

Temptation to Try the Whole World

Fred R. Coulter—June 6, 1996

I've made a couple comments concerning temptation, tribulation and I just briefly touched on it, so I want to do it more completely and I think it will give us more understanding concerning it. Let's go to Revelation 3 and let's look at this with a little bit more profundity as we're going through, a little more detail, and let's think on some of the things that it says. One of the things that's very important for us to realize is that the Word of God is structured with 'precept upon precept'—and it repeats it—'precept upon precept'—so that's double—'line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little.' And it says back in Isa. 28, that to whom is He going to *teach knowledge*, and to whom is He going to *teach doctrine*, but to those that are 'drawn from the breast and weaned.' In other words, *those who are over the 'milk of the Word.'* So, we're going to try and apply some of that today.

We'll kind of review a little bit. Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the One Who is true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens."

- That could be an opportunity to preach the Gospel.
 - That could be opening understanding to the Scripture.
 - That could be opening opportunities to protect and watch over us.
- many different things.

"I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, **and have kept My Word**...[That becomes very, very important! Let's think of it in relationship to what we have today. Is it not important that we have all of God's Word? Let's put it this way: *It's very important that we do have all of God's Word.* Since we have it, does God hold us accountable for it all? *Yes, He does!*] ...have kept My Word, **and have not denied My name.**" Now, how can you deny the name of God? What is one of the ways that you deny the name of God?

- *disobedience*, 'through works being abominable unto every good work, deny His name' (Titus 1:10)
- change the nature of God

Think on that! Why? *Because, if you change the nature of God from what God has revealed, then you are denying God*—are you not? Not only His name,

but you are *denying Him!* I think, also, as we go through this, this will help you understand what God is doing in the churches overall. And when I say 'churches' I mean all the Churches of God that we know of, and all of the Seventh Day Adventists churches that we can throw in there. Once you understand the Jesuit Agenda for the Seventh Day Adventists.

The reason that He's commending the Philadelphians for these things is because there are circumstances around which make it easy to not keep His Word and make it easy to deny His name. And here's the agency that does it:

Verse 9: "Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan... [That is the overall umbrella group that actually worships Satan directly.] (In includes those): ...who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie... [they are not genetic Jews, but claim to be; includes all of those who say they are 'Christian' and are not, such as Catholics; all the false religions of this world who are included in it because we are talking about something that is very big. This is a huge thing that is taking place.] ...—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you." And we're going to see every one of these things come right back to the love of God as we go on.

Verse 10: "**Because you have kept the word of My patience**... [or 'patiently kept My Word'—*every word!*] ...I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth." I've given sermons which have said that 'this is the Great Tribulation' and God is going to keep you from the Great Tribulation; and Luke 21:36, 'pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things. It's going to come to pass and stand before the Son of man.' However, I think that this has more to do with a *temptation* rather than *tribulation*. We'll see why. It can apply to the Tribulation, but, say, only twenty percent of the understanding, if that much, would apply to that.

Now notice v 11: "Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown." We're dealing in a time where there is 'crown-stealing'—are we not? *Yes!*

Now then, let's look at this a little bit more. Let's look at the difference between temptation and tribulation, because there is a difference. The word *temptation* comes from the Greek 'peirasmos' which means *temptation from the devil, from others, from yourself*. It also can mean *putting to the test*—that is

from a positive point of view, *proving* or *trying* or a *trial*. As we're going to see, the devil is called 'the tempter'—one of his names. To be tempted comes from the Greek word 'peirazo'—and is just the verbal form of the noun *temptation*.

Let's look at *temptation* here for just a minute before we get into *tribulation*. Let's, first of all, come to Matthew the sixth chapter and let's see concerning *temptation*. Temptation, as I've pointed out, can be either a good kind of testing as it were, or a tempting with evil. So you have to look at the circumstances to understand what it is, because there are both kinds.

Matthew 6:13—this is part of the prayer we are to pray: "And lead us not into **temptation**... [that's different that *tribulation*.] ...but rescue us from the evil one.... [Now then, how is that going to be done?] ...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." So ***it's through the power of God*** that you can be delivered.

Let's look at Matthew 4 for a pattern here that we have, and here we are going to see the tempter—being the devil—came. Matthew 4:1: "And when He had fasted *for* forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished. And **when the tempter came** to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread'" (vs 1-2). Now you can take and substitute that kind of argument with any number of words. This is done, first of all, to undermine your confidence. It's what he was trying to do. He was also appealing to human nature.

Notice what Jesus said: "But He answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"' (v 3). Tie that back in with Rev. 3 where they are commended for what? *Keeping the Word the God, patiently doing so and not denying the name of Christ!*

Let's come to Hebrews, the second chapter and let's see that Christ was tempted in every way that we are—every way! This is important for us to know, to realize and to understand! We're going through temptation, to be tempted.

