

# Wabanna 1966: Title Unknown 5

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the profound implications of inheritance and sonship in the life of believers, emphasizing the role of suffering in spiritual growth and maturity.*

**Duration:** 1:03:15

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1

**Topics:** "Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not just filling our minds with information, but allowing the spirit of truth to penetrate our hearts. He acknowledges that understanding his message may require careful attention to each sentence, as they all have a broader context. The speaker then focuses on the letter of Paul to the Philippians, highlighting Paul's mindset of pressing forward and forgetting the past. He suggests that Paul's desire for maturity and sonship in Christ came through a history of suffering and discipline.

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## Transcript

You all know it on record how afraid we are of just keeping on wild ideas, information, cramming the mind and thereby blocking the channel to the spirit. But we can do nothing but both appeal to thee and trust thee. The spirit of truth will himself pierce through the mind, the brain, the head, right down into those innermost recesses and make the word of God what it is said to be sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing through the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

Lord, let this be the effect of the ministry already today and now and onward. We look to thee in our need, in our helplessness apart from thee, through thine own word, for thine own namesake. Amen.

You will remember that yesterday morning in our consideration we stopped short and broke off before we were finished what was on our heart. When we were considering this other of the unsearchable riches of Christ, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And so we simply proceed with that this morning and not follow on to a break aspect.

But I want to say here at the outset that this is going to be probably the most difficult thing to grasp, to understand, perhaps to accept of all that is being said this week. Peter, referring to all the letters of the Apostle Paul, did say our beloved brother Paul, that in the next breath he said, in all of whose letters there are some things hard to be understood. Now whether Peter meant that for himself, he hadn't grasped it all,

or whether he was speaking about other believers, I don't know.

But I'm not Paul, I'm not asking you to read my letters. But I do feel that about what is on my heart this morning, it will be difficult to understand. And you will be required to give very close and careful attention, almost to every sentence.

Because every sentence has so much wider context than we can mention and refer to. Well having said that, and I trust prepared you for some hard work, and I'm sorry that it comes at this time. I was waiting and watching for the opportunity to just get to my brother this morning, go right on over the second session.

I could have come on this afternoon all right, but I didn't get the chance, he didn't give me. He'll suffer that, you. So we will come to this, the riches of the glory are his inheritance in the faith.

And again, we are going to let Solomon help us as our interpreter or our pointer. The corollary of inheritance is of course airship. And that of airship is tonship.

In the bible airship means tonship with a particular connotation. At that point we read. Just to refresh our memories on this matter from the first book of the chronicles, chapter 28.

1 Chronicles 28. We just take out two verses from this larger setting. Verses 5 and 6. And of all my sons, this is David speaking, and of all my sons, the Lord hath given me many sons, he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel.

And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my court, for I have chosen him to be my son. This is the Lord speaking. And I will be his father.

The Lord is leaping right ahead of David isn't he? Of course, as we have said, with another in view. A greater son of David. A greater than Solomon, Jesus, who is here.

So then, tonship is the focus of this hour. And you will notice that in these verses, as in others in this context, there was a selectiveness about this matter. Of sons.

The Lord hath given me many sons, but, but, he has chosen, he has selected Solomon my son. We know that David had many sons. We don't know very much about most of them.

One or two come right out conspicuously, like Absalom and Adonijah. But of all his sons, God selected Solomon, the son of David's old age. At the point of brightness and maturity, tonship came into full view.

The principle and reality of sonship emerged from a long history of maturing, of ripening, of bringing to spiritual fullness. And we are so much on one line this morning without any collaboration. This maturity in David, out of which this tonship sprang forth, sprang into beings, sprang to life.

This maturity was through a long history of deep discipline. A long history of deep and often bitter experience. Of suffering.

First there were the sufferings from without. Here you must bring to mind more than I say. Here is a brief statement, but oh how much gathers around.

No sooner was David anointed as a youth than trouble started in his life. Suffering, oh what a long drawn out period of suffering and discipline under that man's soul. From the day that Saul spied him, eyed him, with a jealous eye, and hurled his spear at him, to prompt victory.

