Amazing paradoxes of Scripture: The weak are made strong; you become truly free when you become a bond slave to Jesus; you lose your life to find it; you die (to self) to really live; the poor become rich; the weak become strong; and the last become first, and the first, last.

First Love Ministries of Perry, Georgia
Prayer Study # 342
THE LAST DAYS
PART THREE

Parable of the Fig Tree

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near-at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place."

(Matthew 24:32-34: This same parable is found also in Luke 21 and Mark 13)

Jesus has given a long discourse on the last days' signs. He did this after his disciples asked Him two questions: "When will these things be?" and "What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" Then comes this very controversial scripture. I believe that the fig tree represents the nation of Israel in scripture. The verses seem to be referring to the rebirth of Israel, May 15, 1948. Some scholars vehemently disagree but many do believe this is what the verse is talking about. We do not have time in this course to do an in depth study of Israel in end time prophecy. But I will give some Biblical references taken from *100 Prophecies*, that were fulfilled in 1948: Jacob's descendants regain control of Israel (Amos 9:14-15); Israel brought back to life (Ezekiel 37:10-14); Israel reborn in one day (Isaiah 66:7-8); Israel re-established as a united nation (Ezekiel 37:21-22); the second Israel more impressive than the first (Jeremiah 16:14-15); Israel would be re-established in 1948-this was prophesied by Ezekiel some time between 593 to 571- (BC-Ezekiel 4:3-6). (Note: Ezekiel said that the Jews would be punished for turning away from God for 430 years. They were punished by losing their homeland and scattered over the earth. Babylon was conquered by Cyrus in 539 BC. He allow the Jews to go back to Israel, but only a small remnant went back. The rest chose to stay in pagan Babylon so the Lord punished those who stayed by multiplying their punishment by 7 as explained in the book of Leviticus 26, where it says that if the people did not repent while being punished, the punishment would be

multiplied by 7. By staying in Babylon, most of the exiles had become worldly and refuse to repent. If you multiply the remaining 360 years by 7, you get 2,520. The calendar went by 360 days a year. When that is adjusted by the lunar calendar which we use today, that gives 2,484 years from 536 BC to 1948.); God watched over the people of Israel (Jeremiah 31:10); Israel's army is disproportionately powerful (Leviticus 26:3, 7-8). The fortunes of the people of Israel have been restored (Deuteronomy 30:3-5).

Now the second part of this puzzle: If we take 1948 as the year of the beginning of this generation that will not pass, what is the number of years of a Biblical generation? This creates even more disagreement among scholars. The Greeks considered a generation as a third of a century. I have read Biblical scholars who assign a generation as few as 20 year and as many as 100 years. There is some evidence in scripture of a generation being 70 years, but there are other references in scripture, such as calling the 40 years in the desert as a generation. Also, what does it mean when Jesus says this will be the generation that does not pass? Is this referring to the people born in 1948 or before? Or is the generation that does not pass not living yet? At any rate I am not a Judeizer, but I believe Israel is extremely important in end time events.

We are promised in the Bible a generation that will have the following characteristics?

1. **The Greater Works Generation:** ***Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, AND GREATER WORKS THAN THESE, shall he do because I go unto my Father*** (John 14:12)
2. **The Generation That Will Not Pass:** ***Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*** (Luke 21:32).
3. **The Righteous Generation:** *And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness….and the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away* (Isaiah 35:8a & 10).
4. **The Generation That Will Seek His Face:** *This is the generation of them who seek Him, who seek Thy face, O Jacob. Selah* (Psalm 24:6).
5. **The Generation That Will Not Fear Evil Tidings:** *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting the LORD* (Psalm 112:7).
6. **The Latter Rain Generation:** *Then we know, if we follow on to know the LORD; His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He*

shall come upon us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hosea 6:3).

7. **The Bridal Company Generation:** *And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband* (Revelation 21:2).
8. **The Mature Sons of the Kingdom:** *For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God* (Romans 8:19).
9. **The Third Day Generation:** *Come and let us return unto the LORD; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight* (Hosea 6:1-2).
10. **The Fullness Generation:** *And* [He] *hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all* (Ephesians 1:22-23).
11. **A Generation of Destiny:** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of His own, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light* (1st Peter 2:9).
12. **A Generation that will declare His Mighty Acts:** *One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts* (Psalm 145:4)

The Rapture: Yes or No?