Hebrews 2:14: "Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same... [and the Greek there means *with the exact sameness*; not any different—the exact sameness.] ...in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil; and *that* He might deliver those who were subject to bondage all through their lives by *their* fear of death. For surely, He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels; but He is taking upon Himself to help *the* seed of Abraham.... [there it is,

right there] ...For this reason, it was **obligatory**..." (vs 14-17)—necessary. In other words,

- to bring *full justice*
- to bring *full forgiveness*
- to *cover all the sins* of all mankind
- it was *obligatory* upon God

—since He is just; since He is merciful—to take upon Him the same nature of human beings so that He would suffer the same death.

When we get into a little bit more of the nature of God and what He gave up to become a human being and the judgment that God put upon Himself. In other words, God said since 'I have judged all human beings in this manner—by giving them the *law of sin and death* beginning with Adam and Eve, etc., etc.—I will take the same to Myself.' That's a pretty profound judgment—*isn't it? Yes!* That's why He did it!

"For this reason, it was obligatory for *Him* to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted *in like manner*, He is able to help those who are being tempted" (vs 17-18).

Now, we all have temptations—don't we?—every single one of us! But what is the *temptation* that is coming upon ALL ***the world*** 'to try them that dwell on the earth.' Let's go back and read that statement again. This is of a great magnitude! This is *before* the Tribulation! As we're going to see, ***the Tribulation comes when the temptation has reached its fullest***. I will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon ALL the world to ***try***—try means to *tempt, test or prove*—them that dwell upon the earth.' What test is happening right now, that is going to test every human being in one fashion or another at their level and knowledge of God? That's what we're going to answer, because there is something that is happening, not only to the Churches of God, but to every human being on earth.

So, I want you to understand, this is ***a big thing!*** This is no small event! And remember, the book of Revelation is a *global* book. It talks about everything on a *global scale* when it refers to the *last days*. So when it says, 'to try them that dwell upon the earth,' the time of temptation which 'is coming upon the ***whole*** world.' The world is the society of human beings. The earth is the orb on which we live—that's the physical planet. So this is a ***big deal!*** And it's happening right today, and we have all experienced part of it.

So this *temptation* is presenting before people choices they have to make. Everyone on earth is

going to have to make a choice. No one is going to escape! Concerning the *mark of the beast*: that is the *end result* if you receive it, of *failing the temptation*, but that is not *the temptation*—the *mark of the beast* is *not the temptation*.

Let's come to Hebrews 4:12—this talks about the Word of God. If we patiently keep the Word of God, we use it as this is used here: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.” And in this trial and temptation that is coming, no human being is going to be without a choice.

“And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *one Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet He was without sin*” (vs 13-15). And all of these *temptations* came before He was crucified. The crucifixion was the final *trial!* Everything up to that point was a *temptation*. And the crucifixion was anguish and tribulation, because tribulation implies physical hurt and harm.

Let's come to Luke, the eighth chapter. Let's see how this works in the world. Maybe this will help answer some of the things concerning what has happened to those who have attended church and are no longer with us. Or what has happened to those who have attended church and now they've given up on everything—are they lost forever? *We don't know. Some may, most may not.*

Luke 8:11: “Now this is the parable: The seed is the Word of God... [Again, notice we're dealing with the Word of God all the way through here.] ...and those *that fell* by the road are the ones who hear, but the devil comes... [hears the 'tempter' coming] ...and takes away the Word from their heart, lest they should believe *and* be saved” (vs 11-12). So, there's a time when they hear the Word and they're happy to hear the Word, but they have not believed unto salvation. So these people never truly answered the call—‘many are called, few are chosen.’

“And those *that fell* upon the rock *are* the ones who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; but these do not have any root... [they couldn't bring forth fruit] ...who believe *only* for a while, and in time of trial fall away. And those that

fell into the thorns are the ones who have heard, but are choked *while* pursuing *the* cares and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring *any fruit* to [perfection (KJV)] maturity. And those that *fell* on the good ground are the ones who, in a right and good heart, hear the Word *and* keep it, and bring forth fruit with endurance” (vs 13-15). There it is, right there, patience—ties in right together with Rev. 3:10. Bring forth with *patience (endurance)*. It's not all done at once.

Luke 22:28—He's talking to the disciples: “Now you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations.... [There are many temptations that Jesus went through, so I'll give you a sub-Bible study: Study through the Gospels and find out all the different temptations. The Pharisees came tempting Him; the Herodians came tempting Him; the disciples tempted Him, and so forth.] ...And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom...” (vs 28-29).

Here is the last temptation that Jesus went through. The testing to see if He was ready for the crucifixion, that's what this was. Verse 39: “Then He left *the house and* went, as He was accustomed, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, ‘Pray *that you* do not enter into temptation.’ And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done’” (vs 39-42). Here is the whole thing, brethren. Every temptation you are confronted with, the choice to choose right and good and lawful and commandment-keeping OR to choose evil and sin and commandment-breaking. That falls right in line with Deut. 30:15—‘I've set before you this day, life and death, good and evil—therefore, choose life that you and your seed may live. And that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.’

The whole world is going to be tested. Everyone in the Church is going to be tested at their level! We're going to see that. Here Christ was tested at the ultimate level. Was He ready for the crucifixion?

“Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And after rising up from prayer, He came to *His* disciples *and* found them sleeping for grief. Then He said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Arise and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation’” (vs 43-46). Put in your margin Matt. 25—the parable of the Ten

Virgins. They slumbered! They slept! They were not alert! There were those who didn't take any oil in their vessels. 'Pray that you enter not into temptation.'

We're going to see two kinds of temptation here. Let's come to Hebrews, the third chapter. Here is the *wrong* kind of temptation. This is a *provocation*. Then we're going to see a *good type* of temptation.

Hebrews 3:7: "For this reason, even as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, **if you will hear His voice**... [Not only should we hear the voice of God, but hear the Word of God, because God had to speak those words so it could be written. This is what He spoke now in print.] ...harden not your hearts, as in the rebellion, in the **day of temptation** in the wilderness... [They tempted God—didn't they?—many, many times. He said in the book of Numbers, 'They have tempted Me lo these ten times!' One of them was, 'Go in the land.' *Oh, we don't want to go into the land!* So He said, 'All right, you're not going into the land.' *Oh, we're going to go! We're going to go!* 'No you're not.' They didn't go! *Provocation!*] ...where your fathers **tempted Me** [proved Me] and tried Me, and saw My works forty years'" (vs 7-9). Now, how do you avoid tempting God?

1. you don't challenge Him
2. you don't command Him
3. you don't rebel against Him
4. you know that everything is possible with God

—so therefore, it doesn't matter. God will take care of it! We're going to see that when we're being tempted, or going through trials—temptation is another word for trial; and many of us have trials. I know there is not a single one of us here who has not been through some trials—correct? *Yes!* And that is part of the hour or the time of temptation coming upon the earth. We'll see! He said, "'Because of this, I was indignant with that generation...'" (v 10).

Hebrews 11:17—let's see a *good* kind of trial or testing or tempting or proving, and then we're going to see how God does it and what God provides. "By faith Abraham, when he was being **tried**... [same word for *tempted*—so here is a *good* test] ...offered up Isaac..." Why did he offer him up?

Genesis 22—let's read that section, because that's very important for us to understand. Did God tempt him with evil? *No!* Who tempts you with evil? *Satan!* God *never* tempts you with evil. **God tests you with choices!** Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God tested [try]

Abraham... [Are we going to have a trial of our faith? *Yes, we are, without a doubt!*] ...and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.'" (vs 1-2).

- Can God sin? *No!*
- Can God lie? *No!*
- Would God instruct him to do something that was evil and wrong? *No!*
- So what did Abraham do?

Like in a movie, went out and beat his fist to a pulp on a rock and cursed God and said, 'Oh, God, why? About that time I turned off the television set and went out of the room and said, phooey, this movie's no good, they don't have a clue.

NO! "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son..." (v 3). You know the rest of the story. They went three days; Isaac said, 'Where is the sacrifice.' What did Abraham say? 'My son, **the LORD will provide!**'—right? *Yes!* And He did! And a great lesson with a substitution sacrifice, which is a type of Jesus Christ for the payment of our sins.

But notice Hebrews 11 again and let's see *why* he did. Let's see where it is *by faith*, what kind of faith did he have? *Tremendous faith!* Hebrews 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when he was being tried, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up *his* only begotten *son* of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall your Seed be called'; *because he* reckoned that God was able... [had the power—'dunamis'] ...to raise him even from among *the dead*..." (vs 17-19). Now, in the face of that kind of trial, if we're to have the faith of Abraham, are we going to be confronted with similar trials—of a similar magnitude—though not offering our own children? *I believe we are!* That's why it's important we understand the difference between a trial and an affliction. So he counted Him worthy to raise him from the dead.

Let's come over here to James, the first chapter, and let's see this in action the way it is—this is important for us to understand and realize. This is exactly the defined difference between the two: the good kind of temptation or trial which comes from God *vs* the evil kind which comes from Satan the devil and our human nature.

James 1:12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures **trials**... [*temptation* (KJV)—same word for 'patiently keeping My Word.'] ...because, **after he has been proved**, he shall receive a crown of life..." Tie that in with Rev. 3:11—'behold I come quickly,

hold fast that you have that no man take your crown.' Are we living in a time when people are trying to take something from us? *Yes!* What are they trying to take?

- the nature of God
- the Word of God
- the Truth of God

And how many have read the book *The New Age Bible Versions*. I know a man who told me that he's taking that book and he's going through his *New King James Version*, and he's marking every place from that book where the *New Age Version* ^[transcriber's correction] changes it. Someone said, 'Why don't you just get an old *King James* instead?' He said, 'No, I want this for a personal study to know what they've done to the Word of God.' So if we are commended, brethren—those who keep the Word of God—for keeping the Word of God, that means they have to have it and know. That means they have to know the difference between that which looks like the Word of God and is not, and that which is the Word of God and is. Vast difference! So we're in the time of 'crown stealing'—aren't we? *Crown snatching, yes!*

"...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.... [All of this comes full circle back to loving God. And then God loving us as He told those in Philadelphia.] ...Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God' because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.... [always choices] ...But each one is tempted when he is drawn away... [Which then is what? *His own will!*] ...and is enticed..." (vs 12-14)—which means *deceived*. Human nature is what? *The heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things—who can know it?* That's why you trust in the Spirit of God and the Word of God and not in your own thoughts. We're going to see that's very important when it comes to trials.