David evaded the spear right on through those years of being hunted amongst the rocks, and the hills, and in the desert. So that he cried like a pelican in the wilderness, like a sparrow upon the housetop. And to Saul art thou come out to seek a flee? You know it all.

Long bitter history of suffering coming upon him from without. Because of the anointing. Here you've got to do some changing of your thinking.

Oh the anointing, only we have the anointing. Lord will anoint us, won't that be wonderful. Oh that will be power.

All right. From the day of the anointing, trouble began. Suffering began from without.

Persecution of the usurping, envious, jealous horses, that's their nature, from without. And then that second period of suffering, for it didn't stop when Saul was out of the way. I think perhaps David might have thought at one time, well if only Saul is out of the way, then life will go smoothly.

And that is why on more than one occasion, when Saul was at his mercy, David's would-be, would-be friend said, now you've got your job. God has delivered him into your hands. This will be your deliverance from all your troubles.

Mighty. David refrained, proved himself worthy of being a prince. But when Saul was in battle, David's troubles didn't cease.

But they changed. And now the period of suffering through his own fault. Formerly it was not the suffering through his own fault at all.

Now through his own fault. Do you remember them? He spoke of absolute, absolute. The murderer brought back by David to Jerusalem without repentance, without contrition, in pride.

We know the story of how David suffered because of that weakness on his part. A weakness of sentimentality as over against divine principle. Oh he suffered.

I think that David never really did get over the effect of that episode with Absalom. I believe it registered as something in his life forever after. Then that great mistake of numbering Israel.

The uprising of conceit, pride, of arrogance, commanding there should be a numbering. One narrative says that Satan provoked him to do it. The other doesn't say that, but he did it.

And even this carnally minded, unspiritual man Joab saw through it. The Lord makes the people ten thousand times more. But should my Lord the King do this thing? Nevertheless David brushed aside Joab's judgment.

He went ahead and numbered. Do you remember the consequence? The angel of the Lord with his thorned Lord offering David alternatives, testaments, claims, so on. And the mowing down, the mowing down of thousands of Israel.

This is reaction to his pride. Reducing, isn't it, where he wanted to multiply for his own glory. But what happened? This was through the exposure of himself.

Suffering coming out of his own mistakes and faults. Again when he would bring the ark to Jerusalem. Tending to fetch the ark and bringing it on a new car.

Carrying the testimony of the Lord on a bit of mechanical contrivance. A bit of organization which had its origin and inception amongst the Philistines. And as they came to the threshing floor the oxen stumbled.

The ark was in peril and Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it. And the Lord smote Uzzah there that he died. Except for the Lord.

And so David was offended with the Lord. Was angry with the Lord. Turned the ark aside into the home of the house of Obed-Edom where it stayed for a long time, for years he says, and the time was long.

And we can only imagine something of what David must have been going through. Who that mistake, that mistake. Policy in the place of principle.

You've got that. This world is run on policy in the place of principle. Policy.

Policy. What is policy? What is diplomatic? Not principle. And how much of that there is even in Christianity.

But here it is written large and glaring without warning. God does not hide the failures of his best servants. But David must have suffered intensely over this mistake.

And then what about fast fever? We started with that. Need not go over that bad, dark story again. All the suffering that breezes through those arms.

My, my sin is ever. Purge me with discipline. I shall be saved.

But something through his own mistake. Let me say this at once. If you are ever looking for a man, be he a man of God, of the highest status, standing, who is faultless, you're going to be disappointed.

And the Lord is going to allow you to be terribly disappointed. Because there's only one. No one is going to take his place.

Again, there is this about sovereign grace. You know, if we were not believers, if we were not the Lord, if we were not under the hand of the Lord, these things, these mistakes that we make, these blunders that we make, these wrong things in our life would be our entire undoing. We should be sorrowing as those who have no hope.

But while it is true that in the life of believers, very often there are these shocking mistakes, God sovereignly has hold of them for training. That's what we come into. Sufferings that come because of our own foolishness and weakness.

And then, I think it must have been a poignant night. When after pouring and stocking all the material for the house of the Lord, to realize his lifelong ambition to find a place for the Lord, Nathan was sent by the Lord to him to say, thou shalt not do it. That must have been a stunning blow.

