

## THE DAY OF SEVEN TROUBLES

~Other Speakers G-L: Allan Halton:

George Fox exhorted the early Friends to be valiant for the truth in this day of trial and persecution. For if we are Christians, this is our portion in this day, as many in other lands have already discovered. We Christians here in western lands need to arm ourselves with the same mind—and thus be prepared for the hardships and sufferings that are our portion in this evil day.

Here's another thing Fox encouraged the early Friends with in one of his letters.

And the Lord hath promised to deliver His people in the six troubles, yea, in the seventh, the perfection of troubles... (Letter 377, To Friends that are Prisoners in York)

Fox had in mind Eliphaz's words to Job.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee (Job 5.19).

Eliphaz was insinuating that the reason Job was in "seven troubles" was because there was something in his life that disqualified him from God's deliverance—some hidden sin he was not being honest about. The truth of the matter is that God was trying a vessel He loved very deeply, and when He had finished His work He brought him forth as gold.

This is what He was doing with those early Quakers as well. This is what He is doing with Christians in Eritrea and Pakistan and Iran, and other places in the earth where persecution is severe in our day. It's what He has in mind for you and me also in the day of seven troubles that is dawning.

He promises deliverance, salvation. But when the promised deliverance is delayed? We must go through our troubles valiantly—trusting Him, believing He is a God of integrity, and will be true to His word. We must be patient, trusting. We must nourish faith and hope. And love. God's people in many different ages have suffered much—with the promise of a coming deliverance and salvation nourishing them in their sufferings. God would be true to His word—they knew this. So they endured their sufferings patiently.

Here are Paul's words to the Thessalonians in a time of great persecution.

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet (or, fitting), because your faith growth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;  
So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure...

Notice the atmosphere the Thessalonian church lived in—their growing faith toward God, and their love toward one another in the sufferings they were going through. Like the early Quakers—the Friends, as they called themselves. They were ready to lay down their lives for their friends. They would often go to the prison and offer to take the place of a brother or a sister they knew was inside—a sacrifice that could well mean death for them.

Paul continues:

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

And to you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ... (2 Thes. 1.3-8).

There's a lot here; let's see if we can unpack it a little. Paul is saying that the endurance and faith of the Thessalonians in sufferings they did not deserve was a token, a proof, evidence, that God had judged rightly; He had made the right decision—giving such as these the Kingdom of God. Their patience and faith in their troubles, their refusal to retaliate, demonstrated that they were worthy of the kingdom of God they were suffering for. It showed that they had indeed become the kind of people God intended to give His kingdom to.

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And God would continue to judge righteously. The day would come when He would recompense trouble to those who had troubled them, “and to you who are troubled, rest with us...”

When does this rest come? “...When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

God had not has not forgotten His salvation in the day the Thessalonians were in such hardship. God’s promise to His people is salvation. His salvation is certain. His day of recompense will surely come.

Scripture is clear. “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...” This is from Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 5.9).

But this also is clear. In the same letter Paul wrote: “...That no man should be moved by these afflictions (Gk. tribulations): for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Thes. 3.3).

We are not appointed to wrath.

But we are appointed to troubles, beloved. So, let us arm our minds accordingly. When we find ourselves in the midst of trial and trouble it does not mean God has reneged on His promise of salvation.

It means that His salvation will break upon us with greater honour and glory when it breaks.

Meanwhile, since we have to go through trouble, He who has overcome the world and is Lord over trouble promises that He will go through it with us.

I will be with him in trouble... (Ps. 91.15).

You mean, Jesus Himself with us in trouble? Really, what more could one ask?