This is how every one of us gets in trouble—isn't it? *I do and you do!* How many times have you started out to do something nice and good and fine and it ended up to be one just terrible, twisted, mangled mess? You didn't intend it! But it did! I've done that; that's happened to me. I've had it happen to me; I've had it done to me—both! You're enticed.

And after lust has conceived... [the plan has been brought to fruition] ...it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death" (v 15). I call to your remembrance the account of David and Bathsheba—lust on both parties' part—right? Uriah the Hittite was gone to battle—correct? Bathsheba lived next door to the king, and she wanted to be queen—right? So this was her little enticement. She bathed on the roof of

her house and knew that the king would be looking down there every afternoon. David sure enough went out there and said, 'What, who, is that?' So then, what happened? *His lust got involved*—didn't it? Then he hatched a plan—didn't he? He said to his servants, 'Go down there and bring that woman up here, I want to know...' and she came and he said, 'Oh my, this is too much' and she looked at him and said, 'I gotcha!' One thing led to another—right? A pregnancy ensued. Then you have to make the plan work better, so then you've got to kill Uriah. But he's not willing. He's savvy to know that something's going on, because the king does not call the battlefield captain in to have rest and recuperation in the king's palace, and then be told 'go with your wife tonight.' He was not exactly stupid. So then Uriah had to be killed. The long and short of it was, after months, just before the baby was born, Nathan the prophet had to come and tell David, 'You're the man! You have sinned!' Did it bring forth death? *Yes! The death of the child! The death of Uriah!* And did it bring trouble and difficulty and turmoil to the household of David? *Yes, the rest of his life!* So, he failed the test! He got tempted with evil!

Let's come over here and see some other *good* tests that have come along—Acts 20. Here are some tests. Not everything that befalls you that is not good necessarily comes from the devil. A good part of it may. But sometimes these are testings and trials for you to see if you're going to choose God under all circumstances.

Acts 20:17: "Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus *and* called for the elders of the Church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You know how, from the first day I came to Asia, *and* all the time I was with you, I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations, which came upon me through the plots of the Jews" (vs 17-19). Then you look at everything that he went through; and Paul had afflictions. 'Afflictions' then means *tribulation*. Let's look at this concerning trials, temptations.

If you have the same attitude that Abraham did; that Christ did—regardless of the circumstances, regardless of how it may look—if you are keeping the Word of God; even if it means that you have to stand alone, a lot of us have had to make that choice—haven't we? Everyone of us, indeed—haven't we? It's going to come to everybody; no one is going to be without that trial. Notice if you do what is right.

Let's look at some of the things that they did which were wrong in tempting God. 1-Corinthians 10:9: "Neither should we tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents.

Neither *should we* complain against *God*, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them **as examples, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming** (vs 9-11). So therefore, this is proof text that what is written in the Scriptures we're to learn and know, and therefore for our admonition and example. So what happened to them we should learn not to repeat—correct? *Yes!*

“Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall. **No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind...** [God is not picking on you! It's going to happen to everybody. Some may have more than others.] (But if you're trusting God look what's going to happen): ...For God, Who *is* faithful, **will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear...** [Sometimes you will come to the very 'end of your rope.' Sometimes you will feel that there is nowhere to go. Why is that a good thing? *Because then you'll turn to God!*—correct? Isn't that right? *Yes!* Is that not what God wants to know? Are you going to turn to Him? *Yes, it is!*] ...but with the temptation, **He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear it**” (vs 12-13).

Now, let's come to 1-Peter, the first chapter. We're going to go through this. It's coming upon the whole world! And what Christ is telling the Church at Philadelphia is how to overcome it. The way of escape could be applied many ways. It means God will work it out in the final analysis if you're trusting Him. If an opportunity to escape out of an immediate temptation is right there, right now, you should take it, don't delay. Make sure it is not Satan's substitute way of escape. Try the spirits; make sure it's right. We're all going to be tried and tested.

1-Peter, the first chapter, is very, very important for us to understand in relationship to trials. This tells us the perspective that we need to have whenever they come about.

- If you have a trial, does that change God? *No!*
- If you have a trial, does that change the way God works? *No!*
- If you have a trial, is it so that you are going to turn to God?

In all of these things keep your mind and perspective on God. That's what Peter did here, and Peter made enough mistakes, as he went along, to know. After all, didn't Peter fail the first temptation that came along? *Yes, he did!* If you have a trial, is it so that you are going to turn to God? He said, 'Lord, I won't deny you.'

(go to the next track)

What happened? *He denied Him three times!* I think there are three things that Peter remembered all of his life:

1. the denial
2. the transfiguration when James and John were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration
3. “If you love Me, feed My lambs.”