There are 5 basic teachings dealing with end time prophecy:

1. Genuine Christian believers will soon vanish in the rapture.
2. Seven years of apocalyptic terror will overtake those left behind.
3. The Antichrist will take over the world.
4. The Antichrist will enter the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, sitting on a throne in the Holy of Holies, and declare himself as God.
5. *All* nations on earth will attack Israel at Armageddon.

We cannot address all of these teachings in a 5 week course, but I will be looking at #1. I will tell you from the beginning that I do not know the answer to the question that is the title of this section, but I am going to present an alternate view from the position that I am sure most of you hold. I hope you will love me anyway!

First, the term *rapture* is not found in the Bible. This concept was first expressed by 17th –century American Puritan leaders, father and son, Increase and Cotton Mather, who believed in a premillennial (before the thousand year reign on the earth of Christ) Rapture that would take place before judgments on the earth. The pre-tribulation Rapture was popularized by John Darby in 1827. There are some scriptures that seem to support this position, and there are other scriptures, which don't. This is one time when I hope and pray that this alternate position is wrong and that all those who believe in the Rapture, which I know are most of you, are right.

Many have been wrongly taught that the belief in the pre-trib Rapture was attributed to a 15-year old Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret McDonald who was the first to receive a spiritual baptism in a Pentecostal awakening in Scotland in 1830. She had a vision of the end times. The vision was published in 1840 but published again in 1861 with two important passages removed to encourage people to believe in a pre-trib rapture. The two removed segments were, "This is the fiery trial which is to try us. It will be for the purging and purifying of the real members of the body of Jesus," and "The trial of the Church is from Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept."

In most of our lifetimes the Rapture became popular in wider circles through the publication of books by Hal Lindsey in the 1970s. Lindsey sold between 15 and 35 million copies of his book *The Late Great Planet Earth.* In addition to his books, the movie *A Thief in the Night* was seen by millions of people. The Rapture movement was further popularized by the Tim LaHaye's *Left Behind* series of books, which sold tens of millions of copies and were made into several movies.

The main scripture used to promote the Rapture is found in found in 1st Thessalonians 4:15-17. This is where we find the phrase, *caught up… in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,* that proponents of the rapture cite: *For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own word], that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence]or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him in death]. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so always (through the eternity of eternities), we shall be with the Lord.* The Greek word translated *shout* is a military term used for ordering troops to assemble. Clouds throughout scripture are

symbolic of divine glory. It seems to me that this event, which shall surely happen just as the Bible says, is a loud, joyful, celebratory event, not done in secret but in the air where everyone can see Jesus. Yet Rapture teachers say the Rapture will be secretive and silent with Christians vanishing and nobody seeing them leave. Does this passage seem quiet or even secretive?

We know from Acts 1:9-11 that Jesus ascended into heaven and will return and descend in like manner: *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.* How did Jesus ascend? He went up with everyone starring at him. It was not a secret event.

What about the *thief in the night* analogy? *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then "sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you brethren, are not in darkness, so that the Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness* (1st Thessalonians 5:1-5). Paul, I think, is saying that Jesus' return will be like a thief in the night to the unprepared. They won't be ready. The genuine believers, however, are not in darkness and so the day He returns will not overtake them like a thief in the night.

The Apostle John writes in Revelation 13:5-9: *And there was given unto him* [The Antichrist] *a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him* [The Antichrist], *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear.* If the Church has been raptured, who are these "saints" that the Antichrist is making war against and where on earth does he find Christians to persecute?

In Matthew 24:30-31 Jesus says: ***"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with***

power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." This plainly says that His coming will be visible to *all the tribes on earth.*

Again there are passages and types in the Old Testament, such as Noah's Ark, which theologians use to defend the Rapture principle. I believe strongly in the Second Coming, but I must be honest and transparent to say that I have doubts about a Rapture. I believe these passages cited refer to the Second Coming, not a Rapture of the Church. You will have to look at all the evidence and make up your own mind.

