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ESCHATOLOGY

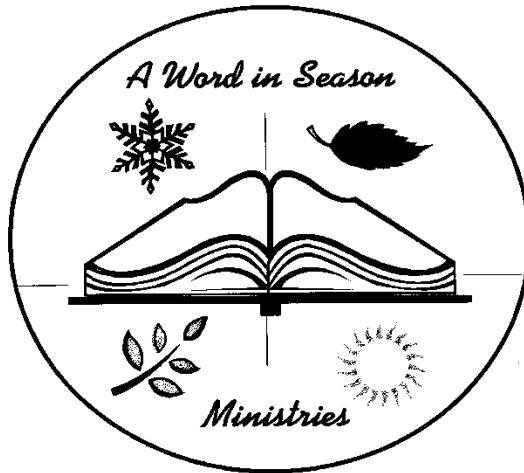
Earl Cooper, Ph. D.

**Cameroon Biblical Seminary
Class Transcripts**

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PREFACE

It has been my responsibility since 2003 to be involved in International Theological Education with the Canadian mission Across Borders for World Evangelism. In seeking to evaluate my teaching performance I audio recorded all of my first classes. For reasons I fail to remember, I continued recording every class that I taught over the following 15 years.

Due to health reasons I was unable to return to overseas teaching from July 2018 to the present (October 2019). Anxious to carry on some measure of ministry during this time of convalescence, Kathi and I determined to develop a book for each course I taught by combining the student manuals with transcripts of the classes. These we intend to supply for the school libraries where I taught.

Each class transcript is clearly marked. Within each class transcript the interactions between me and the students are identified in italics. The lecture content for each class is in regular text with the major student manual outline interspersed. Bible text are from the NKJV. The Bible texts are italicized with regular text Bible references.

Please note: In the transposition of the recorded classes, the English portions of the recordings were used as the source. As a result, some of the French language recorded portions by the translator were omitted. These omissions included clarifications and excellent explanations of the class material along with the correction of verse numbering issues that occur between the English and French Bibles. For French language Bibles, a perusal of the verse context should enable finding the proper verse reference in question.

Eschatology is: The Biblical study of the last things, whether in relation to the individual or the world. So biblical eschatology is not limited to the destiny of the individual; it concerns the consummation of the whole history of the world, towards which all God's redemptive acts in history are directed.

CLASS 1

INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction I quote Erickson:

Eschatology is neither an unimportant and optional topic nor the soul subject of significance and interests to the Christian. We will find an appropriate mediating position if we keep in mind the true purpose of Eschatology. At times Eschatology has become a topic of debate, resulting in accusations and acrimony among Christians. This is not the purpose for which eschatological truths were revealed by God. Paul indicates in 1 Thessalonians 4 his reason for writing about the second coming. Some believers whose loved ones had died were experiencing a grief which was at least to a degree unhealthy and unnecessary. Paul did not want them to sorrow like unbelievers who have no hope for their departed loved ones (v. 13). After describing the second coming and assuring his readers of its certainty he counsels, “Therefore comfort one another with these words” (v.18). It is sometimes easy to forget that the eschatological truths in God's Word, like the rest of his revelation, are intended to comfort and assure us.¹

I thought it prudent to remind us, as we begin our study of Eschatology; The Doctrine of Future Events, as presented in Scripture, of its true purpose of comfort, not conflict. Whether you students disagree with my own position or not, one overriding truth stands: Jesus will bring about the resurrection and perfection of all true believers of all time to abide with Him forever. This promise is our greatest comfort and hope.

A. The Spoken Word for the Present

I begin our Biblical study in Hebrews:

Heb. 1:1,2: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds*

There is a phrase in this verse that defines revelation for the present different from the revelation from the past. It is the phrase “in these last

¹¹ Erickson, M.J., *Christian Theology*, Vol. 3. (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mi.) pg.1153.

days.” I want us to think about this for a moment. I begin our Eschatology class here because so many people look at these words that are repeated so many times, as the future. It is foundational to understanding Eschatology to first understand what this phrase means. We must know what this revelation is speaking about and addressing.

Prof. Question: Tell me the things that you have been taught or read that define what the last days are. You are pastor and one of your people in your church opens the book in the Bible and asks ‘what are the last days? What is your answer?’

Students Response: The church period

Prof. Response: OK, the church age, a very common answer.

Students Response: -The actual coming, the event of his coming. -The coming judgement. -Talking about the way in which God speaks.

Prof. Response: So it’s not referring to a specific time but referring to a methodology.

You can see that in the small room that we have, many different ideas. No one said ‘the last days are the days left when you have wild fever’. But you can see the variety of a term that is significant in the study of Eschatology. I want us to start here because I want us to get our thinking proper so we can follow through with the study of the rest of Eschatology. I’m going to give you some points that will help formulate a proper understanding of this phrase ‘in the last days.’

B. The Definition of the Time

What are the last days? To understand this term we must:

1ST. THINK BIBLICALLY

We see Eschatology as a series of events that we need to put in order, but the Bible views Eschatology as the unveiling of a person - Jesus Christ. Eschatology is Jesus Christ. We are beginning our class by disciplining our minds. As with any word or phrase in the Scriptures, we must first of all think Biblically. This is clearly a phrase that deals with Eschatology. I don’t think we are going to argue with that. But our understanding generally speaking of Eschatology must be Biblical. We have to understand that Eschatology, whether we are talking about the Eschatology of Adam or the Eschatology of you and I, is a series of events. And even though we see in our mind Eschatology as the series of events, this is not necessarily how the Bible views this. When I took Eschatology, the first thing that we did was draw a chart of events. However, the Bible nowhere

in its pages has a chart. When you study the book of Revelation, you don't open up your Bible and see a God-inspired chart of pictures.

Prof. Question: *What does the last book the title of the last book mean?*

Students Response: *In French it is Apocalypse.*

Prof. Question: *I want you tell me what is the revelation. What is it about? What is revealed in the book of Apocalypse?*

Students Response: *-The revelation of the fulfillment of God's plan for Jesus Christ.*

Prof. Response: *OK, so the title is the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

A synonym for apocalypse or revelation is 'unveiling.' To think Biblically about this course of study, Eschatology, we must understand that it is more than anything else, the unveiling of a person. Yes, when we study it we break it down into events that happen in an order. But to think Biblically is to grab hold of the idea that Eschatology is the unveiling of the Son of God. and so if Eschatology Biblically is the unveiling of the Son of God, then we must also think historically as well as think Biblically.