I think those three things burned in Peter's mind, and when he got himself in trouble he remembered those things. Let's see how he did right here, 1-Peter 1:2: “*Who have been chosen* according to *the* predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father, by sanctification through *the* Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us... [notice what he's building up to here] ...who *are* being safeguarded by *the* power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time. In this you yourselves **greatly rejoice...** [that's why you need to have your mind on those things.] ...greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various [temptations] trials...” (vs 2-6). Many! Many! Some days come along and you think: ‘Oh, Lord, why did the sun rise?’ *So it can set in faith!*

“In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ; Whom, not having seen, you love... [There again, comes right back to the love of God in all of these trials—correct? *Yes!*] ...in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory” (vs 7-8). When you're going through a trial, keep that in mind. That will help you through the other end, especially if you're in a tunnel and it's very dark and there doesn't seem to be any light at the end. Christ will open the way and open the door and make it possible.

Now, let's come to 1-Thessalonians, the third chapter, and let's look at some things which combine temptations or trials and afflictions, and affliction is a tribulation. *Tribulation* comes from the Greek ‘*thlipsis*’—which means, *affliction, trial, straight, distress*; and it can mean *bodily harm and injury*. Did the Apostle Paul have a lot of bodily harm and injury? *Oh, yes! Beaten! Scourged!*

Stoned! Left for dead! What did he say in Acts 14? *That it is through ‘much tribulation’ that we must enter into the Kingdom of God!* That was right after he got stoned! And that is stoned with stones for all of those who don’t know the difference between that and marijuana. He was not like ‘Willy’ [Bill Clinton]—I believe ‘Willy’ was in the Garden of Eden—because ‘I never inhaled’ he said. Well, what about these files? *Well, the bureaucrats did it!* It was a snafu! It was a stupid mistake. I was laughing about that this morning: ‘Willy’ has been there! ‘Willy’s’ garden! And, of course, he could always say, ‘It was Hillary; Hillary did this to me!’ That’s going to come. There’s going to come a denial somewhere in all these gates: File Gate, White-Water Gate, Hillary Gate is going to be the next one, I guess. There are going to be some difficulties for all of us.

1-Thessalonians 3:1: “Accordingly, when we could not bear to wait any longer, we thought *it* best for us to be left in Athens alone; and we sent our brother Timothy, a servant of God and our fellow worker in the Gospel of Christ, in order to establish you and to encourage you concerning your faith, so that **no one might be unduly shaken by these persecutions**.... [‘thlipsis’—*afflictions*. That’s greater than a *temptation*. Afflictions can lead to temptations—but not always!] ... (For you yourselves know that we are appointed to this very thing; and also, when we were with you, we told you beforehand *that* we would suffer persecutions, exactly as it also came to pass; and you are aware of *this*.) For this reason, when I could not wait any longer, I sent *Timothy*, in order to know your faith, lest perhaps the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain” (vs 1-5). That ties right in with Luke 8, that the tempter comes along and tempts him out of it. So afflictions can come.

Now, let’s go to Revelation 2 and look at the difference between the Church at Smyrna, which then was not being saved from temptation, but *was enduring in tribulation*. And then we will look, last of all, at the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 2:8: “And to the angel of the Church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive. I know your works **and tribulation** [‘thlipsis’] and poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.... [Notice how there comes a time in the history Church where the synagogue of Satan is moving in. Some are not going to escape. Some are going to be protected. These people are not. These brethren were not.] ... Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you

into prison, **that you may be tried** [*tempted*—‘peirazo’]; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life: (vs 8-10). Notice the ‘crown of life’—in both of these cases: Church of Philadelphia; Church of Smyrna; also there in James 1, ‘crown of life.’

Now, let’s come back to Romans, the fifth chapter. I’ve said many times in the past that I’ve often wondered why Paul could ‘joy’ in tribulation. I think I have some of that figured out, for the very first time.

1. He suffered so much of it that he had no recourse but to ‘joy’ in it.
2. Through it, he understood the suffering and affliction that he also put upon the people of God before he was called.
3. To be accounted worthy of that affliction, to have the same afflictions as Christ that he ‘joyed’ in that!

We all have a long way to go before we come to that point—don’t we? I mean, just try in a hot, humid day of 103 degrees and no air-conditioning and no water for six hours and let’s see how joyful we are. Probably not!

Romans 5:2: “Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 2-5). So there again comes full circle back to the love of God. Notice how none of these things can be endured, a way of escape made, and overcoming take place without the love of God. The love of God is always right there!

Now, let’s come to 2-Corinthians, the first chapter, and, of course, Paul would know greater than anybody else. Here, if you have real, true suffering and affliction—and there are some who do. One of the reasons that he had joy in going through the trial is that after you get through it you understand the love of God even greater and so therefore, you can rejoice in it and have joy because of it. I think that all of you are beginning to understand that after all the turmoil that you have been in with the churches—right? You’re beginning to find Christ and now you’re understanding what is happening and you’re beginning to have the joy that comes from the love of God. And you look back on those things and say, ‘Well, that was worth it to know what I know today.

