

The last days

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] An unspecified time period, we had at point A, resurrection. Those who hear the word of Jesus pass from death to life.

! There is no condemnation for them. They're the one who hear the word and believe. So we had that at the beginning of the period. And in John chapter 5, we have another period of resurrection. This is when all who are in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they will arise to judgment. Those who have done evil will rise to be condemned, and those who have done good will rise to life.

So again, we had another resurrection and an outcome based on what people had done. Those who had done good rise to live, and those who have done evil rise to be condemned.

So I'm not going to go through that whole chapter again. We took it sort of step by step, and that's what we ended up with. So bear that in mind, because I think it's helpful for where we go next.

[1:15] So let's sing something before we go any further. Can we sing? So in case you haven't been for the previous sessions, we're working the way through the book of Revelation.

It is a very vivid book, and in many ways a puzzling book. These two chapters here, particularly the chapter with a thousand years, has been very controversial, and I think although it's a difficult chapter, it shouldn't be impossible if we cling to the things that we have already learned and seen about the book.

So my standard introduction is it's a book in the Bible. It is there for our edification, for our survival, and our progress as Christians.

It's not just meant to be a reason to disagree with people. Apocalypsis means an unveiling, so it tells us the truth behind the appearance.

It is in the form of a letter, so it must have relevance to its original hearers, to the number of churches to which it was written, and the number of churches was?

[2:34] Seven. Yes, seven. And letters are in their nature relevant to hearers, so we must be looking out for the relevance to the hearers. It is also in the form of a prophecy.

It says it's a prophecy. It says it's telling them what is shortly or quickly to happen, but it also gives the big picture, and as you can see here, the picture goes right up to the end of the world, and it gives us behavioral implications.

If this is the sort of world we live in, if this is what God is going to be doing, this is how we should live. So its horizon is from the time of writing to the end of the world.

And the important thing for understanding it, it seems to me, is to listen to his accent, the way he has of speaking. And what we've picked up is that he uses signs, which are not meant to be taken literally, because they point away from themselves to the reality which they're signifying.

He uses images and symbols, most of them, but not necessarily all of them, are from Scripture. But the ones that are from Scripture, he does seem to assume that we know our Bibles very well, and probably, actually, that we know our Bibles better than we currently do.

[3:57] He uses symbolic names like Babylon, Jezebel. He uses symbolic numbers like... Ten. Ten. Seven. Yes. Twelve. He uses symbolic places, so Babylon would be such a place, and themes like the plagues from Egypt.

He uses all those, and he uses them theologically. He doesn't say there are going... He uses the idea of the plague of locusts. He uses the theology of that and say that, which originally was in Egypt, is theologically appropriate to the situation he's describing, which is the current day.

And he uses theological time. And he uses theological time. So he uses three and a half years and 1,260 days and 42 months and things like that to show not just the length of time, but actually the sort of thing that happens in that time.

So Satan's time is described one way. The perseverance of God's people is described using another way of expressing time and so on.

He is also prepared to give things which apparently contradict each other. So Jesus is contradictingly described as... A lamb and a lion, which is a contradiction, isn't it?

[5:26] Because you can't be both of those things. But of course Jesus is, because there's a theological depth to what he's saying. Jesus is as strong as a lion, and he is a lamb, because a lamb is weak.

Yeah, a sacrificial animal in particular. Yes. And he uses a sort of, what I think is like a method of collage, where he will give you a multitude of pictures, which are not meant to be sequential, dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, but he will give them dum, dum, dum, dum, and you put them all together as a recipe.

So we had the seven riders, the seven seals, and the four riders, and they weren't meant to be in strict chronological order. I can't remember what they were.

Was it famine, war, disease, inequality, civil war, or something like that?

And they don't happen one after another, but they happen in this period of time. Like Jesus says, there will be wars and rumors of wars, and that's the sort of thing that happens.

[6:35] So he does collages, many perspectives on one subject. Were you convinced about the horses? Shall we just look at that? Because it's actually reasonably relevant.

So right back when we started, whenever this was, a long time ago now, in chapter six, the lamb opens the scrolls of world history, and scroll number one is a rider on a white horse, and he goes out conquering, and bent on conquest.

In chapter six, verse three, there is a sort of civil war. As this rider goes out, and peace is taken from the earth, and people kill each other.