2ND THINK HISTORICALLY

We see Jesus return as coming for the church and focus on N.T. Eschatology, but the Bible's Foundation for the coming of Christ is ADAM'S ESCHATOLOGY. When we talk about Christ's unveiling or coming, we think of the future event when the church is going to be raptured. But that is not the Bible foundation of Eschatology. To see historically the unveiling of Christ, we have to begin with Adam's Eschatology. The verse in the Bible which defines Adam's Eschatology is in Genesis 3:

Gen. 3:15: *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

In this verse God defines the role of the seed of the serpent and the role of the seed of the woman. Adam had experienced the blessings of God's creation; this was a creation without death. This was a creation without sin. And this was a creation in which God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. John Milton called this 'paradise'. Truly it was the blessedness of everything that God had made perfect and His walk with man who was enjoying everything that God had made.

Prof. Question: *And what happened to that paradise?*

Students Response: *- The devil tempted Adam's wife...*

Prof. Question: OK, was it the temptation that was the problem?

Students Response: No....

Prof. Response: Exactly!

The perfect world that Adam lived in especially in the area of Eden, the special garden, he lost. He was cast out of the garden, he began to die physically, he experienced spiritual death because he hid from God so he could have no initiative for fellowship with God himself. And the focal point of the passage is the spiritual battle between the serpents' seed and the woman's seed evident in emphasizing the difference in the wounds that were caused. The bruising of the head is fatal; the bruising of the heel is temporary. Adam was a, I believe, the most intelligent man ever on the earth, except Christ. He demonstrates this by naming all the species of animals in one single day. He demonstrates this by his recognition that having named the animals by pairs, there was something missing in his life. And his response of belief after God clothed him and made this pronouncement about the seed

Adam's Eschatology was based on the promise of the seed that would restore paradise. His Eschatology was based on the unveiling of a person, Jesus Christ. All Adam's hope was in a person, THE SEED, For Adam this was a point of promise, as God unfolded His plan, the point of promise, THE SEED, became a wide line. Historically Eschatology begins with Adam's Eschatology. It was a simple Eschatology. Adam said 'I, the seed will restore it'. We have no idea how much more understanding he had.

We see from thinking Biblically that Eschatology is Jesus Christ. We see Eschatology begins with Adam's Eschatology and the seed is Jesus Christ. As we continue to think historically beginning with Adam's Eschatology we follow through with the seed. We see the promise of the seed was repeated to Abraham but more detail. We see the promise of the seed given to King David, again more detail than what Abraham had. And we see in the book of Jeremiah although the word 'seed' is not used, the concept of the new covenant wrapped up in the Messiah which is the promised seed. If we are going to understand Eschatology we must think properly, first of all, thinking Biblically Eschatology is Jesus Christ. The unveiling of Jesus Christ. Historically that unveiling through the word of God began with Adam. If Adam was in school taking Eschatology he would not have terms like 'rapture', 'tribulation', he would have one term-

the one term is- 'the seed'. Now that we have the Scriptures, we now look not only Biblically and historically, we look developmentally.

3RD THINK DEVELOPMENTALLY

We view the "last days" in terms of "signs of the times", but the Bible distinguishes "the last days" as the broad line of the days of the Seed. There is a personal unity to all of Eschatology, focusing on the completion of the promise to Adam, that personal unity is "the days of the seed who is Jesus Christ. 'The last days' began with his birth and end with the completion of his millennial reign, the days between the promise & curse and the new Eden.

We begin to see the promises of the seed as the Scriptures unfold through the history of mankind. Whether it is Adam or Abraham or David or Jeremiah, they were all looking forward to the days of the seed. For all of the people in the OT who had the promise of the seed, they looked forward to the unveiling of the seed. The coming of the seed was the beginning of the consummation of history that brings about the promised paradise. When did the days of the seed begin?

For all the people of the OT, the wrap-up of history were the days of the seed. They may have had no concept of the time element after the beginning of the seed, but that was everything in their promise. As soon as the seed arrived, all the OT people would think 'this begins conclusion'. As it begins conclusion, therefore it is the wrap-up of the end of history. And this time is most often referred to in the Bible as 'the last days'. From the time of the birth of Christ we live in the last days. because that was Adam's Eschatology, Abraham's Eschatology, David's Eschatology, Jeremiah's Eschatology. When you finally get this in your mind, it eliminates so many of the problems that we have with Eschatology. Hebrews 1 tells us that the revelation for the entire "last days," the "days of the seed," spanning from his birth to the New Heaven & Earth **IS IN THE SON**. Eschatology is wrapped up in Jesus Christ the living Word! Eschatology is Jesus Christ! The seed would bring the promise of restoration, he restoration of paradise.

Therefore, the last days are everything from the birth of Jesus Christ to restored paradise where God and man dwell together. The disciples ministered in the last days. Their understanding was the Eschatology of the OT people. When they speak with the Spirit of God leading them, they speak from the starting point of Adam looking forward to the days of the seed and what would develop in those days. We are 2000 plus years after the disciples' ministry, the apostles' ministry. But we are still in the last

days. This helps us as we start looking through Scriptures and study things like the parables of the kingdom. Everything fits together in the Scriptures. As much as I respect other theological positions, I am confident that our position is the right position because it makes things fit.

The uniqueness of the people of God in the last days is so defined in Scripture that I cannot comprehend it begin just a continuing of the nation Israel, only a different people. Eschatology is Jesus Christ. We will be talking about the events that will unfold at the conclusion of the ministry of the church, the Rapture, and all these other things that take place- we'll be talking about these. We are even going to even actually practise diagramming because it helps us picture things and gives understanding in our minds.

But try and discipline your mind as we are going through all the events to remember we are talking about the revelation of Christ. This was one of the reasons in Canada in the Baptist group of churches that I belong to, there was a tolerance regarding different Eschatology. We did not divide our fellowship because someone believed that the Rapture was in the middle of the Tribulation or at the end of the Tribulation. We did not even divide our fellowship among those who are millennialists who believe in a literal kingdom and those who are Amillennialists who did not believe in a literal kingdom. Those 2 different positions have great difference in hermeneutics. As the professor of theology, I have to be particular about the method of hermeneutics that I teach my students. But we welcome the fellowship of all these positions because the focus is one thing and only one thing. That one thing is this- Jesus Christ is coming again. That is what Eschatology is, the coming of Jesus Christ, the revelation of Him as we continue in the last days.