2-Corinthians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* God of all comfort; Who comforts us **in all our tribulation**... [He brings it; He alone can] ...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial... [What happens? *Every time you go through a trial or affliction*—maybe even bodily harm—you're able to help those who are afflicted and comfort them. One of the greatest examples that we had is the example of Esther Grisinger. She was afflicted with diabetes, was nearly blind. She also had afflictions in her legs where she could hardly walk and was in great pain all the time, constantly! But she never ever complained. And, as a matter of fact, when people were in trouble, they called Ester Grisinger, and in her pain she comforted them. That's why we go through the things that we do. There's much more to that story but we'll save that for another time which would prove the point even more, that we are able to comfort them who are in any trouble.] ...through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (vs 3-4).

Let's go to 1-Peter, the fifth chapter. Let's see how this comfort comes. This ties it all together:

- the trials and tribulations you go through
- the afflictions that come
- the tempting of Satan the devil

—which is there. 1-Peter 5:6: "Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.... [Remember, when all else fails—when every thing else, every other human being, every other thing around you fails—**God loves you! He cares for you!**] ...Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour" (vs 6-8). Anyone! He's the tempter coming along seeing whom he may devour!

- those who have the cares of this world
- those who don't have roots
- those who are like dry leaves blown back and forth with every wind of doctrine

"...For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith... [That's how we are to resist him! That means the faith of Christ, the Truth of the doctrines, the love of God and so forth.] ...knowing *that* the same afflictions... [Now we're dealing with afflictions, not just temptings, but afflictions!] ...are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while... [It will come to an end!] ...Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, *and* settle *you*" (vs 8-10). And

God is able to do that! That's the comfort!

Come back to 2-Corinthians 1:4 "...that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.... [What he's saying is this: If you're having trials, tribulations and difficulties, it's because God is working with you so that you can abound more in Christ. Whereas, human nature tells us the other way—doesn't it? Human nature says if you have a trial something's wrong! If you have no trials, everything is right.] (Here's how we looked at these things): ...And if we are in distress, *it is* for your comfort and salvation, which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you); knowing that as you are partners in the sufferings, *you are* also partners in the comfort. For we do not want you to be ignorant of our tribulations, brethren, *even the trials* that befell us in Asia; we were exceedingly burdened beyond *our own* strength, **so much so that we even despaired of living**" (vs 4-8).

Now, that's quite a trial—isn't it? And I am sure that ***in the temptation that is coming upon the whole world, we're all going to get to that point!*** Paul suffered far more than we have!

Verse 9: "For we had the sentence of death within ourselves, so that we would **not trust in ourselves**..." Brethren, that is the whole purpose of every trial, every temptation, every affliction—that you learn not to trust in yourself, ***but in God***, which raises the dead. That's what it's all for. That's a tremendous thing, and that is great.

Let's come back and look at what is the *temptation* and then we will look at *the* Tribulation. Let's go to 2-Thessalonians, the second chapter. Remember what we read about a falling away. Let's look at this from the time as *the time of temptation*, which is going to culminate in this:

Let's go to Revelation 13 and let's do a sort of parallel study of these two, while we're going through. This temptation is coming on the world right now. It is taking place right now and has been for quite a while. It is all summed up in Rev. 13, which is the global government, the global economy and the global religion. Remember concerning the united religions formed and patterned after the United Nations. What they want to do—and Satan's plan behind that—is to take away Christ from everyone. Give them a false Christ! Substitution salvation! And it's all coming under this beast of Rev. 13, which is going to encompass the whole

world. This is the trial before *the* Tribulation. This is the *time of temptation*. It's going to get worse and worse as we go along. It's probably going to get more clever as we go along.

And I thank you all for bring me these things off the Internet concerning what's happening with the Catholic religion and the religions in the world. Very profound! It's going to come to a global religion.

Revelation 13:1—this is the final beast: “And I stood on the sand of the sea... [what is the sand of the seashore picture? *People!* Water pictures *multitudes, nations, languages and so forth.*] ...and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns... [that is always Satan's, the sign of his system—seven and ten!] ...and on his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads *the* name of blasphemy. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth like *the* mouth of a lion... [This combining the best of all of the past civilizations on earth; bringing them all together in one glorious last beast. This is the *temptation* that is coming.] ...and **the dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority**. And I saw one of his heads as *if it were* slain to death, but his deadly wound was healed; and the **whole earth** was amazed *and* followed the beast” (vs 1-3). Notice, *all the world!*

Revelation 3:10: “...I also will keep you from the **time of temptation** which *is* about to come upon the **whole world**...” Ties right together. This is *the temptation*. Now it is happening on all the world. Everyone has to make a choice. If a person knows about God just enough to know that God is Creator and he forsakes that for worshipping Satan the devil, he has made the wrong choice. If a person knows that the name of Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven whereby you may be saved, and they forsake that, that is their judgment. God is going to judge them according to the knowledge that they have. Everyone—whether is it's a little or it's a lot—has a lot of knowledge. God is going to judge us on that. So it's *all the world*.