In verse five, the third seal is the inequality of food shortages, a kilogram of wheat for a day's wages, and three kilograms of barley for a day's wages, but do not damage the oil and wine, which I take to be the luxury goods.

And then the, in verse seven, the fourth seal, there is sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts.

[7:51] So, I remember speaking about this in Sri Lanka, just after the civil war, when there was shortage of food, and where, because they hadn't been able to manage the land, there was problems of disease spreading, and it was possible to turn from the lecture screen, to look out of the window, and say, the four horsemen are riding across this land as we speak.

So, it wasn't sequential, it was a sort of, this is the sort of thing that was going on. Does that make sense? Okay, let's, so, up to date, the seven churches, the lamb upon the throne, the seven seals of world history, the seven trumpets of repentance, the war between the dragon and the woman, and the various agents that the dragon uses, the beast and the false prophet.

There was images of the final judgment, like a harvest. There were seven bowls of wrath, the prostitute Babylon, which is a symbolic place name, it's also a symbolic woman, the Babylon, the actual historic city had been, I presume, long gone by the time this was written, but the Babylon principle was alive and well as it is today.

the prostitute Babylon gloriously defeated, so there's a, that's a, a visual to show that, and then we, we're now getting up to the triumph of the rider on the white horse, and this cluster of rather gory and vivid images of the last day, the final end.

Okay, are you with me so far? That's what, that sort of recap, and if you weren't here and you want to find what was said, they're all up on the web somewhere.

[9:54] And in the bit that we read, as I put on the board there, I think we have sections that end with the fiery lake, so that was in chapter 19 verse 20, the two were thrown in alive into the fiery lake, and then we get the fiery lake in 20 verse 10, and we get the fiery lake in 20 verse 15, anyone whose name was not found in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire, and then in chapter 21 verse 8, we are told the

cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, idolaters, and all liars, they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur, and it helpfully says this is the second death because we might have been wondering what the second death was, but that's described to us, so each of those sections ends with a fiery lake, we have a song about that, don't we, we have his honour and his names at stake to save me from the burning lake, there's a gold star for anybody who can remember how that song begins, and we could sing it, but I can't remember, right, so this is just giving a bit of detail on that, 1911 to 21 ends with the fiery lake, and it has those various other things going on in it, 21 to 15 is the period of a thousand years plus a short time, and that ends up with the lake of fire, and then we have another, a third thing, the great white throne, and judgment, and then we have the lake of fire there, and I was trying to distill out what the pictures were in that last one, we have a judgment seat, a great white throne, so I just did a chair, we have judgment, so I put that symbol for judgment, that's the one we use in our culture of weighing things up in scales, isn't it, the symbol of judgment, and then we have the fiery lake again, okay, so that's just saying where we've got to, and this is what I think is how I think it's best to approach these, so number one, there are multiple images for the final day, the last day, usually we use the image of judgment, and we say the day of judgment, which is absolutely fine, but also there is a day of battle, the last battle, which is what C.S.

Lewis picked up on in his Narnia books, and we've also got a gory feast where animals, not animals, birds, peck at the corpses of the people who've been defeated in the last battle.

So all of those things I am putting to you, and I hope it commends itself to you, they're all different ways of saying this is what happens on the last day.

So a collage of different views of the same thing. And then the other one which I am probably not going to stop to defend, because we worked a lot on it last week, that the period of a thousand years is the period between Christ's cross and resurrection and the last day.

So the thousand years covers the same period as what we've previously been told was three and a half years, or what we were previously told was 1,260 days, or what we were previously told was 42 months.

[14:08] There are different ways of describing the same period of time, and at the end of it, we get this terrifying two-way split between heaven and hell.

Unlike other things in the book of Revelation, it's rather unfamiliar and a little bit unattractive, but the book of Revelation is very insistent that we understand there is a heaven and a hell.

And I guess that's something for present-day Christianity. The gospel is not simply to make me feel better. It doesn't always make me feel better.

The gospel isn't guaranteed to cure me of anxiety, because I might be anxiety. Jesus swept great drops of blood, doesn't he, at the Garden of Gethsemane? But what the gospel does do is on that last day, I can be sure that he will say, well done, good and faithful servant.

And it makes sense in terms of the last day. If you take away the last day, it doesn't make sense actually. We are of all men most to be pitied if Christ wasn't risen and if there is no heaven and hell at the end of it.