Because there is so much variety in Eschatology understanding there is the question: "Why bother studying it at all? We live unfortunately in times where even the world educational system is in the process of reduction, reduction, reduction. There is a temptation to say: "What are the important things that we should know about Christianity, everything else that is confusing and not critical to my salvation, we don't have to deal with." That is the way some schools deal with Eschatology. They would begin a class like this by saying: "Within the body of Christ on the earth there are many views of Eschatology. I will introduce you to 10 of these views and you can decide for yourself which is the right one." Whether you agree with the position that I will be teaching, or not, it doesn't matter. I will give you details of the position I am convinced is the best.

I. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

1. We need to be ready first of all to give an ANSWER for what we believe.

1 Pet. 3:15: *But sanctify the Lord God {NU-Text reads Christ as Lord. } in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*

Peter says ‘be ready always to give an answer’. What is the answer about? The answer is about the hope that is in you. What is our hope? Peter referred to that hope earlier:

1 Pet. 1:3: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

This is the “living hope” in which believers have been begotten again by God, the hope in God (1 Pet.1:21; 3:5), and it comprises all that we expect from God on the basis of Christ: His strength in trial, our resurrection in Christ, our perfection with Christ, His return to establish His kingdom, our reign with Christ etc. In this passage are called specifically to give an answer of our hope. The Bible word here is ‘apologia’ the regular term for a defense before a court judge. Peter is not referring to a court situation, but implies that all Christians must be ready to render an account of their hope in Christ to anyone that asks or judges them. Can you imagine an unsaved person saying this to you ‘I see that your life is different when circumstances come. Why is this the case?’ and you say this to him ‘I am different because I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and my sins are forgiven. And I think someday he’s ‘probably’ going to come back.’ If that is your hope? The listener will go and talk to the Hindu man.

It is seeing our hope living in us, that causes people to ask about God. I know that we use this verse to teach people that we need to be prepared to share the gospel. And that’s true. The focal point of this verse is the hope of Christ’s return that changes my life so much that when I share this hope, I share how they also can have this hope. It is not just the truth of salvation that changes my life. It is the truth that salvation promises Christ’s coming again. You probably have noticed that getting saved does not solve all your problems. We are still in the days of the seed. We are looking forward to the conclusion of the conclusion. And truly when Christ comes, our problems are solved. Grab hold of the reality of what this should mean in our lives compared to the world. If you say to someone who is struggling with the circumstances of the world, I am forgiven and will live forever, they are going to say ‘who wants to?’

If my brother goes to America and he says to unbelievers in America, 'I'm a Christian, God loves me. But I didn't know whether I was going to have food for Christmas or not.' What is that going to mean to them? It's a reality. But they are going to say 'do I want that God?' it is the hope that causes all of us to continue on. Because my sins are forgiven, the Lord will come one day and all my problems will be gone. Now that is meaningful!

I want to close this class by saying something very important. This has been my experience as I have been continuing teaching in Africa. Most Christians in Africa would say this to me- 'Oh, I wish I lived in Canada' or 'Oh, I wish I could go to America.' I want to help you understand that you should never begrudge your suffering. Never despair because you are the part of the body of Christ on the planet that struggles more than most of the body of Christ. Because in the Scriptures God teaches us that it is the trials, the persecutions, the difficult circumstances that build a believer to greatness. My brothers, the fact that you had to pray for food because you had no other resources is something that most Americans have never experienced. Now you might say 'Well, that's why I want to be American.' But what is more important in life- your spiritual life or your physical life? You have learned a lesson that most Americans never learn. You can say 'I can have nothing and depend upon God and He will provide'. Therefore, that impact of your faith is so much greater than what an American will experience. It puts you in a most enviable position.

You are far more prepared to live by faith than most Americans will ever understand. You've heard me say before and I will repeat it- 'I believe that the suffering church in the world today will produce the great men of faith that will be needed as the world turns viciously against the church.' You are not only important for reaching people in Cameroon, I believe if the Lord should tarry and persecution will increase as we understand Scriptures, it is believers like you with a life like you have lived that will write the books and preach the sermons and call the church to persevere through persecution..

The president of the school in India is very much like Dr. Simon. He's a national pastor, he's born in India, Simon is born in Africa. They both went to the same school in USA to get a doctorate. Dr. Satish told me the story of his family. His grandfather was a very famous and very important Hindu guru. He was renowned Hindu leader in India. He was reading the Vedas the Hindu book that they call the holy book. Now we know that it is not God's Word. But God can use many things to draw people to

Himself besides the Scriptures. The Vedas holy book made this statement: the greatest prophet would come from a carpenter's family. The grandfather realized that this sounded like the Christian's Jesus Christ. He wanted to learn more about him so he got a Bible and started reading it. God opened his eyes and he accepted Christ as his saviour.

Now he's become a famous Hindu guru who is preaching Jesus Christ. He lost everything. They kicked him out. They removed him from his position. They took all his property away from him. They cast him out of the community. He had to with his small family, go to the big city and sell shoes on the sidewalk for a living. His family went through great hardship. But like many of you, he had to pray and God provided. God never made him a rich man, God always gave only enough that he had to live by faith. That guru had 2 or 3 sons, all of them became pastors. That same guru had many grandsons who became pastors. One of those men is Dr. Satish, he is not only a pastor, but he started a seminary. Never ever regret the hardships. I know they are tough, they are difficult, but never regret them. This is the will of God for you and God has a purpose.

CLASS 2

We began our class by reminding ourselves that Eschatology is not a series of events but the revelation of Jesus Christ. The foundation of our Eschatology is Adam's Eschatology. Adam was promised 'the seed.' 'The seed' would restore what Adam had lost- paradise. As we walk through the Scriptures we will see the development of the idea of 'the seed.' When we come to the NT and we see the phrase 'the last days' we know we are talking about 'the days of the seed.' Because the 'days of the seed' began at the birth of Christ. And so we are in the last stage of earth according to the promise of God to Adam.

In our notes we began to look at the reasons for studying Eschatology. Some would say it is a waste of time because it is not important as long as we know we are saved. But the first reason I shared with you is from 1 Peter 3:15.

Prof. Question: What are we to be ready to give an answer for?

Students Response: The hope within us.

Prof. Response: Yes, but remember Peter is not referring to just the salvation, but all the hope found in Christ. This tells that our salvation brings a hope that changes our lives.

2. We need to live HOLY lives in light of the return of Christ

There is another reason and that is found in 2 Peter 3:

2 Pet. 3:10-11: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*

Peter is saying that all creation that we see will be dissolved, will be destroyed. The understanding of this falls under Eschatology. And Paul tells us in this verse because this is going to take place, we should live holy lives. The second reason we need to live holy lives in light of the fact that the end is coming and Christ returns. We are told the same thing in 1 John 3:

1 Jn. 3:2-3: *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

This is a repeated theme that because our Saviour is coming to claim us from this alien world. With assured hope we must live holy lives as true children of God.

