Will the Church Go Through the Tribulation? Pt. 2

By Charles Feinberg

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This is part two of the message will the church go through the tribulation the message by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg dean and professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary. On this important subject. Will the church go through the tribulation? We've already seen that the church will not go through the tribulation because there's no reference to it in that connection and because of the silence of the Epistles on the subject. There are yet other reasons why we can know that the church will not go through the tribulation period. The reason is that the wrath of God is never meant never indicated in the Bible for the church. Well some say after all the church was persecuted up to the fourth century A.D. under Emperors like Domitian up to the time of Diocletian's time in the fourth century before Constantine made Christianity the state religion. Friends there is no parallel between the Great Tribulation and those persecutions of the church under the emperors of the Roman Empire up to the fourth century A.D...

How so? Well for one thing the tribulation precedes from the throne of God those persecutions through the Emperor who were of Satan and Scripture tells us precisely that very thing in Revelation. Chapter 2 Verse 10. The message to Smyrna the church under fiery trial we read Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer behold the devil not God but that devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried and you shall have tribulation not the Great Tribulation ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.
Now those persecutions were from Satan in this book of the revelation we read of the judgments of God coming from the Throne coming from the altar. So you see the wrath of God is not for the church it's upon a Christ rejecting a God dishonoring and a spirit resisting world made up of unsaved Jews, unsaved Gentiles and apostate church. Christ himself is going to present to himself a glorious body. There's a beautiful picture in that wonderful book sometimes called the Alps of the New Testaments. That's the book of Ephesians in Ephesians, in the fifth chapter. It's the apostle Paul who is speaking of the work that the Lord Jesus Christ did relative to the church. We read their husbands Ephesians 5 25 to 27 Husbands love your wife even as Christ also loved the church. Number one he loved the church number two and gave himself for it. Number three that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Now the future that he might help it to go through the tribulation. Not at all. That he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blame but that it the church should be holy and without blemish.

You see then that Christ is going to present to himself a glorious body not a mutilated one not a disfigured one not a dismembered one. Why should the church come under the wrath of God poured out on the earth every single sin has been put on Christ he died for our sins? All of them you say well just our past sins. My dear friend when Christ Jesus died on the cross all of your sins and mine were future every sin has been put on Christ the tribulation is not to be a Protestant purgatory. He has not appointed us unto wrath. We read in First Thessalonians. Chapter 5 Verse 8 and 9. But that us who are of the day be sober putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation for God hath not appointed us to wrath or you're not God have it in spite of God's appointment. Of course not. And yet God has never intended for us to have wrath but to obtain salvation deliverance temporal and eternal by our Lord Jesus Christ who died
for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him and then in Romans 5:9 indicates what Christ has accomplished for us in salvation when God verse eight commended him when he exhibited his love toward us [inaudible] Christ died for us. Listen much more than that now justified by his blood ye shall be saved from wrath through him.

So any view of a partial rapture or a post tribulation ism or a mid tribulationshism, that which divides the body of Christ is absolutely wrong. It cannot be the plan of God. No partial rapture some folk have a number of raptures. There are those that they would call the goody goods and then the only partly goods and then the fairly goods. No God is not making distinctions like that there will be distinctions for reward but for obtaining salvation all are saved if you have trusted Christ friend by simple faith. You are just as actually truly eternally saved as was the apostle Paul or the Apostle John or the Apostle Peter. You are absolutely eternally saved and that's the condition of all believers. We are all appointed unto salvation not unto wrath.

So that's another reason why we know the church will not go through the tribulation the tribulation is the wrath of God and the wrath of God is not for the church. Yet another reason why the church will not go through the tribulation. That's because of the nature of the hope of the church. What is the actual characteristic? What is the type of the hope of the church? In what does it consist? Read through the New Testament friend and look for it and look diligently for it and you'll find that the hope of believers is not long life. No one has promised you when you were saved that you would live to be 80 or 90 or 100 instead of perhaps 40 or 50 or less. If you are unsaved. Oh no no. The hope of the believer is not long live. It's not painless death. Some of us have known believers who have suffered very very painful death martyrs have suffered painful death. That's not the help of believers. Where has gone got promised us that we should have an easy painless death. It's not world conversion. Nowhere are we told that during the
church's sojourn on earth all the world will be saved will be converted to Christ through her
testimony. I find that nowhere in the Bible no the nature of the hope of the church is not world
conversion it's not wealth. We do have wealth that blessed one who was rich became poor that
we through his poverty might become rich. But that's spiritual riches. That is eternal riches that
are the riches of high heaven.