[15:30] So, that's my sort of basic, some basic assumptions. traditions. And then I thought, we worked very hard at this last time, what use is it?

Now, the Puritans in their books, the ancient, no, they're not ancient, are they? The preachers in the 1600s and around there would give you uses.

What is the use of this doctrine? How do you use it? And I thought, that's a good idea. What are the uses of looking at these chapters? So, number one, I think it defends us against widely prevalent myths and rabbit holes about the millennium.

Because there are rabbit holes, you can get into all sorts of prophecy and go round and round and just get confused and it eats up your mind and your time and you should be thinking of other things. So, I think it defends us against that. Here's another use. It defends us, it gives us sober realism about the stakes of life in God's world.

[16:33] Like Daniel was saying this morning, we live in God's creation and if we do not live in reverence towards our creator, that is a fundamental sin.

If we take his good gifts but live in ingratitude, we neither thank him nor glorify him as God, that is a fundamental insult to God.

And we're reminded here that life is lived for very, very high stakes. If we choose to live in very respectable guardian reading, telegraph reading, but we don't make our lives based on reverence for our creator, we've made a huge, terrible mistake, a life and death mistake.

It gives us realism about the stakes of life in God's world. And I would hope to say this should give us optimism about the spiritual success of the gospel. We'll come to that bit in a moment, but there's something there we shouldn't overlook.

And use number four, hunger to know what the positive future will hold. So these chapters are all very grim. The chapters following are full of what the alternative is, the heavenly Jerusalem.

[18:06] And I suppose in a way you say, well let's get on to those, but it should make us think, make us long for heaven.

Okay, so those are some uses that came to my mind. And then I thought of some questions. I think it's quite a useful thing when we're studying the Bible to think of what questions it throws up.

Because one's instinct is to say, oh, if the preacher said it, it must be right, so if I've got a question, I must be wrong.

But sometimes the questions are really helpful because they draw out something that you might not otherwise have thought of. So here's some questions, and I haven't got the answers to them, but I'm thinking it would be nice to find the answers.

Why are there so many different images? Why doesn't it just say Day of Judgment, full stop? There must be a reason for that, and perhaps in the next talks we could maybe explore that.

[19:06] Why do we have to delve into the Old Testament so much? Because we won't understand this unless we have got, I mean, the Gog and Magog, where does that come from? It does, that's right.

Yeah, that's right. So how many of us are familiar with chapters 39, 40, and 41 of Ezekiel? Perhaps anybody could just do that from memory? It would be, I'm thinking, be worth going back and trying to get a grip of that so we can understand this.

And the bit about judgment being given in favor of the saints in Daniel chapter 7, how many of us have got that at our fingertips? Probably not so many.

People, I'm thinking it'd be worth going back and spending time getting the hang of that. Now then, here's another more specific question. The short time in chapter 20, chapter 20, verse 3, Satan must be set free for a short time, and it says another place that he has to be set free.

Where does it say that? When the thousand years are over, verse 7, Satan will be released from his prison and go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth.

[20:22] Now, what is the meaning of that? Is the short time a prediction of a period of worldwide persecution just before the final end? A lot of people would take it that way, or is it something else?

And my problem with the prediction of a period of worldwide persecution is that Jesus said, you do not know the day and the hour. Keep watch, because it could be any time.

And for me, if there is a prediction of some specific thing that is yet to come, we could take the time off being Christians, because he won't come until that happened, and then we could go back to being Christians when we see the persecution coming, because we say, ah, right, so this has happened, and then he will come.

Do you see what I'm saying? That if there's something that has yet to be fulfilled, it takes away the power of that repeated warning, you keep watch now, because you don't know when he's coming, it could be tonight.

Do you see what I mean? That seems to be the overriding principle. And then another question here, so when I did this in Sri Lanka, they said, why haven't you told us about the Antichrist?

[21:45] The Antichrist, it doesn't mention the Antichrist, it's mentioned the beast, the false prophet, so what happened to the Antichrist? And what happened to the rapture? Because in some schemes, a rapture is an absolutely key element, but we haven't seen it, because it hasn't been there.

So I have things I would say about the rapture. For example, it doesn't actually, the references in scripture are not what people think. And then the Battle of Armageddon, well that's the Gog and Magog bit, isn't it?