3. We need to learn to rightly DIVIDE the Word of God.

The pre-millennial position is not merely a view of last things but a system of INTERPRETATION related to all theology.

2 Tim. 2:15: *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

We are to study or be diligent to study the Word of God. We are to be able to rightly divide it, to cut it straight. The proper study of God's Word requires much labour. Paul calls those doing so workmen. The proper study of God's Word requires much time. Taking five minutes to read to read a devotion written by another every day will not be sufficient to grow in discerning the Word.

The school holds to what we call the premillennial position for Eschatology. We'll explain this later. But we need to understand that this is not just a different view of the order of events. Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. I maintain that your Eschatology as well as many other doctrines is rooted in hermeneutics. We will grab hold of what we consider to be the proper way of studying Scripture. I don't know where you stand, but for me, I believe in the pre-tribulation, premillennial return of

Christ not because my church does, I hold this position because of what I believe about how you interpret the Scriptures.

4. We need to remember that God has a PLAN which He is working.

Also, our fourth reason for Eschatology study is that we need to remember that God has a plan that He is working through..

Is. 46:9-10: *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

God declares the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. God tells us the things that have not yet come to pass. God does not do this to show that He is intelligent. God reveals the future to show us that He has a plan that will not fail. One of the great blessings of studying the Bible is to study the prophecy that has already come to pass, that has already been fulfilled. Because as we look at the prophecies of the OT that have come to pass, we can be assured that the prophesies that are for us in the future are going to equally come to pass.

Is. 8:17-20: *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning... My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.*

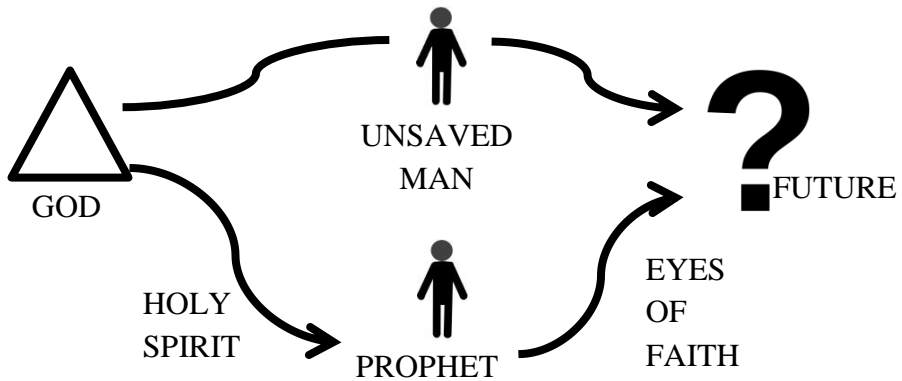
In the Bible, men of God wrote of great world events centuries before they were come to pass. People have always had an interest in the future; thus, magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, diviners, enchanters, and necromancers have flourished. These have all failed to accurately predict things of the future. There have always been in history individuals, sorcerers, magicians that say they can predict the future. There was a famous lady in America, Jeanne Dixon, who called herself a prophetess. Believe it or not, she even had presidents of the USA consult her. She claimed that she was accurate in predicting the future 25% of the time.

Prof. Question: *How accurate is the Lord?*

Students Response: *100%*

Amos. 3:7: *Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

God tells us that He does nothing except that He reveals it beforehand. Examine this text diagrammed:



This is my picture of unsaved man, knowing nothing of the future events. But with the Scriptures, man also can understand. We have the future in our hands. We know from Scripture what's going to happen in the tribulation for the price of gold. Tell your unsaved friends to not invest in gold if they are going to go through the tribulation. We are told that in the tribulation period you'll need a whole bag of gold to buy a loaf of bread. We know that it will not be the ozone problems that will be the end of the world. We know that it will not be over-populate that will bring starvation to the world. We know that a meteorite in the universe will not all of a sudden come and destroy the world. All of these examples that I have given you, countries today spend millions of dollars trying to find a solution for it. But not only do we know that God will destroy the universe with fire; we know the events that will come before this. As the OT days 'we who have the word of God are wiser than our teachers'. In the NT we also see this truth about God revealing the future:

Heb. 1:1: *God, who at various times and in various means spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,*

You see what God is doing in this verse; He is joining the OT Scriptures with the NT Scriptures. God spoke in different ways and in different times before. But now in the last days, in the days of the seed, He speaks through His son. He speaks to us by the people that He taught as we are told in verse 2 or 3. Right after this verse, Hebrews says 'how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation'. It was spoken to us by the Son and passed on to us by them that heard Him. In this whole passage we see that what God did in the OT in revealing, God continues to do by the prophets and by the Son and by the apostles in the NT.

5. We need to have knowledge of prophetic events because of the constant CONFUION regarding the Lord's return.

Mat.24:36: *But of that day and hour no man knows, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

In this text Christ is preaching and answering the question regarding the future and the coming kingdom. This passage is part of the Olivet Discourse. Jesus specifically says that no one will know the day and the hour. Only His Father. Does that mean then that we shouldn't study Eschatology because we don't know? Of course not. That is not what the text means. God has given us the plan. But men are not to set dates or identify the persons.

Unfortunately, many pastors and teachers that hold our position like to do this. There was just within this past year, some pastor in USA predicted the date the Christ would return. The date has come and passed 'oh, he has made an error' and now he has another date. False religions and cults that have perverted true Christianity have begun with the predictions of His coming. I personally think it is more dangerous even than setting dates to predict the countries that are represented by Gog and Magog and all the enemies at the end.

The reason that I say this is the story of Jonah: the people of Israel were given a prophecy that people from the North would be used to discipline Israel. I believe that Jonah did not wish to follow the will of God to go to Nineveh because that was the enemy that was going to be used to discipline Israel. If we start saying 'Gog is China' and 'Magog is Russia', we may be a people that say 'I'm not going there to share the gospel- they are the enemies.' I would even go as far as to say we need to be careful regarding our attitudes to Israel and the Arab countries. God has promised to restore Israel and that is one of the purposes of the tribulation. But as we now live in the last days where the people of God are the body of Christ, that means that unsaved Jewish people are just as much against God as the unsaved Arabs. As a matter of fact, in Iraq and Iran today the church is growing.