The hope of believers is not in world conversion it's not world judgment that we should call
judgment down on the world. No. the hope of the church is the coming of the Lord looking for
that blessed hope and the glory of the appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ.
That hope cannot have its real force if the tribulation is interposed between it and the church.
Here's a father who's been out in ministry, he's been out in conference work and the mother says
to the children daddy has been gone for two weeks preaching now on such and such a day this
coming Friday he will return home and the children are all overjoyed. But she says I have
something else to tell you on Thursday so that you may be properly subdued when father comes
on Friday and not be too hilarious and troubled him too much. I am going to give all of you. A
sound thrashing. Will those children then look forward to father's coming of course not? What
kind of a hope would it be if before the period of our Lord Jesus. We were told that the church
has to go through and to experience the greatest agonies she's ever had. Don't you see that's not
the nature of the hope of the church that doesn't read like John 14?

One to three and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto
myself where I am. There. You may be also. That's the hope of the church the hope of the church
is that we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed in the moment in the twinkling of an eye
the last trumpet. We are going to be changed. Death is going to be swallowed up in victory.
Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of the
church is that saints that have gone on our loved ones who have died in Christ will be caught up together with us in the air. This we say unto you first Thessalonians 4:15. This we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not proceed we are not going to be one single step ahead of those who have gone on to be with the Lord through death we're not going to proceed, we're not going to proceed by one moment then we're asleep. Well how has it going to take place? Well we'll give you the program of the rapture says Paul. 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 they have farther to come then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with him in the clouds.

You've been worried about those who have fallen asleep in Jesus have gone before that they would not be in the resurrection of the righteous. They would not be in the rapture ah you're wrong. We're going to be caught up together with him in the clouds. Reunion union and reunion with them will mean for all of us. Union with the Lord to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord it's not going to be a changing of that wonderful relationship. It's not going to be with whim for a little while and then a long period of time and we'll not see him again. No wherefore comfort one another with these words. Yes. Whether you look at John 14 or First Corinthians 15 or first Thessalonians four or Philippians 3 or whether it's Titus or whether it's first John 3. Ah we have this hope set on him. He that hath his hopes set on him purified himself.

The Believer purifies himself even as he Christ is purified a great explorer of the South Pole Shackleton when he was driven back from his quest of the South Pole. He left his men on [inaudible] island and he promised solemnly to come back to them in time he worked his way as best he might to South Georgia on the way to the South Pole tried to get back to fulfill his promise and he failed.
He tried again and failed. The ice was between him and the island but he wasn't able to come. But he couldn't rest. And though the season was all wrong it was adverse and friends told him it was absolutely impossible it was a madness to try it yet in his little boat the Yalcho he called it he tried it again was the wrong time of year but he got nearer the island. And amazingly he saw there was an open avenue between the sea and the place where he had left his men. He ran his boat in and at the risk of being nipped he got his men all of them on board and came out again before the ice crashed to. It was all done within half an hour and when the excitement was partly over he turned to one of the men and said well I must say you certainly were all packed and ready. You didn't keep me waiting and the man to whom he spoke said boss. You see Wilde? And you pointed to the second in command Wilde over there never gave up hope whenever the sea was at all clear of ice. He rolled up his sleeping bag and he said to all hands roll up your sleeping bags boys.