And I think through the hours of that night, David must have had a very, very deep, dark time. All his life ambition and all his preparation for its realization, cut down one blow. Thou shalt not, by John, suffer.

But here are the sufferings through which this man went, which brought him to maturity, to spiritual maturity, which made him the man to whom the Lord can refer again and again and yet again with pleasure, with delight. The New Testament has nothing in it about the dark side of David's life. And yet it mentions him over thirty times.

How wonderful the Lord is, how gracious. All his sufferings of every kind were used by the Lord to bring this man to the place where the Lord could look upon him. A man after man, a man after man.

That's unfathomable grace. Now out of all that suffering emerged function, emerged function. It wasn't till that day when that story was completed and David had rest that the Lord spoke about his son and brought Solomon to view as the selected one.

I do want you to keep your finger on that word selected and hold it as we go on. Watch as we turn now from Solomon, from David over to David's greater son, to the New Testament, to the New Testament. We have said that here sonship has a peculiar connotation.

Sonship in the New Testament is not just birth into the family of a male child. Sonship in the New Testament is something more than birth into the family. And it is something different.

Watch this closely because I feel this to be one of the most vital issues perhaps of this conference. Yes, sonship in the New Testament is more than birth into the Lord's family. Of course birth, childhood, is potential sonship.

We are sons of God who face potential. Potential. But not absolute.

Not absolute. There is a special word in the New Testament related to sonship. Not to childhood, but to sonship.

That word is adoption. Adoption. You are familiar with it, aren't you? You can look it up.

I can't give you all the references now and put all the scriptures. But there it is. Adoption.

And adoption in the New Testament is something different from birth, from being a child in the family. I was talking to a Hebrew scholar last week and I raised this question with him. I said, far as I can discover, this idea of Paul's about adoption has no place whatever in the Hebrew economy.

I can't find it at all in the most ancient colonies, in the Old Testament. He said, you're right. And I said, I go further, because this Hebrew scholar was also a Greek scholar.

He goes further, I cannot find it in the Greek world, this idea that Paul has about adoption. I can only find it in the Roman world as a part of the Roman system and economy. He said, you're right.

And then I got this and wrote it down. Illustrating Paul's acquaintance with Roman law. With Roman law.

The process of legal adoption by which the chosen heir became entitled not only to the reversion of the property, but to the civil status. For the burdens as well as the rights of the adopter became, as it were, the other self of the adopter. The heir, by adoption, became the other self of the one who adopted him.

One with him. This was a principle and a practice in Roman law. It was the placing of one who was already a child in the family, in the position of responsibility to represent and act for the father who adopted his own child, for that person.

There was a ceremony of adoption of his own child. The boy who had been with him through the years in the family, his own child, came to the day of adoption. When he was placed, placed, and given the father's honour, the father's responsibility, the father's trust, that wherever that son, not that child, that son went, it was in effect the going of his father.

Now, Paul has lifted that right up, you see, the Roman economy, and brought it into Christian teaching, truth. And he uses it again and again. And dear friends, I would want, I would ask you to know with that word adoption, it is usually in the future.

Romans 8, waiting for the adoption. The wish for redemption of the body. The manifestation of the son of God.

Future. This thing, adoption, is future. It's something more than being a child of God.

Adoption is child placement. And that is Hebrews 12, if you like to read it carefully. And third year, every son whom he places.

Whom he places, that's different. Not whom he receives, whom he places. Adoption is child placing, or placing in the meaning of sonship.

Now, is that difficult to understand? Let me say then, that sonship in the New Testament is the highest and greatest thing that ever God has revealed to man. The greatest thing that ever God has revealed to man is this destiny to which he has called him, his sons. You know that the letter to the Hebrews is wholly based upon this.

It begins with, God has spoken wisely, at the end. Of all his speaking, he has now spoken wisely. The original does not say in his son, although of course it means this.

But it says just this, wisely. Wisely. And then that whole letter goes on, on that basis.

I'll come to that again in a minute. Sonship means the full concept of God in creating man. Representation of God.

Let us make man in our own image and after our own likeness. What is that if it is not representation of God? But when you will see the man perfected, you will see God in expression. That's what we've been hearing this morning.