I met a chaplain from the USA Army during the Persian Gulf War? This chaplain was in the American reserves which basically means normally they don't go to war. But he was called by his country to go to Iraq or Iran, whichever the war was, and to be a chaplain and leave his family behind and he struggled with this. He was saying goodbye to his family told me he could not wait to go back because his greatest ministry was not to the soldiers but to the Muslims he had preached Christ to and many

were coming to Christ. He said to me he had never seen even in America people so desiring to know Jesus Christ. Even war has its divine purposes which we cannot speculate. Nevertheless, we cannot set dates or pretend to know the future apart from what God, through His Word has foretold.

6. We need to study prophecy because about 25% of the Bible contains prophecy.

So much of the Bible is prophecy. If we ignore the study of Eschatology we are taking one-quarter of our Bible and setting it on the shelf.

Prof. Question: *Name some books that you know are full of prophecy, OT and NT.*

Students Response: *-Daniel, -Isaiah, - Joel,*

Prof. Response: *Most of the minor prophets, there is so much. How about in the NT? What books?*

Students Response: *--Apocalypse, -Matthew in the Olivet Discourse, -2 Peter.*

It is evident by your quick reply to naming Bible books that have prophetic content that eschatological details have been buried in your memories by virtue of volume. God's choice to include such in the Scriptures indicates He deemed this necessary and important to understand. Studying the subject is therefore expected and prudent.

7. We need to study prophecy because a knowledge of Christ's return provides COMFORT in sorrow.

1 Thess. 4: 17, 18: *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

This is a very powerful passage. First of all, it tells us that those who are dead in Christ are now with him, they have to be with Him because He is bringing them back for us. The second thing it tells us is that some of God's people will not die before He comes back. The next thing it tells us, whether we are dead in Christ and with Him or alive and serving Him on the Earth, we will be united together in the air forever. You and I as God's people have this great promise. Whether we are alive or whether we are dead, we are going to be forever with God. No worldly circumstances can change that.

Prof. Question: *what does the last phrase say- what are we to do with this information?*

Students Response: *We are to comfort one another.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, we see we need to study prophecy because the knowledge of Christ's return provides comfort.*

There are many good reasons based on Scripture for studying Eschatology. That is why it is included in one the major doctrines that Bible Colleges teach. If we were taking a Biblical theological approach to this course we would have to go through every book of the Bible to determine the aspects of Eschatology and the terminology of every book. That would be a very profitable study. But it would also take about 1 ½ year. Our approach is what we call a systematic theology approach. Someone has done the work for us, and someone has put all the information together in a systematic way to study it. As we present this, you need to understand that it is Bible truth but we are not going to be going to the Bible to discover this truth. There are some confusing passages that we will examine specifically. But we are going to take the big information and we are going to deliver as a system of understanding. The challenge that you have as students is to not just accept the teacher's word but in your own studies in your future ministries, go back and study this yourself.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is helpful to know the meanings of a few key words before investigating the various aspects of prophecy. The first thing that we are going to look at are words or terms that people use when they talk about Eschatology. When we have these terms in our minds as we continue to go through them, you will know what I'm talking about when I use the word 'tribulation' or 'rapture', you will understand the Bible concepts.

Student Question: *In the past there have been these false prophets or whatever that say 'OK the world is going to end in 2000 or whatever' and because of that a lot of people including Christians in some of the villages said 'If that is the end of the world let us eat up all our goats and cows and destroy all our goods we are not going to leave them for anybody else' and now they've got nothing and they are suffering. Because of that there are governments in certain countries that are hindering churches to be planted. What do we, as students, do to destroy this mindset when people say the end of the world is going to here, it's going to be there, it is*

coming, when all this has happened in the past and people see the falsehood of it.

Prof. Response: I am surprised that this has happened in Africa then? I am surprised that the churches had such an influence in this way. I don't know if that is good or bad, but I'm surprised about it. Nevertheless, it helps us understand that any error will bring trouble and disaster to people.

There really is no difference in the evangelical preacher preaching error as they did, and the Muslims who talk about another faith. My answer is: We must be faithful to preach the truth and only the truth. The last warning that God gives us in the Scripture is 'Do not add or take away from this book, or the plagues that are in this book, I will send to you.'

If I were a pastor in one of these villages preaching the truth from the Scriptures and talking about Eschatology and an official from the government came and said 'No, you cannot do this', I would say 'the reason that I am doing this is because of the warning here, I am telling them 'do not add, do not take'. I am not making dates.

Jesus said 'you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.' Don't hesitate to preach the full counsel of God, but don't put dates and don't assign the personalities of the Eschatology to people that will only be speculation.

Student Question: When Jesus said 'the hour no one knows except the Father'. But yet Jesus is God. Was He speaking from the human perspective. How does He say that He himself does not know when He is God?

Prof. Response: In the same way that Philipians tells us that He set aside His glory. He functioned in the limitations of humanity even though He was God. That's all I can say. And if you ask me if I understand that, my answer is 'no.' Just the same as I cannot understand how the Son of God could be in the womb of Mary and still hold the universe together. The wonder of God may be the best answer, even in the area of Eschatology, to help our people realize God is beyond us. I refuse to try and fill in the spaces of understanding. I will take the information that He does give us in the Scriptures, and when there are gaps in understanding I will sit back and be amazed at God and just trust Him. I in some ways I have to say 'thank you for not giving me more information' because I probably would not treat it properly.

Let's look at some definitions. I am sure that you have heard these terms before, but I want you to have them in your notes so you can be sure what we are talking about.

A. Rapture

This is the taking up of the Church (redeemed) by Christ just prior to the beginning of the TRIBULATION period. This is the taking up of the church, the body of Christ, to be with Christ just before the beginning of tribulation. You will not find the word 'rapture' in the Bible.

That tells us that the church is not a part of the tribulation which is a controversial issue. If you were a mid-tribulational person, you would be thinking right now: 'That teacher is biased, he is defining rapture in a way he should not define it. My answer would be: 'If you compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, you will see that there was not only a promise of the taking up of the church, but the promise that God has not appointed the church to the hour of wrath.

B. Judgment Seat of Christ

This is the place where Christ will judge CHRISTIANS, after the rapture, on the basis of their CONDUCT as Christians. These words are taken straight from Scripture. Believers shall stand before the judgement seat of Christ. This is the place where Christ will judge Christians or believers. It is after the Rapture, and it is based upon the believer's conduct or works. Is the judgment seat of Christ determining salvation? No. it cannot because we are not saved by works. As our brother said, he is not ready for the Lord's coming because he's not ready to get his crowns yet. That's what the judgement seat of Christ is about- it's about loss or gain as we enter into the kingdom of God.

C. Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

This is a term used in Rev. 19: 7-10 to describe the occasion happening between the rapture and revelation of Christ. The church is eternally united to Christ as His BRIDE.

This describes the occasion between the Rapture and the Reign of Christ. This is called the marriage feast; it is the uniting in heaven of the bride which is the church, with Jesus Christ. I think that this is what Jesus was referring to when He gave the memorial table, the bread and the cup, which we call communion. At the conclusion Jesus says 'I will not drink of this wine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' I think He was referring to this uniting and this great feast when all Christians together will be participating with the new wine with Jesus Christ.

I know today that there are many believers who do not drink alcohol. It is my understanding as I studied Scripture that there is no way of determining the wine that Jesus made was alcohol. There is no way of knowing. But when I was a pastor and I had people in my church that would not accept my teaching of the importance of abstinence. I did gain a victory in convincing them with this argument: If you feel free to drink alcohol, tell me what quality of wine did Jesus make?

In the marriage when He made the wine, what was the quality of the wine it was the best because they tasted and said “Why do we get the best wine at the end when usually we get it at the beginning of the feast?” This is my argument to believers who think they have the liberty to drink wine. At the marriage Jesus made the absolute best wine that there was. And at the table when He gave us the memorial of His death, He said He would not drink it until we are together in heaven. If Jesus is not going to drink wine until we have the marriage feast and He has the best wine, I suggest you leave your liberty until you get the best wine at the coming marriage feast.

Student Question: Our text suggest that the wine Jesus made was alcoholic because people are getting drunk.

Prof. Response: That is a bad translation, that’s all I can say. When you complete your Greek studies, you do your own exegesis of this passage. The passage can suggest the drunkenness, but it doesn’t necessarily have to. The context is about the quality of the wine, not the affect. In my opinion, because the Bible discourages indulgence of anything that could control believers, I suggest it would have been inappropriate for Jesus to offer such.

D. The Great Tribulation

This is a period of SEVEN years, beginning after the rapture, when great judgment will take place on the earth because of its sinfulness. This is also the time when God will use suffering to bring the JEWS to Christ. This is when great judgment will take place on Earth because of its sinfulness. There are many reasons for the great tribulation. One of these is that God will use the suffering to bring the Jewish nation to Himself. This occurs after the Rapture.

E. The Revelation of Christ

This term is usually used to describe Christ’s return to the EARTH at the end of the great tribulation. This describes Christ’s return to the

Earth. What is the difference between the Rapture of the church and the revelation of Christ? In the rapture Jesus does not come down to the earth. The church is glorified and meets Christ in the air; Christ does not come down with His feet on the Earth to begin His reign. In my understanding and it could be incorrect, I do not think the world will view the Rapture; they will not see the Christians ascend into heaven. I personally think that everything will be normal and all of a sudden every believer will be gone from the Earth. Then the scientists will come up with all their reasons. Aliens from Mars have come and taken the people away. A flesh eating disease absorbed these people in a flash of a moment. Who knows?

The one thing that we do know is that at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the whole world will see. I don't know how this is going to happen. Will God somehow use the atmosphere as a reflective mirror so everywhere we look up we will see the reflection of His return to Jerusalem? I don't know. I do not believe that this will mean that every person in the world has a television. Don't tell your unsaved friends 'invest in televisions because the time will come when everybody will buy one'. Is God able to somehow make every person on the world see when Jesus Christ comes to Jerusalem? Absolutely. He does not depend on man's advanced science to get this done.

Student Question: Will there be Christians that stay, or are left behind because of sin?

Prof. Response: We haven't gone that far yet, but can you tell me a reason why they would stay? If you say to me, some Christians won't be living for God so therefore they will be overlooked. Then you have forgotten what it says in Romans- "There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ." What we experience as God's people on the Earth now when we do not confess our sin is the discipline of God. Discipline is not judgment. Judgment requires payment for sin. That's done. Discipline is to provoke the individual to repentance. Bring you to repentance. When the Rapture takes place, according to Paul, we are changed in a moment, we become like, we are glorified. Body, soul, spirit changed to be perfect. Logically speaking, the one who is not following Christ, it would be the best thing for that person at that moment to be glorified to be like Christ so they don't have to continue in life out of fellowship with God. There are things we are not told in Scripture. But when I'm teaching people who are studying the Scriptures, I will entertain a little bit of speculation. Your question is a good question because there are those today who

are teaching some believers will be left behind. But theologically, that is inconsistent because why would they be left behind? Secondly, it tells me the importance of the Judgement Seat of Christ. There will be accountability for our conduct and our service. According to Paul, there will be some who are at the Judgement Seat of Christ that lose everything and are saved 'yet so by fire.' Fire is a NT term for judgement. I believe it talks about the judgement seat of Christ that looks at their life and their works and says 'there is nothing here.' You come before me with nothing. If I am a believer and I am now glorified, now perfect, and I stand before my Saviour and I have nothing to show, how will I feel within myself? I will have shame and I will have sorrow. Will I weep? I would say I would weep, but does the Bible say there is no tears? Yes. That is in the new heaven and the new earth, but the judgement seat of Christ is not the new heaven and the new earth. The Bible says He will wipe away all tears. I think there will be shame, sorrow, crying, but the love of Christ, He will somehow console me. Jesus may say: "You failed Me but I love you, and you are part of My kingdom, and then He will wipe away the tears and we will enter in all sorrow will be behind us and forgotten.

Student Question: There are two couples, a Christian couple, a pagan couple. They both have a child, between say 1 and 5 years old. What will happen to their child? One is a child of a Christian couple, the other a child of a pagan couple. They both die without having trusted the Lord. What will happen to them? Does the Bible tell us?

Prof. Response: This is one of the issues that is not clearly stated in Scripture. I believe that Romans teaches us that the role of the conscience brings judgment because of guilt. This suggests that before a child reaches the age of accountability (that point in life when disobedience is realized and guilt takes place, because there is no sense of wrong, there is no sense of guilt, even though there is depravity and original sin. With this logical conclusion I understand why King David, when his child died, rejoiced because he would see the child again, the child would be with him in eternity. That tells me that the sacrifice of Christ paid for the sins of all people and those who never reach accountability will be with Him because there is no personal guilt due to absence of conscience.