The boss may come today said Shackleton. So it came about that we suddenly came out of the fog and from a black outlook in an hour all of us were in safety. Homeward Bound. Yes my friends that's the nature of the hope of the church are we keeping our hope. Bright. It's based on a sure on a more solid a more guaranteed promise than ever any man on earth could make. Now in the course of this study. We have been mentioning something concerning the Book of the revelation and the position of the church before the tribulation as the book of the revelation gives it to us is if anything the final and conclusive argument that the church will not go through the tribulation. Let me remind you that Revelation Chapter One speaks of the things which John saw the vision of the resurrected Christ coming as a great high priest with a long flowing robe coming as high priest in judgment. That's Chapter 1. Chapter 2 and 3 the spiritual moral history of the church from the Ephesus stage down to the Laodicean church.
The lukewarm stage of the church. Now that's through the third chapter and verse 22. Now we come to chapter 4. Here we find that there are twenty four elders the 24 elders. It seems to me of the Fourth Chapter 24 elders of revelation 4 are decisive in the matter of whether the church is going to go through the tribulation or not. How so. Well look at their position before the tribulation. The position is one of enthronement revelation 3:21 to him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my Throne even as I also overcame and sit down with my father in his Throne. Now what do we find in Revelation four hear it. I'm reading from verse one on. After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven and the first voice that I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me it said come up here and I will show thee things which must be hereafter and immediately I was in the spirit. And behold a throne notice a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like Jasper and a Sartia stone. And there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like an emerald. And now the altogether important area that we're dealing with now, here are enthroned elders around the throne and round about the throne.

We were four and twenty thrones notice it. The all-important throne in the middle. Then four and twenty thrones. And upon those thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment and they had on their heads crowns of gold. Please mark that in your Bible that is a very vital passage. Why. Because number one it shows the promise of revelation 3:21 to the church fulfilled the position of the elders and throne. You see but it talks about elders are these elders. The church we're going to show that the word elder has significance for the church. They represent the church. Why? What further proof do you have well in the second place not only their position but they are crowned? Did you notice clothed in white raiment and they had on their heads crowns of gold. I challenge you friend to make a study of the Bible to see who in the
Old Testament and New Testament are offered crowns as a reward in the life which is to come. I know there were kings crowned like Saul David Solomon. Others in the southern kingdom and in the northern kingdom. But where do you have in the Bible crowns offered to anybody but the church of this age they are going to be crowned. There's a crown of glory, there's the crown of rejoicing the crown of the soul winner. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. Yes crowns, mark it, are offered and held out as rewards to one group one section of the human family only. That is the church.

Those who trust now the Lord Jesus Christ Savior and Lord. So we have had thus far two reasons from the position of the church before the tribulation. The position in throne and Crown. Notice the number is significant what is the number 24. Some say 24 represents 12 tribes of Israel in the Old Testament twelve patriarchs heads of the tribes of Israel and twelve apostles disciples in the new. No the Bible does not mingle in that matter. Israel and the church no the 24 remind us of first chronicles 24 1-19 in the Levitical Priesthood. There were 24 shifts or courses because the Levites who ministered the priests who ministered at the temple were not going to be gone from their families they had families. There were 48 Levitical cities. They were not going to be gone from their families for a whole year for a long extended period of time.

How would family life go on? No. There were 24 shifts every year. See how God in His mercy and loving kindness made it so that these heads of families would not have to be gone from their loved ones for an undue amount of time. So there are 24 courses and in the book of Luke it's very clearly stated that John the Baptist's father Zacharias was of the course of the particular shift of priests that had over them the name of Abiah. He was of the course of Abiah represents Levitical Priesthood. The courses 24 that number we find in the Bible and we know full well that the church as such is priesthood. We are not unrelated to the concept of the
priesthood that was one of the great cries of the Reformation time. What was the fact that all believers are priests not just some small group that has a special distinct place from all believers we are all priests under God. We have all access.