End Time Terms

1. **Dispensationalists**: An interpretation of history into a series of divine dispensations in which God is thought to have made separate covenants with humanity. Most believe there are seven dispensations:
   Innocence-Adam, until Adam and Eve sinned
   Conscience –After man sinned, until the flood
   Government-After the flood, to time of Abram
   Promise-Abraham to Moses and the giving of the Torah or Law
   Law- Moses to the crucifixion of Jesus
   Grace-The Cross to the Millenial Kingdom
   Millenial Kingdom-The 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth and centered in Jerusalem
   Most dispensationalists believe that the Jews are God's chosen people and they teach that the Second Coming of Christ will be in two steps. First, He will return to resurrect the dead in Christ and will rapture the living Christians before the 7 Year Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. Then, He will return the second time to intervene in the Battle of Armageddon and to establish His Kingdom on the earth.
2. **Premillennialists:** Premillenialists believe that the Second Coming of Christ will take place before His thousand year reign on the earth.
3. **Postmillennialists:** Postmillennialists believe that Jesus will not return to earth until after His 1000 year reign. He will reign instead during this time from His throne in heaven.
4. **Amillennialists:** Amillennialists believe that the Millenniam is happening now and is the current Church Age.
5. **Rapture:** A secret event when Christians are mysteriously instantly and secretly evacuated from the earth before tribulation

6. **Second Coming:** A public event when Jesus comes back to earth to rule and reign for 1000 years.
7. **Pre-tribulation:** the position that the rapture will occur before the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period. Pre-tribers describe the Rapture as Jesus Coming for the church and the Second Coming as Jesus coming with the Church. Pre-tribulation proponents include Jimmy Swaggart, Dwight Pentecost, Tim LaHaye, J. Vernon McGee, Perry Stone, Chuck Smith, Hal Lindsey, Jack Van Impe, Grant Jeffrey, David Jeremiah, and John Hagee.
8. **Mid-tribulation:** the position that the rapture will occur at some point in the middle of what is called the tribulation period. They believe that the Christian believers will go through the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation, which they refer to as the Beginning of Travail, but will be raptured into Heaven before the severe outpouring of God's wrath in the second half of what is popularly called the tribulation. At the mid point or 3 ½ year point the Antichrist will commit the "abomination of desolation" by desecrating the Jerusalem temple (the Third Temple), which will be built on what is now called the Temple Mount. Mid-tribers include Harold Ockenga, James Buswell, and Norman Harrison.
9. **Post-tribulation:** this position places the rapture at the end of the tribulation period. The emphasis in this view is that the church will undergo the tribulation, although the church will be spared the wrath of God. Upon Jesus' return, believers will meet him in the air and will then accompany him in his return to the earth. People who support this view include Pat Robertson, Walter Martin, John Piper, George Ladd, Robert Gundry, and Douglas Moo.
10. There are also some positions that few hold to. **The Prewrath Rapture** position is that the Church will go through part of the tribulation and many believers will be slaughtered, but this tribulation will be cut short by the coming of Christ to deliver the remaining Christians by means of the rapture. This will be followed by the Day of the Lord's wrath on the ungodly. **The Partial or Selective Rapture** theory says that true Christians will be raptured before, in the midst of, or after the tribulation depending on one's genuine conversion to the faith. Therefore, the rapture of a believer is determined by the timing of his conversion during the tribulation. Watchman Nee held to this second theory.
11. **Date Setters:** Jesus plainly said in Matthew 24:36: ***"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My***

Father only." Yet many have foolishly predicted the date for the coming of Jesus:

a. 1844 William Miller said Christ would return between March 21, 1842 and March 21, 1843. He later said he miscalculated and the date should have been October 22, 1844. Out of Miller's theology came both Seven Day Adventist movement.

b. The Jehovah's Witnesses predicted 1914, then 1918, and then 1925 as the dates for His return.

c. 1981: Chuck Smith said that Jesus would probably return by 1981.

d. Edgar Whisenant wrote *88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988.* When this did not take place, he predicted 1989. Subsequently he has predicted 1992, 1995, and other years.

e. Pastor John Hinkle of Christ Church in Los Angelos predicted that the Rapture would take place on June 9, 1994.

f. Evangelist Harold Camping predicted the Rapture would occur on September 6, 1994, revised his prediction after September 6 to May 21, 2011 and then October 21, 2011.