So, you know, should we be dealing with that? Is it to do with Russian tanks? That's what, the late great planet Earth by Hal Lindsay, wasn't it, predicted that Russian tanks, that the book of Revelation predicted Russian tanks.

I mean, I don't think it does, but I'm not saying that there won't be Russian tanks. But if salvation is by grace, why is it judgment by works? That's what we came across last time.

So there's lots of questions that get thrown up, and maybe we can answer some of them as we go through. Anyway, let's go through it again, and at this time we'll try and light on some of the things that we can benefit from and try and do that.

[23:08] So let's first of all look at that basic shape of the thousand years. So we're in chapter 20, and I remind you of the basic shape of this, which is the dragon is cast down, so there's a downward motion.

Then the saints, or however we're going to describe them, there's an upward motion because it says in verse, chapter 20, verse 4, end of verse 4, it says, they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

So there's this upward motion of they had been beheaded and they lived and reigned. We'll come back to that in a moment. And then at the end, so there's a beginning motion down to up, and there's an ending motion down to up because at the end of the thousand years, in verse 5, the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.

So at the end of the thousand years, there's an upward motion. So just in terms of motion, there's a downward motion, upward motion, and then there's an upward motion at the end.

And I've put along here all these things that happen at the end. The battle, lake of fire, books, they didn't have books. With binding in those days.

[24:34] If it was books, it would be a scroll, actually. A scroll and a book would be the same thing. And the great white throne. Okay, that's the basic shape. Are you with me on that? Right. So let's look, take it to pieces and say the thousand years with the additional short time, so it's a thousand point one years.

It ends with the battle defeat and the lake of fire. This is followed by a vision of judgment with the court sitting and a great white throne and a lake of fire.

I think I've already said that. Let's look at this particular thing here. I need the arrow. There we are. Now, what happens in the thousand years?

verse, the dragon is bound. He is chained and bound, so he cannot deceive the nations.

And then there is the short time in verse 3. Let's just think about this. The binding of Satan. Please will you look at Matthew chapter 12, verse 29.

[25:47] Verse 29. This is Jesus describing the interaction with Satan.

He's been accused of working with Satan or by Satan. And Jesus in Matthew 12, 29. Now, where's the microphone got to?

Could you read that for us, Pete, please? Matthew 12, 29. Well, how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder his house?

Okay. Do I need to explain that? I mean, does that make sense? He's talking about the conflict between Christ and Satan. And he says, how can you take the possessions from a strong man unless you bind him?

Then you can take his possessions. And it's a picture of the strong man is Satan and the one who binds him is Jesus.

[27:08] And Jesus takes his possessions. And in a nutshell, it's what Jesus does through the gospel, isn't it?

Satan has people in his grasp. He blinds them and he binds them. But Christ's power is superior. power and guardian grace.

Christ is able to bind the strong man and take precious souls from him. And I would like to suggest that that is a really helpful picture of what's happening in this thousand years.

The nations had been deceived and they worshipped gods of iron and wood and stone. That was what the nations did all the way through the Old Testament.

[28:26] They were, what's the word? Can't think of the word. They did it all the time. There was no remedy.

They were just idolaters. They had no idea of the true and living God. But in the gospel age, in the gospel age, the gospel goes out to all the nations and people in different nations have their eyes opened.

My chains fell off, unbound. My heart was free, or if you like, my heart was new. I rose, went forth and followed you.

Or I rose, went forth and followed thee, if you will. But that is what is happening at the gospel age. And I would like to try and persuade you that this long period, it's a significant period, is the day of grace.

And isn't it fantastic that just starting with whatever it was, 12 disciples, such is the power of Christ that nation, continent, ethnic group, have heard the gospel.

[29:45] And I don't know the statistics, but I would imagine that there are now living more Christians than have ever lived before. I mean, because the population of the world is so much bigger.

But this is the triumph of Christ's kingdom in this age. That's not the only thing that's going on in this age, is it? I mean, there's persecution. There's people who fall away, etc.

People who don't believe. But you could definitely say, this is the age of the unblinding of the nations. This is the age of the undeceiving of the nations.

And this is the bit that makes me think we should be positive and optimistic about the power of the gospel. We should be looking and praying for people to be converted.

So that could be people who sit here in the meetings. It could be people that are out there who have never darkened the door. And that's not really the right way of putting it.

