

Of course if you look at all the contexts in which it is used, then you can get a pretty good idea in most cases, at least if the word is used very much. Far better than you would get from a dictionary. But if you look up that Greek or Heb. word in back of Youngs, it immediately tells you how many times the KJV translators render it this way, that way and the other, and that gives you a pretty good sense of what they felt was the real area of the meaning of that word.

So he says, In this world you will have trouble. Of course we all know we have trouble. Everyone has trouble. Is that what it really means here? Does it mean something more than just trouble, something more precise? I looked in the back. This word is THALIPSIS. I found in KJV it translates it trouble only 3 times. It translates it anguish once, and persecution once; affliction 17 times and tribulation 21 times. I think that's a pretty good indication that when our Lord said here, was not, You are going to have a lot of little troubles in your life; you're going to have a lot of little misunderstandings. But in this world if you really are true to Him, through the course of the years you are going to have affliction. You are going to have persecution. You are going to have tribulation.

Most of us know very little about what that means. We have not had much experience with tribulation. Some people out in Nebraska who were trying to bring up their children so as to give them a Christian education are learning something about tribulation. When men are put into jail and held there for weeks on end simply because they will not promise to send their children to schools where they will be indoctrinated in modern secular humanism, but want to send them to a Christian School.

But such things are comparatively rare in our country yet. It seems far away to think of our having real tribulation in our lives. But Jesus said, In this world you are going to have tribulation. We think of the early Christians and the troubles they went through. There was tribulation! We don't have anything like that. That's gone, isn't it? That's past. Is it past? Maybe our Lord will come very soon. We do not know. We don't know how soon He will come. I think he wants us to have as an incentive to be entirely loyal to him and to serve him fully and to take every opportunity of opening more and more of our lives to Him, and one incentive to that is the knowledge that He may come very soon. But we have no guarantee He is coming soon. None at all.

I think of St. Augusting in 430 A.D. Let's go back a few years before that--30 or more years before that. Augustine became a Christian and became a great leader among the Christians of N. Africa. N. Africa and S. Europe was an area in which for 700 yrs. there had hardly been a war. There had been a few small skirmishes within the land; north of it there were great hords of people. The Roman armies kept them out from coming in. Every year they brought in a few hundred, received them into their army and they were eventually made Roman citizens. But those great numbers of people to the north, nobody worried about them. They had had peace and prosperity