He's Coming Back-The Second Coming of Christ

Much of this study has already had a lot to say about the Second Coming. I just wanted to add a little more. As we wait for His Second Coming, we need more than ever to walk in vision. Proverbs 29:18a says, *Where there is no vision* [no redemptive revelation of God], *the people perish*….AMP. The Message Bible puts it this way, *"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves*….

In a time similar to ours, the Prophet Habakkuk had a vision: *And the LORD answered me* [Habakkuk] *and said, "Write the vision and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come. It will not tarry* (Habakkuk 2:2-3)

There are two unfulfilled prophecies from Habakkuk 2:2-3:

A. The vision of the 2nd Coming of Christ, as proved in Hebrews 10:37 (*For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry*), is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie.

B. Though it tarry, wait for it (the 2nd Coming!); it will not tarry. The Second Coming will fulfill God's ultimate purpose on the earth as recorded from Habakkuk 2:14 (and Isaiah 11:9): *For the earth shall*

be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk's response after the seeing the vision was so different from the initial verses of this book where Habakkuk seems angry and feels that the Lord is doing anything to help the situation of his nation: *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will joy in the God of my salvation* (Habakkuk 3:17-18 KJV). The Contemporary English Version puts it this way: *Fig trees may no longer bloom, or vineyards produce grapes; olive trees may be fruitless, and harvest time a failure; sheep pens may be empty, and cattle stalls vacant-but I will still celebrate because the LORD God saves me.*

Lord, let us have a fresh vision of the Coming of the Lord. *He who testifies to these things says, **"Surely I am coming quickly,"** Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen* (Revelation 22:20-21).

While We are Waiting for the End to Come
By John Torell

- He who wins souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)
- Let us lay up treasures in heaven. (Matthew 6:19-21)
- Let us not worry about tomorrow. (Matthew 6:25-34)
- Let us do the work of Jesus. (Luke 10:1-2)
- Work while there is still day. (John 9:4)
- Tithe while you still have money. (Malachi 3:6-12)
- Pray and fast for the light to break forth. (Isaiah 58:6-9)

God has given you a limited amount of time on earth. If you die before the Antichrist comes to power, you are still going to leave all your earthly possessions behind, and there is nothing you will be able to take with you except what you invested in the kingdom of God.

It Could Be Worse
By Steve Wohlberg in *End Time Delusions*

A certain minister acquired a reputation for telling his church members, "It could be worse," during times of great trial. One day a troubled soul told the pastor, "Last night I dreamed Jesus came on the clouds with shiny

angels. The most horrible thing was-*I was lost!"* Expecting encouragement, the minister shockingly replied, "It could be worse." *What!* Thought the man in disbelief. *What could be worse?* Solemnly his pastor whispered, "It would be worse if it wasn't a dream."

How true! Thankfully, the loving arms of Jesus Christ are still open to lost sinners. Let's respond to God's goodness and the pleading voice of the Crucified One before His visible return *is not a dream!*

Sources I have used for this lesson besides Biblical sources and my own opinions:

End Time Delusions by Steve Wohlberg
Wikipedia on *The Rapture*
The Flaming Sword by Reverend John Torell
All the Men of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer
Interpreting the Symbols and Types by Kevin J. Conner
Every Wind of Doctrine by Hobart Freeman

TIME OF TRIBULATION
Corrie Ten Boom

The world is deathly ill. It is dying. The Great Physician has already signed the death certificate. Yet there is still a great work for Christians to do. They are to be streams of living water, channels of mercy to those who are still in the world. It is possible for them to do this because they are overcomers.

Christians are ambassadors for Christ. They are representatives from Heaven to this dying world. And because of our presence here, things will change.

My sister, Betsy, and I were in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck because we committed the crime of loving Jews. Seven hundred of us from Holland, France, Russia, Poland, and Belgium were herded into a room built for two hundred. As far as I knew, Betsy and I were the only two representatives of Heaven in that room.

We may have been the Lord's only representatives in that place of hatred, yet because of our presence there, things changed. Jesus said, "In the world

you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We, too, are to be overcomers, bringing the light of Jesus into a world filled with darkness and hate.