Whether it be the spitting, or the bride, or the body, whatever it is. When the work is finished, it will be that man is an expression of God. Representation, that's the destiny of which God called and created man.

Responsibility. I know I think what our brother would have gone on to say, this morning if he'd had more time. I think he would have come to the real meaning of the city.

Not only its nature. What is a city? Well what is Washington? What is London? It is the administrative center of the whole realm. The governmental focal point.

Today the New Jerusalem is only a type and figure after all. A symbol of the church glorified but in its predestined position to govern the nation that walks in the light of day. But this is something special, something specific, something different.

A governmental position. Responsibility through the ages to come. When the Lord put his hand on Solomon.

Solomon thy son. The Lord hath chosen Solomon of all my sons. It was with the throne immediately in view.

The throne immediately in view. The governmental position and responsibility was there at once. Notice that.

And here we are. Friendship emerges in this great trust for God throughout the ages to come in government. We have often said it and I believe it is quite true that just now the world rulers of this darkness are the evil powers in the heavens.

Well I don't leave any doubt about that. The evil powers. Satan at their head.

In the unseen in the heavens. Principalities and the powers and the world rulers of this darkness push the wicked spirits in the heavens. They are governing them.

They are influencing them. They are having a great deal to do with the course of this world. It does not set the Lord aside as supreme Lord.

He is, he is using all that. He is making it subject to his end. But there they are.

He is not annihilating this other world. There and I can tell you that one of the most difficult problems that I have in the New Testament. I have wrestled with this problem a good deal.

I don't know that I've finally got the answer yet. It's Paul's Christ saying that Satan hinders. This Paul who speaks about Christ said far above all rule and authority and principality and power in this age and in that which is to come.

And here is a servant of God seeking to pursue the course of his divine vocation to fulfill the eternal purpose of God. And he says and I Paul once and again would have come to you by Satan. Now you can get down to that one and give me the answer if you can.

But there is a statement that Satan is very active. He does have powers of frustration, interference. He's always interfering.

Well that's another line by itself but it's a statement of fact. These evil forces are the forces which are so much influencing men and things on this earth. They are going to be displaced.

For the government of the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth they will be wiped out, put into the abyss. But God never believes in that and their place is going to be taken by the church. Know ye not the saints, the saints shall rule the world.

You shall reign with me. Well there again the moment. This dear friends is what is inherent in sonship.

It's the throne, the rulership, the great trust and honour God conferred upon the son, the son. And this, to take up what our brother's been saying, is the explanation of a child's training. A child's training.

Hebrews 12 as you know. My son, besides not thou but Satan, whom the Lord loveth each day. God dealeth with you as with sons.

We have had fathers after our flesh who chastened us as it seemed good to them, as it pleased them. I don't know, always a pleasant thing for a father to chasten his child. However, by the way, we've had fathers of our flesh who chastened us.

Shall we not be more in subjection to the father of what? Our spirit? Oh that has a big context hasn't it? The father of our spirit. That which was born again, not our bodies certainly, and not our souls. Our spirit, the father of our spirit.

And this child's training, this discipline, it goes right to the depth of our inner being. It's a spiritual thing. It focuses upon our spirit.

And we have spiritual suffering. That's where it is really. You see, you may have a lot of trouble, all sorts of things.

You may have rheumatism. You know, you may have this or that infirmity in the body. And you may just write it off as that.

Oh my, rheumatism is bad today. Or whatever it might be. Your outward form of suffering.

If you do that, your only recourse is to the doctor. To the doctor. As far as he can help you.

But if you realize that this is a spiritual thing, well look at me. It is touching me deeper. Touching my relationship with the Lord.

It's touching my walk with the Lord. It is just touching me in the realm of my spiritual life. Are you got the key? God's key then, to the discipline.

Then it is not just your physical or bodily infirmity. It is your spiritual training. And it's wonderful isn't it? What the Lord can do.

I've often told of an incident of many years ago. I was speaking at a civic convention in the south of England. And after the meeting, a brother came to me.

I hadn't met him before. I discovered that he was a doctor. He said, Mr. Stoutside, my wife is an invalid.

She's been confined to bed for 20 years. I wish you would come along. Pay her a visit.