This also helps me understand why God called the nation of Israel to enter the promised land and destroy all the people, dashing the babies on the rocks. To me, it is God claiming the last generation of these degenerate nations out of His mercy and grace even though these nations have been evil. I believe that every child, being before the age of accountability, will

be with God in heaven. But how that relates to the Rapture, I cannot tell. I assume their infant bodies would be raised in adult maturity as everyone else.

CLASS 3

We have begun our look in Eschatology by examining the terms that will be used. I want to remind you again that our approach is a systematic theology approach; we are not doing this by examining every text of Eschatology in each book of the Bible. In our study of Eschatology it is assumed that you will follow it up with your own personal examination of the Scriptures. If you are involved in pastoral ministry or teaching, I would encourage you to do this for every course that you receive. I understand that with the many responsibilities that students have in Africa as well as having jobs, time is very limited. Because of this sometimes it is necessary to take your school notes and just repeat them in ministry. But if you take the time to study on your own these things, you will be able to preach with greater authority. We have looked at some terms and the last one we looked at was the revelation of Jesus Christ which was number E in my notes.

There is a distinction between the rapture when Christ descends in the air and the church, both the dead and alive, join with Him in the air, and the revelation of Christ where Jesus actually descends to Jerusalem and begins His reign. The next term or phrase that we want to define is the Battle of Armageddon.

F. The Battle of Armageddon

This term is taken from Rev. 16:16 and designates the battle which will bring the tribulation to an end. The Lord Jesus will defeat the ANTI-CHRIST. This is a phrase directly from Revelation 16:16. We define this as the in which Jesus Christ defeats the Antichrist. The judgment of Gentiles is our next term.

G. The Judgment of the Gentiles

This judgment will immediately follow the time of Christ's deliverance of Israel from Antichrist. This will determine which GENTILES will enter the MILLENNIAL period. This is the judgment that will come right after Christ's deliverance of Israel from the Anti-Christ so this will follow the battle of Armageddon. And this will determine which Gentiles enter the millennial kingdom as/in their normal physical bodies. At the conclusion of the tribulation, the Anti-Christ is defeated as he seeks to bring his

armies to destroy Israel. In a helpless state as Israel is surrounded by the world's armies and are facing extinction, Christ returns to the Earth.

Like Israel in the OT when they were in a hopeless situation, they cry out to God and as Christ descends, as a nation, they believe who He is, the true Messiah. For 7 years they have been under great persecution and great trial and at the same time they have seen the 2 witnesses and have heard the gospel even from angels, not only have they been under trial for 7 years, they have heard the gospel for 7 years. As the nation of Israel sees Christ descending every one comes to believe in Christ as their Saviour. What we have is an entire nation of Israel as believers. The battle in which Anti-Christ is destroyed takes place, and then Christ establishing His kingdom on the Earth, reigning from Jerusalem. Remember, it is a kingdom of righteousness. It is a kingdom for 1000 years where God's people are the true citizens and everyone else is the alien. To enter that kingdom only the righteous can be a part. That means God has to judge the Gentile nations because all Israel is believing.

God judges the nations, only those that are believers will enter into the millennial kingdom, all the rest will be destroyed. It is interesting in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, when Jesus said that some will be taken and some will be left, that we often say that this is the Rapture. That is a misunderstanding of the Olivet Discourse. The Olivet Discourse it is about Israel as they enter into the millennial kingdom. It makes more sense that those that will remain are the believers that will go into the millennial kingdom; those that are taken are judged so that they will not be a part of the millennial kingdom.

Student Question: I doesn't understand what you talked about in the tribulation when you say they heard the gospel from the 2 witnesses and from angels. It is the angels part that I really don't understand.

Prof. Response: We will be looking at that in more detail when we cover the details of the tribulation. It depends on how you translate the word 'messenger' which is the same word 'angel'. We will get into details later.

Student Question: Will there be Gentiles who are saved during the 7 years of the tribulation, or will it be just Israel?

Prof. Response: There will be many saved because we see there is a great persecution and most of the people that are saved in tribulation become martyrs and their tears are caught and in heaven. People will be saved during the tribulation but at great cost.

Student Question: Will we study the Olivet Discourse?

Prof. Response: Yes, we will be looking at this. I have done a paper on this but it is not translated into French. In other classes I have asked people to read my paper on this. We will be examining this.

As you read the NT in the requirements for this course, you need to look for passages that are eschatological. The most common term in the OT that addresses Eschatology is the term ‘the day’ or ‘the Day of the Lord’. And as you read through the OT you will see that sometimes the Day of the Lord is characterized by tribulation, turmoil and suffering. And sometimes the ‘that day’ is described as a time of great peace and a harmony and blessings. And so you will come to understand that the term is a reference to what takes place in the final years of the seed which commences at the rapture, the tribulation and the millennial kingdom. 20:25

When you are reading through the NT and you will read the promises of the church being spared the great suffering and the tribulation, you will realize there is this aspect of suffering, the 7 year tribulation that is very real and preached by the apostles of the NT. But there is one book of the Bible that gives more details about the tribulation than any other book.

Prof. Question: What book is this?

Students Response: Daniel.

Prof. Response: No, not Daniel,

Students Response: 1 Thess.-

Prof. Response: No, that speaks of the rapture and the coming tribulation, but not the details.

Students Response: Apocalypse (Revelation)

Prof. Response: Yes. After the first 3 chapters, it begins the details of what takes place during the tribulation. Only the last 2 chapters of Revelation really even deal with the kingdom. For those of you who have lots of questions about the tribulation, you need to read Daniel 9 about the 70th week. Then you need to read Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, and then read the book of Apocalypse (Revelation). Then you will get most of the information, of the Bible, that details the tribulation.

H. The Millennium

This is a period of 1000 years, when Christ will rule in righteousness and PEACE over the state of Israel in particular and over all the world in general. We shall assist in this rule. This period is characterized by Christ’s rule of righteousness and peace. It is the last step between the Mediatorial

Kingdom on Earth being united with the Universal Kingdom, which is eternity. This 1000-year reign it will be almost the restoration of paradise. Because there will be world peace, there will be a reign of righteousness. However, there will be people born during this period with the sin nature and sinning who still to receive Christ as Saviour. Some will die in unbelief.

Students Response: I don't understand how there was still sin and death and all that during the millennial period.

Prof. Response: It is because the Gentile nations are judged and many of the Gentiles that are believers enter into the millennial kingdom as ordinary living people. They have not raptured, they are not dead and raised. They are just like you and I entering into the millennial kingdom but they are believers. These people will be blessed with the blessings of the millennial kingdom where, although there is still death, because of the peace and the righteous rule of Christ as well as nature being changed, they will live like Methuselah, probably live for most of the 1000 years, maybe even the whole 1000 years.