Revelation 13:3: “...and the whole earth was amazed *and* followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, who gave *his* authority to the beast... [that, brethren, is the final hour of this temptation. Then it moves on into the Great Tribulation. The temptation comes before, and then the Great Tribulation comes after. So, in a sense, when He says ‘I will keep you from the hour of temptation’ it could also imply at the end of it *from the Tribulation*, but only if you successfully get through, with Christ's help, that *temptation* coming upon the whole world.

“And they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who *is* like the beast? Who has the power to make war against him?’ And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given to him; and authority was given to him to continue *for* forty-two months.... [that is after the ‘deadly wound’ was healed.] ...And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And he was given **power to make war against the saints**... [Now *tribulation!* No longer *trial/temptation*—now it is *tribulation!*] ...and to overcome them; and he was given authority over every tribe and language and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of Life of the Lamb slain from *the* foundation of *the* world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear” (vs 4-9).

Now then, Matthew 24, then 2-Thessalonians, the second chapter. When we are talking about *tribulation* it is Great Tribulation! The Greek is “*megas thlipsis*”—rather hard for someone with an English language to try and pronounce that correctly; it's one of those tongue twisters.

Matthew 24:12: “...because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold.... [That's why they failed the *temptation*. They don't love God in the temptations, now they're going to have to make up for it in the *affliction*—aren't they? *Yes!*] ...But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come” (vs 12-14). I don't think that has been done, because that must be done to the very last generation.

And our former understanding of that was not correct at all, but it was a lot of braggadocio. However, how it's going to be done, by whom it's going to be done—besides the two witnesses, which I think it's going to be done in addition to the two witnesses—it's going to have to be done with power and conviction and understanding of the things that are going on. To be separate from it, not a part of it—not *in* the world but *out* of the world! Preaching the Truth of God, not having to worry about whether you're going to *offend* someone or not. I mean, if someone's offended, let them be offended, if it is the Truth! Don't go out and deliberately cause it, but some people just like to be offended at everything, because they're in that mode today. Let them be!

Notice what happens, v 15: “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place”... [This tells us what? *There must be a Holy place, which means there must be a temple*. It is the ‘abomination that makes desolate, and it

stands in the Holy place.’] ... (the one who reads, let him understand).” When this is put there, this means *this is hard to understand*. There are many factors which bore in on this and it’s difficult to realize.

Then! When that happens: ‘Then... [there’s going to be a moment, and instant in time, when it happens] ...let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains. Let the one *who is* on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; and let the one *who is* in the field not go back to take his garments... [That is urgent! If you’ve got a ‘Petra box’ forget it! If you don’t have the Word of God up here in your mind... you aren’t going to take your Bible with you.] ...But woe to those *women* who are expecting a child, and to those who are nursing infants in those days! And pray that your flight be not in *the* winter, nor on *the* Sabbath... [shows the Sabbath is in force—correct? *Yes!*] ...for then shall there be **great tribulation**... [not temptation] ...such as has not been from *the* beginning of the world until this time, nor ever shall be *again*” (vs 16-21). So, the beginning of *the* Tribulation is the end of the *temptation*, because it goes on to its destructive end. The *world* would have failed the temptation. The question is, **will the Church of God have failed the temptation?** This is the culmination of the *temptation*.

- The *temptation* is already working.
- The mystery of iniquity is working!
- The globalists are working.
- The one religion people are working.
- The global government and economy are working.

2-Thessalonians 2:1: “Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled—neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as if from us, *saying* that the day of Christ is present. Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not come unless the [falling away] apostasy shall come first...*” (vs 1-3)—leaving all knowledge of God; not just someone leaving a church organization. Not just a single person leaving God. But, this is the culmination of that hour or that time of trial coming upon the whole earth to try all them that dwell upon the earth. We don’t know exactly how long it’s going to be; it’s going to be profound when it comes. I want you to understand how this is interweaving itself and the whole society, everything!

“...the apostasy and the man of sin shall be revealed... [that’s the one who stands in the Holy place; that is the abomination, the man that says, ‘I am God!’ **That then is going to bring the Tribulation.**] ...—the son of perdition, the one who

opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship... [above every religion, everything that there is] ...so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you understand what is holding *him* back in order for him to be revealed in his own set time” (vs 3-6).

His time is coming! You’re not going to rush the end! And that’s why it’s not correct to say that *the* Tribulation is going to start this year; the Tribulation is going to start next year. There was a book out, *88 Reasons Why Jesus Should Return in 1988*. And on the Feast of Trumpets it was supposed to be, so on the Feast of Trumpets, 1988 I gave a sermon on why Jesus is not returning in 1988. So then the guy put out a second book and said, ‘Oops! Sorry, it will be next year.’ You can’t speed it up! Every one of those manipulations have been done to put fear in the brethren, to put guilt in the brethren, to manipulate them and take more money—every single one! It’s not right! It’s going to be revealed in His time.

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already working; only *there is* one Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); *even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders... [That is the fulfillment of Rev. 13; he’s going to be something!] ...and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved” (vs 7-10).