Have prayer with her. I think it would be a help to her. So I said, I'll come this afternoon.

And I went home and prayed about this. Oh Lord, make me a blessing to this dear woman. So on and so on.

I put myself in that position of someone going, you see, to help somebody in trouble and doing good deeds. And I arrived at the house and the doctor opened the door. I said, come in.

Come upstairs. And I went up. He showed me into the bedroom.

But I was expecting to find a poor, suffering woman in distress, bowed down. And I saw in that bed something radiant. Something radiant, very room full of peace of God.

And I sat down. I didn't kneel down. And she began to talk to me.

And if ever there was a flowing out, a stream of life, of glory. Do you think I could pray for that, that dear woman? Be a blessing to her? I went down with him in utter faith. I ministered to that? I don't know anything about that.

I don't know anything about that. I've never been there. I remember it, you see, to this day.

Yes. He could have blamed her and moaned about her suffering, wrong, drawn out, all that. Instead of that, it was the glory of the Lord.

Because she was taking it in the right way as her spiritual training. I expect to find people like that in a very high place in the city, in the kingdom, carrying responsibility. My last touch with Miss Amy Carmichael, Joan of Arc, how many of you know that name? You know her books, don't you? The wonderful work God used her to do in India.

My last touch with her was when she was not far from the end. She had been lying for several years in complete helplessness, much suffering. And I was shown into the room and I went and I said, stay quiet.

Thought perhaps I, well, what was I going to say to this person that would be helpful to her? The time when I was being very much persecuted and ostracized, and she'd heard all about it. She'd heard all about it, all the bad reports about this man. What am I going to meet here? She smiled beautifully and said, do sit down.

She said, I'm so glad to meet you, because you are a fellow lover of my Lord and that's all that matters. And the fragrance of Eden was in that room. Beauty of holiness, peace, joy.

She went quietly away to visit the Lord like that. Oh, you see there are sufferings and suffering. The Lord's intention in our sufferings is our spiritual maturity and rightness with a purpose.

And this purpose is reign with him if you suffer with him. You shall reign together with him. It's the throne that is in you, not just to get into heaven, not just to get into heaven, but to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting.

That means being brought into the great responsibility because we are qualified to take it through the work of God in us. Now in a few remaining moments let me bring you right up against the scene, because you may be thinking this is some particular teaching. I've got into a lot of trouble, I suppose one might ought to expect.

But dear friends, this is not a teaching, and this is not something I have read or concocted. This is something that has come to me along the line of a very big challenge. It's the challenge of the New Testament.

Of course the Old Testament is impressive, but particularly the challenge of the New Testament. And when you are brought face to face with what I have said and am saying, you are really brought face to face

with your New Testament. Take it on the broadest basis.

I ask you, why is it that more than 90 percent of the New Testament was written for Christians? If you're a Christian, if you're born again, if you have accepted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, haven't you got everything? Haven't you arrived? What more is necessary? Why the New Testament then? Even the Gospels were written for the believers, remember. Why all this? The New Testament with all its entreaty to believers, its admonition of believers, its exhortation to believers, and its warnings to believers. Why all this? Well, some have resolved it, you see, on systematized doctrine, and that is the strength of Arminianism.

Because, because your salvation is here. Because it's possible, having once been saved, once having received the gift of eternal life to have it fulfilled. Well, I'm not going to argue that.

Leave it if you like. I don't believe that's the answer to the New Testament. Any more than the other extreme is the answer, which our brother has spoken.

The ultra-Calvinism, which is only another word, ultra-Calvinism, another word for fatalism. Fatalism. Well, what is to be willed then? It wipes the floor of all this.

Well, why all this New Testament? It's appealed, and it's warned, and it urges, if there is not something more than being saved. Answer the question. If there is not a difference between a child and a son, or between being in the family and obtaining the inheritance.

The inheritance. Well, that's the broad basis. What about Paul? Paul personally? I came up against this, you see, and you will, you must, you cannot put on blinkers over this matter.

You must look it straight in the face. And Paul, in his letter to the Pharisees, brethren, Paul, this man, is at the end of his long life of devotion and service and uttering. No man more utter for the Lord than this man.