We were all told to draw nigh unto God and if you want a specific scripture on it you have only to look at first Peter Chapter 2 verses 5 to nine you oh soul as living stones are built up a spiritual house. Watch this and holy priesthood believers we're living stones in the building the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ and he's the capstone too the all beautifying stone. We are in him a spiritual house a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus by Jesus Christ wherefore also is contained in the scripture behold Eilean Zion the chief Cornerstone elect precious. He that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Of whom was that scripture speaking when it mentioned in Isaiah 28:16 about a cornerstone. Unto you therefore who believe he is precious he is that precious he is that precious cornerstone that unto them who disobedient the stone was the [inaudible] the same as me the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence paved with him who stumbled to the word being disobedient were onto. Also they were appointed. But he says you're different you are different verse 9 but ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood. Before he said just priesthood.

Now a royal priest and a holy nation a people of his own that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. There you have it the New Testament priesthood. It is all of us. We are now believing priests and if we needed anything in the book of the revelation to confirm it the revelation does in Revelation. Chapter 1 verse 6 we read. We should begin with the latter part of verse 5 and this Doxology unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his father to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever amen. So the third
reason that we know the church is under the figure of the 24 elders and their position is an enthroned one before the tribulation. The number not only the position and the coronation but the number. And then notice the testimony that these twenty four elders have. It's a testimony that the believers of this age could sing and they sang a new song revelation five verse nine and ten and they sang a new song. Ours is a new birth.

Ours is a new life. Ours is a new hope. Ours is a new song and they sang a new song saying Thou art worthy to take the scroll. This line of the tribe of Judah and to open its seals for thou hast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. Yes the church of the living Christ comes from all nations. Just as in Revelation 1:6 you redeemed us by you loved us and redeemed us by your blood has made us unto our God. A kingdom of Priests what Revelation one six indicated and we shall reign on the earth. We read in Timothy that we suffer with him. We shall also reign with him the testimony in Revelation 5 9 and 10 could only be true of the church and then the eldership eldership is a representative office. Yes these 24 are not just 24 persons. No more and no less. No these twenty four are representative. They are not just 24 in themselves they are representative just as we have 50 different senators in our Senate of the United States of America.

They don't represent 50 different families. They don't represent just 50 individuals and individual personal capacity. Not a bit of it. They represent 50 sovereign states. That's a representative office. Read Acts 15:2 and Acts 20:17 elders our representatives elders in churches are those who represent the congregation and then notice the spiritual insight they are acquainted with the councils of God in John 15 15. Our Lord Jesus says I no longer call you servants I call you friends because a servant knows not what his master does but I'm divulging my plans to you. Spiritual insight they're acquainted with the counsels of God. Notice revelation
5:5 one of the Elders said unto me weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah the root of David hath prevailed to open the scroll and to lose its seven seals these elders that are up there know that which the Apostle John in his human body on earth couldn't know even when he was caught up to heaven in that body.

Unglorified he could not know this and they tell him what all of this relates to who it is that's going to be able to open the book and to break the seals thereof. So friends for these five reasons. And we could give many more. The church will not go through the tribulation. Why not. Because there's no reference to it in that connection. The silence of the epistles on the subject the wrath of God is not meant for the church and the nature of the hope of the church is such that it's not that you should pass through the tribulation and the position. The remarkable position of the church represented by the 24 elders before the tribulation ever breaks on the earth. Friends the church will not go through the tribulation. I wonder may there be a spirit of legalism behind the view that puts the church in the tribulation so many feel the church has failed of course she has man always fails.

She hasn't lived up to her privilege so she must go through some sort of purgatory. No. Christ has borne all he's died for all our sins all our shortcomings those who trust him will not see wrath who were unbelieving will remember my friends. Rapture is not a reward. It is all part of grace. It is the way the bridegroom takes the bride home to her heavenly abode. There's a Christian woman once talking to a servant of Christ about the assurance of her safety in Savior. She said you know I've taken a single ticket to glory and I don't intend to come back at that the man of God rightly answered you're going to miss a lot. I've taken a return ticket. I'm not only going to meet Christ in glory but I'm coming back with him in power and great glory to the earth.
Yes the church is to look at it that way. She's to expect glory. She's not to expect tribulation and friend. Be ready and see that by the grace of God your faithful life your witness your testimony that precious souls in your family and among your acquaintances may also be in that glad company of the church that awaits not tribulation not wrath but glory but deliverance but salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[End Part 2]