

Rev 25-11-12b

Appreciate those words, Matthew. That was, I think, an extra verse, maybe from standard length, but so meaningful. Great, great song.

Helpful reminder. That's one of the sources of the word we hold onto and the strength that we maintain is understanding who we belong to. With that, let's resume our study now in Revelation chapter three.

We're looking at this fascinating letter to the church at Philadelphia. You of course know that the theme there is love, love for the brethren. And Jesus mentions that these enemies who claim to be close to God, who claim to be the bastion of tradition and keepers of the flame and those who represent God's truth are in fact the opposite.

They are a synagogue of Satan. They say they are Jews and they're not. And of course, by the time John is given this message from the Lord Jesus, the Jews have had decades to come to understand that God has moved forward in his plan and purpose.

And to be stuck in the past and saying, no, it's the law of Moses and we are Jews and that makes us righteous and all the rest of y'all are Gentiles and are outside the fold. And we're going to invoke the law of Moses and separate from you and say that you're impure, incorrect, and wrong to make any claims on God's grace. They are going to be forced to acknowledge that these people have in fact latched onto God's truth and God's grace and have responded.

And that is the reason that the Lord Jesus can put before them this open door. Because you have kept my command, verse 10 of Revelation chapter three, you have kept my command to persevere. That's what it says in your New King James.

I would line that out because you have kept, this is to guard or maintain the word of my patience. I also will tereo, keep or guard you from the hour of trial. This is Philipsis.

This is translated tribulation in many places. The hour of trial or tribulation, which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth. Now, this is something that becomes more complex the longer you look at it.

And I'm going to appeal to an article written by an old teacher of Patty's from her days at Believer's Chapel down in Dallas. His name is Sam Storms. He's a wonderful Bible scholar.

He is very diligent. I think he's a wonderful guy in many respects. We differ theologically because he is pretty much a Calvinist and an adherent to Reformed theology.

But that has not gotten in the way as with several other people, as Lewis Johnson comes to mind, that can be wonderful teachers as long as you're not on the subject of covenant theology, dispensations, and some of the ways that that persuasion can lead one astray in interpreting scripture. But this is not one of those areas. And what I would like to do is summarize for you

what I think is a very perceptive article that Sam Storms wrote back in March of 2007.

And it's on his website, which is samstorms.org. But he was an assistant pastor for many years at Believer's Chapel in Dallas. And Patty learned a lot from him and appreciated his scholarship. And you can learn a lot from him.

There are areas where, you know, it's a Venn diagram. You have an overlap where things are in common. And then there's some things where he would disagree with me and I would disagree with him in terms of understanding.

But I'm going to share this article because I think it's a good one. It is called, and it's number 37, Keep from the Hour of Trial, Revelation 3, 10, and 11. March 25th, 2007, Sam Storms.

If you've ever wondered whether it mattered much to Jesus that you have kept the faith and maintained your commitment to him, this promise to the Church of Philadelphia should put your fears to rest. That's a great introduction and very true. Look closely at our Lord's words in Revelation 3, 10, and 11.

Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, said Jesus to the Church in Philadelphia, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Let me say that this is very pregnant. Each of these phrases needs to be taken and looked at closely.

We're going to take a look at those who dwell on the earth. That is not an idle phrase. I had done my own list and then I found that Sam Storms had done the same thing in his article.

I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown. Skipping down a bit here, his first point is, the notion that any Christian is assured of special protection from trials, tribulations, and persecution is unbiblical.

This is a great point. It isn't that if we are faithful enough, we are not going to suffer any kind of trial. Paul says in Acts 14, 22 that it is through many tribulations, philipsis, same word as is used here, that we must enter the kingdom of God.

We must enter through trials. Jesus said in this world, you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

You can look at John 15 verses 19 and 20 for this. We are to rejoice in our philipsis, our sufferings. This is Romans 5, 3, Acts 5, 40 and 41.

I could give you more passages, but you understand this point. We know that in this world, we can expect testing. James 1 is all about this.

What should our attitude be in philipsis, in times of trial, in times of perosmos, testing and trial? So John 16, 33, in this world, you shall have tribulation, testing, philipsis. So we shouldn't expect that if I'm just faithful enough, it's all going to be a bed of roses. We should not only not be

surprised, be not surprised at the fiery trial that you experience.

Secondly, these are Sam Storm's points, and I think they're good ones. I had worked out a rough outline, and then I found his article, and probably 80% of what I had put in mind was already in his, and he organized it better. Second, the trial or tribulation that is coming is designed for the judgment of unbelievers.