And here he is, in his prison, in the last days of his life, and he's saying, brethren, I count not myself yet to have attained it. Neither am I already complete, complete, full. But there's one thing I do, for getting the things which are behind, I press towards the prize of the unhyped Paul.

The prize of the unhyped Paul. Do you believe that Paul was afraid of losing his salvation at that time? Oh, it would involve the righteousness of God, wouldn't it? And a lot of other things too. Oh no, he has seen something.

He has seen something beyond being saved. Marvelously saved, wonderfully saved, and fully saved with something more. That is, holy he was saved.

Until what? In God's mind. And here he is saying, to these charisms, lest, having preached to others, having heralded others, I myself should be rejected. For what? The prize.

Lest I should be rejected, passed away, when it comes to the prize. No, Paul's fear was not fear of losing his salvation. Can't believe it at all.

You come to this letter to the Hebrews, and as I have said, it's built upon this very thing, funship from beginning to end. And in the end this funship is set forth in this figure of a race. Oh, great a crowd of witnesses in the gallery, the heavenly gallery.

We down here in the race, let us run with patience. The race that is set before us, looking away unto us, unto Jesus, the author, yes, and the perfecter of faith, over the joy that was set before him. Remember the original said, instead of the joy set before him, when was that? The Mount of Pontificaries.

And he could have gone right in, so far as his own rights were concerned, into the glory. Glory had come, and he could have gone up with the glory, so far as he himself was concerned, he came down on the mount. And instead of the glory then, he endured the cross, despised the shame.

For us, that's the letter to the Hebrews. For us, bring us in, the funship. The funship run with patience.

Well, you know, this funship can be sabotaged by many things. And if there's one thing the enemy will try to do, it will be to come in between the Christian and their being saved, and their attaining unto the full purpose of their salvation. To obstruct the way, as truly as the nations stood upon the path of Israel when they were moving over into the land.

In effect saying, you shall not have it. You shall not have it. So these forces in the heavenlies stand, to thwart our path, to stop us coming to the inheritance.

That is why the Christian life becomes a conflict, a battle. And use our brother's language, cheer up, it's going to get worse. Yes, yes, it is getting more and more intense for believers to go right on.

Stand fast and go on. Oh yes it is. You ask some of our brethren in the far east about that.

In Siberia, China and other places. Oh, it's becoming intense to hold on our way. It's a battle, but you see the pride is there.

And I do not understand the first two chapters of the book of the Revelation, unless what I've been saying is quite true. To him that overcometh, is the word to Moses, near will I grant to sit with me in my throne. Well if I don't overcome, what is fault? My salvation? You see, this thing has been sabotaged by certain interpreters and commentators to say those people to whom the letters in Revelation were addressed, were not Christians.

They were only professing Christians. I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

Read again. There's no logic in what is in those letters, if they were not believers. But here, to believers, let no man take thy crown.

Let no man take thy crown. To believers, to him that overcometh. And the high point of overcoming is to sit with me in my throne.

Whatever that means. Now this is a matter of vital consequence, dear friends. Really, perhaps what the Lord would bring to us as a challenge, it's what the letter to the Hebrews again says, let us go on, not laying again the foundation, but let us go on, let us go on.

Everything, not for our being saved, but the purpose of our being saved is bound up with us, going on. It's going to be costly, but I'm quite sure, though sometimes even this kind of assurance and glorying becomes enshrouded in clouds, but I'm quite sure that when you and I, if we go through, right through, come to glory and are placed in the great day of adoption, are placed, placed, that God eternally intended us to be in that responsibility, great responsibility for governing the nations that will walk in the light thereof. Governing the earth.

We shall say then, it was worth it, brother. It was worth it. Often I was tempted to just drop down and be satisfied with being saved and getting into heaven, but I'm glad I never did compromise.

It's worth it, the Lord helped us to go on. In all this, we need that touch of thy finger, O Lord, where we sing, we understand our and how much we shall need thy grace to accept, to go on, a lonely way, not understood by perhaps the majority even of Christians, ostracized by even leaders amongst thy people, a lonely way, a difficult way. Help us, Lord, O help us, not to cast away our confidence, which has great reckoning, but to stand, withstand and having done it, so help us, God, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

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