site noted above... then, "Tom's Page" and page down to this series: *The Rapture As Taught in The Book Of Revelation*. Find this title: "Who Are They That Dwell On Earth During The Tribulation"?