When I pointed out to you the hour of trial that comes upon all of those who dwell on the earth, the earth dwellers, this is a phrase that always refers to persecutors of the church, to those who are unbelievers. He says persecutors of the church. In Revelation, these are persecutors of believers who are on the earth, persecutors of the saints.

So take a short trip with me here, or I will read them and you can write them down, but I'm going to page through my Bible, beginning in chapter 6, verse 10, when the fifth seal is opened, the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God are seen under the altar and they cry with a loud voice saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth. The very same phrase, 610, souls under the altar. We have been slain by these people.

When will you avenge us? When will you perpetrate justice? By the way, note in advance, another point that we're going to see, this is one of my points, that in the age of Israel, it is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life. These souls under the altar who have been slain in this period are basically demanding that fulfillment, that retribution. Our life was taken.

If you shed man's blood, by man shall your blood be shed. It goes all the way back to Genesis 9 and the aftermath of the flood and human justice. And if humans don't do it, then God needs to step in and do it.

Revelation 8, 13. I looked and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. The inhabitants of the earth, those who dwell on the earth, same group.

Revelation 11, verse 10. They are always distinguished from the saints, from the faithful, from those who are sealed, from those who belong to God, from the servants of God. Revelation 11, 10.

Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over the death of the two witnesses. Remember, Revelation 11 is all about the two witnesses. Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, their dead bodies.

They will make merry. They will send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. They're mentioned there twice.

Revelation 12, 12. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, the earth dwellers and the sea, for the devil has come down to you having great wrath because he knows that he has a short time.

Revelation 13, 8. All those who dwell on the earth will worship the beast from the sea, those whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Same chapter, verse 12. Another beast comes up and exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.

Verse 14. He deceives those who dwell on the earth by signs which he is granted to do. Revelation 14, verse 6. Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, to preach to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

It isn't that they don't have a chance. It isn't that they don't have an opportunity to repent and believe. And our two final passages, Revelation 17, verse 2. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with the scarlet harlot, and the inhabitants of the earth are made drunk with the wine of her fornication, the earth dwellers.

And then finally again in verse 8. The beast that you saw was and is not and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. Those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. When they see the beast that was and is not and yet is.

So these are the ones who will suffer the judgments of the seals and the trumpets and the thunders and the bowls. You'd be amazed. I've surveyed between 15 and 20 different commentaries.

Everybody talks about the seals trumpets and bowls and they forget about the thunders. This is a fourfold judgment and there's a reason for it. Those thunders are mentioned for a reason and they are not detailed for a reason.

But these judgments are going to come upon those who are dwelling on the earth in this time. They are emblematic by the way of the entire church age. The reason we study them is as people have studied for the last 20 centuries.

There is pertinence and application in our own lives. There are adhebrations and anticipations. This prophetic word is applicable now.

There are those who dwell on the earth. Their names are not written in the book of life and they sponsor and implement oppression and persecution, opposition and stumbling block and friction and seduction and endeavors to fulfill Satan's program of tripping us up, slowing us down, diverting us, deceiving us, deflecting us from accomplishing God's purpose. If this was only for one generation, if it had only been in the preterist view for the generation that actually

received these letters circa 96 AD, AD 96 is the right way to say it.

If it was only for them, why is it in the inspired collection of scripture for our benefit? If it was only for the days of tribulation, why have we had it for the last 2,000 years? Like the Old Testament, it is applicable. It is pertinent. We need to pay attention, not so much worrying about the people in the first century and how did they understand it and what did they do about it, not so much for who will be on the earth in the tribulation period.

What do we do with it now? It is written for our instruction and it pertains and it applies now. And this, of course, is Sam Storm's understanding because I think he's an amillennialist, but he says these judgments characterize the entire church age from the first coming of Christ to his second. And there is a very strong sense in which that is true.

He thinks it's true for a different reason, but it is nevertheless true. And if our understanding of scripture results in personal application, personal spiritual fruitfulness, the Lord Jesus will iron out the details of our theological understanding later. We will be judged on what we do with the word.

And if we take it to heart and say, in the light of what I have learned, this is how I should live. I want to look for that open door. I want to walk through it.

I do not want to be one of these that ends up being tested and judged as the winepress of God's wrath is trodden out. So this is a promise then, point three. If you're keeping track of the points, the first point was there is no scriptural promise that we will be kept from all trial, all tribulation or all persecution.

We are promised God's presence and God's strength. But we are not always put in the ark and floating above hard times. Even being in the ark for 14 months was a hard time for Noah and his family.