If you’re going to be patiently keeping the Word of God, are you loving the Truth? *Yes! The Word of God is Truth*. What is happening to those people right now who haven’t yet completely failed, but who are right now *failing the temptation*. They’re not loving the Word of God—correct?

- Oh well, it doesn’t matter if you work on the Sabbath if you have need.
- It doesn’t matter if you eat leavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- You don’t have to keep the Feast of Tabernacles if you’ve got to keep your job.

—and on and on and on. *They are not loving the Truth*. I hope that as many as can will repent so they can recover themselves. That is not to condemn them to the point to put them down. That is to bring out a point in fact of what is happening. I think that the *Jesuit Agenda* for the SDAs could also be the

Jesuit Agenda for the Church of God Seventh Day, the Worldwide Church of God. They don't have to do anything to CGI, that's already disappeared; it's about gone. Concerning the *Jesuit Agenda* and the SDAs is the expose` of Seventh Day Adventist elders showing how that the Jesuits have infiltrated the SDA Church at the top higher echelons and wherever there is a hierarchy they come in and use that and begin converting the religion step-by-step into a world religion unbeknownst to them—through baptism, Eucharist and ministries. And it's happened to Worldwide. It's happened to Church of God Seventh Day. It's happened to the Seventh Day Adventist. And that is why God has scattering the Church right now. How is He going to keep us from this temptation?

Let's go back to Revelation 3:10: "...I also will keep you from the time of temptation..." How is He going to keep you? *Keep* in the Greek means *to deliver, to rescue, to watch over, to watch over you, to take care of you*—not to remove you from it. When we read 'keep' before, we would say, 'this is removing us to the place of safety.' NO! This is ***keep you from the temptation!*** Watch over you! Protect you! NOT remove you. Maybe the end of it would be that you will perhaps be removed to a place of safety; that is entirely possible. But that's not the thrust of what this means. He's going to keep you from that. Why is He going to keep you from it? How is He going to keep you from it? He's going to keep you from it "Because you have kept the Word of My patience..." How is He going to keep you from it? *By scattering the Church into small unrecognizable groups which cannot be infiltrated, because they do not have a hierarchy!* That's very important! He's going to keep us! This is what we're really fighting; this is the whole *hour of temptation* by Satan the devil.

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord... [That's how to do it. That's how He keeps you. The Lord bless you and keep you.] ...and in the might of His strength.... [Relying on Him and not your own devices.] ...Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (vs 10-11). And the wiles then are these *temptations*. The wile of the devil right now is so clever in infiltrating the churches. It's amazing! Every church that names the name of Christ—whether Sabbath-keeping or Sunday-keeping—has been taken down or is in the process of being taken down, or is in the process of being scattered to be preserved. God will re-gather! So it's important that you be able to stand, and also, if you have to, stand alone! That's wall part of it. Are you willing to stand alone for God today now? *or* Are you so concerned about people that you want to know what they think of you? That's a test. God

can always bring the fellowship, once you fellowship with Him He'll bring it.

"Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth... [You love the Truth so much you wrap it around you; becomes part of you.] ...and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [which comes from Christ] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of peace.... [That means you are walking in the way of the Lord.] ...Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one... [because the temptation is there] ...and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (vs 12-18). So, that's how we're going to do it.

Let's come back to Rev. 3 and we'll finish where we started. This is the promise that He gave us, because we are not fighting with arms, but fighting with spiritual arms and resisting the synagogue of Satan. Revelation 3:10: "Because you have kept the word of My patience... [all the Word of God] ...**I also will keep** you... [watch over you, protect you] ...**from the time of temptation** which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.... [We're right now in this trial. How long, how intense, how great this is going to be—it will grow and grow and grow unto this fulfillment of Rev. 13 and then *the* Tribulation will begin.] ...Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown. The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 10-13).

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible In Its Original Order* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 3:7-11
- 2) Matthew 6:13
- 3) Matthew 4:1-3
- 4) Hebrews 2:14-18

- 5) Hebrews 4:12-15
- 6) Luke 8:11-15
- 7) Luke 22:28-29, 39-46
- 8) Hebrews 3:7-10
- 9) Hebrews 11:17
- 10) Genesis 22:1-3
- 11) Hebrews 11:17-19
- 12) James 1:12-15
- 13) Acts 20:17-19
- 14) 1 Corinthians 10:9-13
- 15) 1 Peter 1:2-8
- 16) 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5
- 17) Revelation 2:8-10
- 18) Romans 5:2-5
- 19) 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 20) 1 Peter 5:6-10
- 21) 2 Corinthians 1:4-9
- 22) Revelation 13:1-3
- 23) Revelation 3:10
- 24) Revelation 13:3-9
- 25) Matthew 24:12-21
- 26) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10
- 27) Revelation 3:10
- 28) Ephesians 6:10-18
- 29) Revelation 3:10-13

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- Titus 1:10
- Luke 21:36
- Deuteronomy 30:15
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- Luke 8
- Acts 14

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