Sometimes I get frightened as I read the Bible, and as I look in this world and see all of the tribulation and persecution promised by the Bible coming true. Now I can tell you, though, if you too are afraid, that I have just read the last pages. I can now come to shouting, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" for I have found where it is written that Jesus said, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be His God, and he shall be My son." This is the future and hope of this world. Not that the world will survive, but that we shall be overcomers in the midst of a dying world.

Betsy and I, in the concentration camp, prayed that God would heal Betsy who was so weak and sick. "Yes, the Lord will heal me," Betsy said with confidence. She died the next day, and I could not understand it. They laid her thin body on the concrete floor along with all the other corpses of the women who died that day.

It was hard for me to understand, to believe that God had a purpose for all that. Yet because of Betsy's death, today I am traveling all over the world telling the people about Jesus.

There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are the false teachers that Jesus warned us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution. In China, the Christians were told, "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated-raptured." Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly, "We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes, to stand and not faint."

I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the Body of Christ across the

world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it. We are next.

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus' sake, and since I met the Bishop in China, now every time I read a good Bible text I think, "Hey, I can us that in the time of tribulation." Then I write it down and learn it by heart.

When I was in the concentration camp, a camp where only twenty percent of the women came out alive, we tried to cheer each other up by saying, "Nothing could be any worse than today." But we would find the next day was even worse. During this time a Bible verse that I had committed to memory gave me great hope and joy. *"If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part evil is spoken of, but on your part He is glorified"* (1st Peter 3:14). I found myself saying, "Hallelujah! Because I am suffering, Jesus is glorified!"

In America, the churches sing, "Let the congregation escape tribulation," but in China and Africa the tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone more than two hundred thousand Christians were martyred in Africa. Now things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue right on as though we are all going to escape the tribulation.

Several years ago I was in Africa in a nation where a new government had come into power. The first night I was there some of the Christians were commanded to come to the police station to register. When they arrived, they were arrested, and that same night they were executed. The next day the same thing happened with other Christians. The third day it was the same. All the Christians in the district were being systematically murdered.

The fourth day I was to speak in a little church. The people came, but they were filled with fear and tension. All during the service they were looking at each other, their eyes asking, "Will this one I am sitting beside be the next one killed? Will I be the next one?"

The room was hot and stuffy with insects that came through the screenless windows and swirled around the naked bulbs over the bare wooden benches. I told a story out of my childhood.

"When I was a little girl," I said, "I went to my father and said, "Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ." "Tell me," said Father, "When you take a trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?" "No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train." "That is right," my father said, "And so it is with God's strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need just in time."

My African friends were nodding and smiling. Suddenly a spirit of joy descended upon the church and the people began singing, "In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore." Later that week, half the congregation of the church was executed. I heard later that the other half was killed some months ago.

But I must tell you something. I was so happy that the Lord used me to encourage these people, for unlike many of their leaders, I had the word of God. I had been to the Bible and discovered that Jesus said He had not only overcome the world, but to all those who remained faithful to the end, He would give a crown of life.

How can we get ready for the persecution? First we need to feed on the word of God, digest it, make it a part of our being. This will mean disciplined Bible study each day as we not only memorize long passages of scripture, but put the principles to work in our lives.

Next we need to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Not just the Jesus of yesterday, the Jesus of History, but the life-changing Jesus of today who is still alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is no optional command of the Bible, it is absolutely necessary. Those earthly disciples could never have stood up under the persecution of the Jews and Romans had they not waited at Pentecost. Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We will never be able to stand in the tribulation without it.

In the coming persecution we must be ready to help each other and encourage each other. But we must not wait until the tribulation comes before starting. The fruit of the Spirit should be the dominant force of every Christian's life.

Many are fearful of the coming tribulation-they want to run. I, too, am a little bit afraid when I think that after all my eighty years, including the horrible Nazi concentration camp, that I might have to go through tribulation also. But then I read the Bible and I am glad.

When I am weak, then I shall be strong, the Bible says. Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord. We were weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit helped us through. No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will not forsake you. For seventy-six years I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me, or let me down. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him, for I know that to all who overcome, He shall give the crown of life. Hallelujah!

Corrie Ten Boom
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