But we don't claim special protection from any and all hardship and trial, quite the opposite. Secondly, this particular hour of testing that Jesus speaks of in Revelation chapter three is specifically designed to fall upon unbelievers, earth dwellers who resist and oppose God, the things of God, the son of God, and the people of God. Those earth dwellers always refers to unbelievers, persecutors of the church, and they have existed in every generation and will continue to do so.

And they will have their time of opportunity to marshal their forces and try to perpetrate the agenda of their leader in this 70th week of Daniel. So the third point here, this promise that Jesus makes to Philadelphia, to those who have kept his name, not denied his name, have kept his word and have persevered, have endured. We can in the abstract contemplate, you know, I could do this run, I could walk this distance, I can accomplish this task.

In the abstract and in anticipation, we think, oh sure, we watch somebody else and they start getting tired. And we think, well, I wouldn't be tired in that circumstance. I wouldn't get down, I

wouldn't be depressed, I wouldn't start to flag and to fail and to want to sit down and quit.

I could do that. It is in the doing when we experience the difficulty, the fatigue, whether it's physical or spiritual, the actual hunger when going into a diet, we say, you know what, I can completely change my ways. I'm going to live on bird seed and green leaves, no more saturated fats for me, no more bacon, no more butter, no more sugar.

That's not hard. Anybody can do that. A little bit of willpower is all it takes.

And then you actually get into it and you discover that there really is a very strong communication connection between your gut and your brain. And the gut says, give it to me, give it to me. There's butter in the refrigerator, slather it on those gluten-free waffles and completely negate the health benefit.

Put some 100% maple syrup on those things. I'm talking about this because I did it today. I got gluten-free waffles and slathered them in butter and maple syrup.

So how healthy is that? But it's one thing to say it. It's one thing to believe it in the abstract. It is something else to actually be in the hour of testing and wag your finger at the butter and the bacon and the syrup and all of that good stuff.

And I think, you know what, if they got a pill for this, let's just do that. But we are promised spiritual protection in the midst of this time of trial. So we are going to see this in Revelation chapter 7. Flip over there.

I've got to go back there since I'm up in 16 and 17. But Revelation chapter 7, remember, this is the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God. They're often called witnesses or evangelists or whatever, but the scripture calls them witnesses.

I saw the four angels, I'm sorry, it calls them servants. Verse 3, do not harm the earth, the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. I heard the number of those who were sealed and there is a great chunk of space devoted to listing these out.

It could have just said 12,000 from every tribe and moved right on to verse 9, but it doesn't. It lists them out and there's a reason as we will see when we get there. But this wind that is going to blow on the earth and be held back suddenly so that it should not blow on the earth, on the sea or on any tree.

And it is going to result in harm in verse 3, to the earth, the sea and the trees, but not until the servants of God are sealed. There is some sense in which this is not going to harm them the way it is going to harm the earth, the sea, the trees, and everyone who depends on those and who dwells in and around them. And we will see that when this affliction occurs, God's servants have been sealed.

You think of the angel we saw in past studies. You can see this also in Revelation chapter 11 verses 1 and 2. I was given a reed like a measuring rod. The angel said, rise, measure the temple of God, the altar and those who worship there, but leave out the court, which is outside the temple and do not measure it.

It has been given to the Gentiles. They will tread the holy city underfoot for forty and two months. I will give power to my two witnesses.

They will prophesy and so on. But there is a distinction made between those who are servants of God and those who are not. They are given a space of protection or they are not.

You find this in chapter 12 verse 6. The woman fled into the wilderness and she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her one thousand two hundred and sixty days. There is preservation, there is grace, there is provision in the midst of or during a time of trial. Same thing in chapters 14 through 17.

So not necessarily being preserved from trial by being removed from it, but faith preserved through trial because they have been sealed by God. Now, much is made. I have made much of this in the past.

If you go back to our passage in Revelation chapter three and he says, I will keep you from, out from, ek, E-K. This is the word that means out from. And we have to find the balance point here because unlike Sam Storms who says, or Beal who he quotes here, they are not preserved from trial by removal from it, but ek means out from.

I will keep you out from this hour that is going to test the whole earth. So in what sense do we understand this out from? If this is a promise of the rapture and we don't believe in a partial rapture, then it's kind of silly to promise it to Philadelphia because they have been faithful to not deny his name, to keep his word and so on, to persevere. And he says, because of this, I'm going to keep you out from.

What about those that haven't kept his name, but they are believers. They're just whatever you want to call them. Backsliders, less obedient, not so faithful, not so diligent.