[30:44] But they've never come into a church building. They could be our family members. They could be our workmates or our neighbors. We should not think, oh, nobody's ever going to be converted.

Because this is the day of grace. This is the time at which Jesus binds the strong man and takes people from his clutches and from his kingdom.

So that's why I said we should be optimistic. Let's... So Jesus, the name high over all in hell or earth or sky. Angels and men before it fall and devils fear and fly.

That's true, isn't it? So we should celebrate that. Anybody like to suggest a song about the gospel that we can sing? A little bit further, shall we?

Now let's... Going back to Revelation. Looking at the... Now just stopping to look at the people who lived and reigned with Christ.

[31:55] So this is verse 4. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given judgment.

That's what it says. NIV says they had been given authority to judge. I think he's quoting from Daniel chapter 7 where it says they were given...

Judgment was given in favor of the saints. So in other words, you translate this. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given favorable judgment.

And it describes them. It says they have been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God.

They had not worshipped the beast or its image. They had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. And as I said the other time, I think saying they're beheaded is to use one part of something meaning the whole.

[33:01] So my example is when a young man asks his bride's father fill her hand in marriage. He actually doesn't just want her hand, does he? He wants all the rest of her as well.

So the beheaded, I think, is one way of saying the whole company of the redeemed. But anyway, these particular ones have lost their lives, been beheaded or whatever.

And it describes them and it says they are seated on thrones.

So I just want to stop and think about that. So my thesis, what I'm sort of putting to you, is that is what's happening now. I should have a red arrow along there.

Let's see if I can get the red arrow. There's the red arrow. So that's, this is, again, the current time before judgment. And here are the thrones and here are the people seated on the thrones.

[34:02] Please can we turn to Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 10.

Perhaps Mark could read this for us, please.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 10. This describes Christians now.

It starts off, as for you, meaning his readers. Ephesians is on page 1172 or thereabouts. Testing 1, 2.

And when we're all there, we could read, Mark could read us 1 to 10. Please note verse 6 as we go through. Yep. As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

[35:21] But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast.

For we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Thank you very much. Just notice the bit about works in the last couple of verses.

We're not saved by works, so we can't boast. But works are indispensable in the sense that that is what we were saved for. For we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

[36:44] Which I take to mean that for each of us, for you, you, you and you, there are good things that God has in mind that only you can do, that he wants you to do for his glory.

Something of value, something that is not just rubbish, it's good. And by his grace he will say, that's good. Good works.

I prepared you for that and there you are doing it. So that wasn't the point. The point was verse 6. This section has got lots of words with co in Greek in front of it.

So we were co-made alive, verse 5, with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions. And in verse 6 we were co-raised up with Christ and co-seated with him in the heavenly realms, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And that's where we are now. And I really think we need to encourage one another in this. Because sometimes we just feel as though we're dredging along the bottom in the mud.

[37:58] And he says, well, yeah, there's probably a sense in which you've got, you know, we're one foot there. But that's not the whole truth at all. Because there is a true truth here.

We've been raised with Christ. We've been co-raised from death with him. And verse 6, and we've been co-seated in heavenly places.

So where are you sitting? Well, you're sitting in Calvary Church on a red, on a blue chair. But simultaneously, we are also seated in heavenly places.

It's one of those things that, in a sense, we have to take by faith, don't we? That it doesn't feel like it. But that such is union with Christ. Such is the triumph of Christ.

Such is the fact he doesn't leave us behind where we belong to him. that there is a true sense in which we are currently seated in heavenly places with him.

[39:06] And I would like to suggest, I mean, even though I haven't persuaded you of that, I mean, this is certainly true. I would like to suggest that when it says they lived and reigned with him and they were seated on thrones, that he has the same idea as Paul does in Ephesians.

That we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. And death does not interrupt that in that sense. When we go to be with the Lord, we are seated with him in heavenly places.

Our life is hid with Christ in God. Therefore, when Christ, who is our life, appears, we shall appear with him in glory. So I think perhaps the question that the original readers would have had in their minds is, well, what happened to Antipas and what happened to brother so-and-so who was killed for being a Christian?

Are they just losers? Are they forgotten? Are they lost? And the emphatic answer is, by no means are they forgotten and by no means are they lost.

And they are certainly not losers because they are seated with Christ. They reign with him. They live with him. And in a sense, we do too. Let's look at these other verses as well.