If this is being kept from the hour of trial, there's two things to understand here. First of all, there is another case, there's one other place where this exact phrase is used, kept out from. Turn with me back to John, the gospel chapter 17, gospel of John chapter 17.

In my view, this is the same author writing. It is certainly the same Greek construction. This is the, what has been called the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus.

He is speaking to his father about his disciples. He starts up in verse six. I've manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world.

They were yours. You gave them to me and they have kept your word. Notice given to me out

from the world.

Well, they're still in the world, but they have been given, they have been separated for service. This is what it means to be a saint, to be sanctified, to be set apart. You can be in the world and yet set apart from it.

We can be in the world and not of it. And this begins to give us a sense of what the preposition ek out from means in this kind of context. You get down to verse 14 and 15.

I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Jesus was in the world, but not of it. In his first advent, the disciples have been taken out from the world to be servants, to be disciples, eventually to be apostles.

So this is a kind of spiritual separation. Look at verse 15. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one.

Keep from. Keep from. Very same construction as we have in Revelation.

Now these disciples slash apostles are in the world, but they are not of it. Satan is going to ask for them that he may sift them like wheat. Yet Jesus prays not that they be taken out of the world, but that they be kept from the evil one.

They are going to have a kind of protection spiritually. It reminds me of the traditionally noted Lord's Prayer. Lord teach us to pray when you pray.

Pray lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Guard us, keep us from evil. There is a special grace available to faithful believers that gives us the strength to fully implement the shield of faith with which we quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And we are promised that we will be kept from the kind of trial that is in view. So be sure you make a note if it's not already there in your Bible of John 17, 15, same Greek phrase, same combination of verb and preposition. What does it mean to be in the world, but not of it, to be out of the world and yet still in it? This is a spiritual truth.

And so Jesus says, because you have kept my word and not denied my name, you have a little strength. I am going to cause your opponents to recognize the nature of the love that I have for you. And they are going to bow in that presence.

They're going to bow at your feet. And because you have kept my word, the word of my patience, the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you. And again, look at the parallel.

How do we keep the word of perseverance and patience? By being patient, by that long suffering, by that endurance that is a part of the fruit of the spirit. This gives us the strength to be kept from this hour of trial. Next thing I want to point out is if we wanted to understand this as the tribulation period, there's a bit of a problem because the tribulation is not called an hour.

It is called a time, times and half a time. It's called 1,260 days. It is called three and a half years.

It's called a lot of things, but the entire tribulation is not called an hour. We have references just in the New Testament, to an hour. Let me give you a few of these.

Jesus talked about his hour of testing. So in John chapter two, verse four, remember John two, wedding feast of Cana, his mother comes to him, they've run out of wine. He says, my hour has not yet come.

This is a time of revelation. This is the hour of his ministry that is reinforced by the miraculous public demonstrations of God's power in healing, in feeding multitudes, in calming storms and so on. That's why this particular sign is accomplished in secret.

Nobody sees it happen. They don't put the wine in clear glasses and it starts out being clear water and turns to wine visibly. It happens without anyone's observation.

It isn't even known until someone tastes it. Even the servants who fill the water jugs don't see the miracle take place. Jesus' disciples who accompany him don't see it.

My hour has not yet come. John chapter seven, verse 30, when they try to seize Jesus, they are unsuccessful. He walks through the midst because his hour had not yet come.

John chapter eight, verse 20, his safety is manifest because his hour had not yet come. In John 12, 23, Jesus says the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. This is the beginning of that time of testing and glorification.

Four verses later, John 12, 27, shall I say, father, save me from this hour? It's for this cause I came to this hour. He says, should I seek deliverance from it? This is why I came. In John 16, 32, Jesus tells his disciples, the hour is coming when you will be tested, when you will be scattered.

John 17, verse one, father, the hour has come. This is the passage we were just in. John 17, what's called the high priestly prayer.

Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son. And he is going to be glorified.

The father is going to be glorified. The son is going to be glorified in and through this hour of testing, this hour of suffering. When you look at the other gospels, Matthew 24, we've seen this in detail, of that day and hour, no one knows the coming of the day of the Lord, the day and the hour.

It's called the day of the Lord. It's not called the hour of the Lord, but of the day and of the hour, when it is to begin, no one knows. Matthew 24, 44, the son of man will come at an hour you do not expect.

His coming is much more of an event than a period. And after he tells the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25, verse 13, be watchful because you know neither the day nor the hour.

Luke 12, 46, is a servant faithful or not? The master will come in an hour when he is not aware.

Luke 22, 53, Judas brings the arresting party to the garden. This is your hour and the power of darkness. This is a brief moment when God allows the force of darkness to come.

We're going to see this idea of the hour in Revelation itself, here in verse 10 of chapter three, the hour of trial that tests the earth dwellers. They have the opportunity to repent, will they? Revelation 14, verse 7, the hour of his judgment has come. Within the context of the entire tribulation, this is an hour.

Revelation 14, 15, the hour to reap. Turn real quickly to Revelation 14. I want to make a point in advance.

I am working through something and this is part of what I am working on. I will share it with you and you can be thinking about it. John says, after the fall of Babylon, the proclamation of three angels that begins in verse nine.

But in verse 12, we're going to be seeing something here because there are two places where John records these words. Here is the patience of the saints. This is 14, 12.

Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This is almost inscrutable unless you do a little bit of work. And I'm doing that little bit of work now.

I'm working 11 chapters ahead already. But verse 13, I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, right? Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the spirit that they may rest from their labors and their works follow them.

We're going to see something about this that I had never seen before. I can't find it anywhere in any commentary, but I will suggest it to you. I may even do a special on it before we get there because it's really fascinating.

But verse 14, I looked and behold, a white cloud on the cloud set one like the son of man, having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle. Pay attention now, we're watching for the hour. Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, thrust in your sickle and reap for the time has come for you to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

So he who sat on the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped. We believe this is the Lord Jesus. He's like the son of man.

He's got a crown. He's got a sickle. He's going to reap.

Now, if the earth is reaped, do you think the Lord Jesus did a bad job and somebody else has got to finish it? He did a particular harvest. This son of man sitting on the cloud with his sickle gets the command from heaven. The father in the temple of heaven issues the command via messenger reap.

The son of man uses his sickle and he reaps. Verse 17, then another angel came out of the temple, which is in heaven. He himself has a sharp sickle.

The Lord Jesus, the son of man has reaped his own harvest. Now another angel comes out. He's got his own sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar, having power over fire. And he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle. Remember power over fire, fire represents judgment.

The first one is a harvest. It's not a harvest of fire. It is a harvest specifically done by and for the son of man.

Now the one who has power over fire cries with a loud cry to him who has a sharp sickle saying thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth. Her grapes are fully ripe. The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

And the wine press was trampled outside the city and blood came out of the wine press up to the horse's bridles for a thousand six hundred furlongs. Two different reapings, one accomplished by the son of man. After that is complete, there is this second reaping.

There are those who claim that the rapture is nowhere found in the book of Revelation. They don't think it's in John chapter four verse one where we will soon arrive and they don't think that it's anywhere else. I would submit to you, I am going to posit that this reaping, because we understand that that revelation does not unfold in a single chronological stream, there are chunks that you can overlay.

And I'll tell you why I think this is the rapture. And this is another way where it says the hour has come. The time has come.

The hour has come in verse 15 for you to reap. And this is an event. So there is an event when we are kept from the hour of testing that is about to come on the whole earth.

And it exists in everyone's life. It exists in every generation. There is an hour of testing.

And if we are faithful, if we are keeping the word of his perseverance, if we do not deny his name, if we have a little strength, we are in a different category. We don't face the basic test that is going to come upon the whole earth. Our testing is of a different kind and sort and quality.

And we are kept from that particular hour. More about this next time. But isn't it a wonderful thing to know that the Lord Jesus is aware.

He knows our works. And in some cases, in Thyatira, he knows the nature of those works, and that's all well and good. But they have been adulterated.

They have been defiled. They've been rendered moot by what they allow. You can make all of your gold, silver, and precious stones of no effect if they are adulterated with tolerance, with not separating, not making a distinction.

In Philadelphia, the open door comes first. I know your works. And because I am the one who opens and no one shuts, I've set before you an open door.

This is who we want to be. If you want to be the faithful church in Philadelphia, take a look, pay attention, watch for the open door, so that we are walking through that door. Outside the door, the hour of testing is coming upon the whole earth, the hour of Philipsis.

We walk through the door. We're engaged in a different project. What an opportunity.

What a promise. What a great hope. We are not of those who fall back unto perdition, but of those who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises.

That's who we want to be. More about this next time. We'll close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the revelation of your truth delivered to us for our benefit, for our application. We pray that as we reflect on it, God the Holy Spirit will help us to see its pertinence and where we can actually put it into practice in our personal circumstances, that we can live a life that pleases you and glorifies the Lord Jesus. We pray it in his name.

Amen.