[40:25] Philippians 1. 21. Could Mark read these as well?

Philippians 1, 21, 22, 23. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.

Yet what shall I choose? I do not know. I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith. Keep going.

No, that's fine. Thank you. There's Paul weighing up where he stands in his life at the moment, whether he is facing imminent death and all that that means, or whether he is facing, staying here on earth.

[41:37] And he says the better option is certainly death. To be with, depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. It's an interesting thing to say, isn't it?

Verse 23. I am torn between the two. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. To be with Christ, which is better by far.

That's something to hold on to, isn't it? When we think of folks who have gone to glory, they are in a place which is better by far. Am I right? Philippians 1, verse 23.

Yeah. The alternative is to continue serving on earth with all the sort of frictions and constraints of that.

But he says, well, I guess that's what the Lord will do because this is going to be useful to you. This will be, does it say fruitful? For your progress and joy in the faith.

[42:44] So it'll be good for you guys, but for me to depart would be better by far. That's an interesting thing to say, isn't it? And let's look at 2 Corinthians 5.

Verses 6 to, we'll do 6 to 10.

2 Corinthians, this is on page 1161. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 6 to 10. Perhaps Mark, seeing as he's got into his stride now, perhaps you could read that as well.

I'll put it to 2 Corinthians 5, verses 6 to 10. Therefore, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.

For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and we prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

[43:53] For we must all appear before the judgment seats of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

That's it, thank you. It's interesting, isn't it? They've got the judgment by works there. It isn't just an oddity. It's actually through the whole of Scripture.

It's not a meritorious judgment. It's not saying this is what you deserve. It's saying it's a diagnostic judgment.

It's saying this shows what was in your heart. You are saved by Christ, but the fact that you have lived that way shows that you belong to him.

That's the way that judgment works. And he has put it in the hearts of his people to be able to do good things, to be able to do things that he values, that are a sweet savor.

[44:54] That's AV language, isn't it? A sweet savor to the Lord. Things that we offer to him. Prayers that we pray. Cups of cold water that we give.

He says these are good and valuable, and on that day they will not lose their reward. So the day of judgment isn't something that we should look at with fear and trembling.

I think we should look at it with a certain degree of surprise. Then will the righteous say, when did we ever see you and visit you when you were in sick?

When did we ever, you know the bit I'm talking about. There's certainly a degree of surprise about it, but it's telling us that there is good that we can do that matters to the Lord.

And one day he will show how much it matters to him. But my, yeah, but the other part of this text is saying, as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.

[46:03] So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. This is the text that says, absent from the body, present with the Lord, isn't it?

Or have I chosen the wrong one? Verse 9. We make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. Have I chosen the wrong verse?

Which is the one that says, absent from the body, present with the Lord? Not this one. I looked it up. I must have chosen the wrong bit.

Be that as it, is it? Verse 8. Am I overlooking it? We would be away from the body and at home with the Lord. The old translation was absent from the body and at home with the Lord, wasn't it?

Yeah. So I'm sort of mixing together two things, aren't I? I'm saying where we are now, we are seated in heavenly places. And I'm also saying that when we die, that will not be interrupted, but rather enhanced.

[47:15] We will be with the Lord forever with the Lord. We will be absent from the body and present with the Lord. And so I think this, when this was originally written, it would have been a great comfort, wouldn't it?

To the people who have lost loved ones in persecution. Where are they? Yeah. 1 Corinthians 5.3. When we are clothed, we will not be found naked. Yeah. Yeah. That's a fairly complex paragraph. Let's just stick to the simple thing. When our loved ones die and they are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. I saw the souls of those who had died.

They lived and reigned with Christ. I think there's a comfort there, isn't there? And in terms of our own mortality, what happens to us when we breathe our final breath, having said, behold the Lamb with our final breath.

[48:25] Absent from the body, present with the Lord. You know, that's great comfort, isn't it? And I think... Sorry?

From the Lamb of the Dye. Well, yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah. It is quite something.

And it's something we need to remind one another of, isn't it? Encourage one another with these things. So we need to positively, you know, not every moment, but we need to have this on our agenda to be reminding ourselves of this.

Okay. Okay. I have another... I have another couple of things, but we'll stop now rather than make it into a marathon. What shall we sing? What shall we sing?

What shall we sing? Let's sing something.