We have entering into the millennial kingdom the nation Israel, ordinary people who are all saved. We have many Gentiles entering into the millennial kingdom who are also ordinary people and saved. Like the early days of creation, they will live for many years. And what do natural men and women do when they live together? They produce children. And if you can produce children for 100 or 200 or 300 years, you are going to have many children just like the early world. These people enter into the millennial kingdom are for the purpose of re-populating the world. But are the children of the saved automatically saved? No. the children born during the millennial kingdom will have to choose to receive Christ as their Saviour just like everyone else, even though Jesus Christ is actually in Jerusalem on the planet.

Although these children are grow up into adulthood living in a righteous world and have the example and the testimony of the glorified church that are ruling with Christ all around the world, with human depravity there will still be many that will not accept Christ as their Saviour These will become the individuals that will rise up as Gog and Magog and finally be defeated at the end of the millennial. You are asking questions about the details of the events yet I must finish off the definitions before we get into these details. When we finish these I will do something that I have never

done before, I will give you a synopsis of the tribulation and the millennial kingdom for your understanding and then we will get back to the notes.

I. The Great White Throne Judgment

This follows the millennium and is the time when the UNSAVED of all ages will receive their sentence of eternal punishment in the LAKE OF FIRE for their sin. The great white throne judgment is the judgment following the millennial kingdom. You can see that there are many judgments that God has promised to bring to mankind.: The Judgement seat of Christ for believers to receive rewards, the Judgment seat of Gentiles to determine who goes into the millennial kingdom, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the greatest judgment of all; Calvary. Understand that Jesus dying was a judgment OF ALL MANKIND? That was the greatest judgment for us because that was when He was judged and died in our place. We were judged on the cross.

As to the views regarding the future end of the earth as we know it, there are many. Although I am not going to take the time to give you all the details of these views of Eschatology. I will briefly define the terminology and give you a summary of them. My focus will be to present this school's position (which is my own as well), with the conviction that is the correct one.

J. The Pre-millennial View

This view holds to the existence of a LITERAL, EARTHLY millennium, and believes that the rapture of the church precedes it.

K. The Postmillennial View

This view holds to the existence of a LITERAL, EARTHLY millennium, which results from the spread of the GOSPEL and the salvation of many. Christ will return at its CONCLUSION.

L. The Amillennial View

This view denies the existence of a LITERAL millennium. The millennial promises are fulfilled in a SPIRITUAL kingdom. This could be Christ's rule over His CHURCH here on earth or His rule over the SAINTS in HEAVEN.

M. The Pre-tribulation View

The rapture will not only be pre-millennial but it will occur before the beginning of the TRIBULATION. Thus, the CHURCH will escape the period of great suffering.

N. The Post Tribulation View

The rapture will be pre-millennial but it will occur AFTER the tribulation. The church will be on the earth during the 7 year period.

O. The Mid-Tribulation View

The rapture will be pre-millennial but it will occur at the MID POINT of the great tribulation. The church will not experience the time of the severest suffering.

P. Eschatology

The study of LAST THINGS

Q. Chiliasm

Chiliasm means the same as millennium (1,000 years). *Chiliasm* comes from the GREEK LANGUAGE while *millennium* comes from the LATIN.

R. The Day of the Lord

This term is the most significant Eschatological term due to its vast Biblical content. The term merits a study all of its own. To seek to define the term with all that Scripture mentions cannot be abbreviated. The best way I can define it is by the period of earth's future history it encompasses. This would commence with everything the Tribulation includes, everything the Millennial Kingdom includes.

Summary

1. Millennialism

In summarizing these Eschatological terms, there is what we call the Pre-millennial. This pre-millennial view holds to the existence of a literal earthly millennial kingdom. There is a universal reign commencing eternity but this is different than kingdom reign of Christ. to be. This is an actual 1000 years of peace. The next view is the Amillennial view. As the word begins with 'a' meaning 'no' or 'non' millennial, this view denies the existence of a literal 1000 year reign of Christ. Basically, this view sees the statements of universal reign and peace, as a spiritual kingdom.

There are two ideas of this spiritual reign within Amillennialism. First, there is the belief that Christ's spiritual rule is over either the church on the earth, or over the saints in heaven. In reform theology, when you read their commentaries you will read the term 'realized millennium.' They would say that it's the church that realizes the reign of Christ in our hearts, and He reigns in the church on the earth. The problem with that is the reality of the weakness of the church on the earth. When we think about the church on the earth as you and I know it, does Christ really reign really? I mean, does He reigns in our minds? Paul said himself the things

that I want to do I do I don't do, and the things I don't want to do, those are the things that I do.

Therefore, there would be some Amillennials that would say the reign that is true will only take place in the church when Christians die and they are in heaven. That is when the final reign really is realized. Second, some believe that the millennial kingdom is the church becoming so powerful and large by the spreading of the gospel that it literally brings world peace. There are various views about the millennial kingdom: the church is gone before the millennial kingdom; the church brings in the millennial kingdom by a world rule; there is actual millennial kingdom it is only realized by the people in the church in their hearts either on earth or in heaven. This summarizes the views of the millennium.

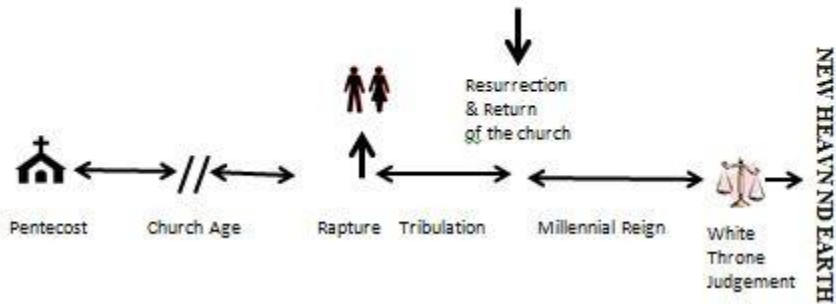
2. Tribulationalism

Now we have to deal with Tribulation. There are people that do not believe there is a literal tribulation just like there are people who do not believe there is a literal millennium. However, everyone who believes that there is a literal tribulation puts the tribulation before the millennium. Now we have to ask the question: "Where does the church fit in the tribulation? We believe there is a literal tribulation; therefore we are now assuming that the church is here. There are various views of this as well. The first one is the Pre-tribulational view. This states that not only will the Rapture take place before the millennial but it takes place before the tribulation. Therefore, the church will escape the period of suffering. The idea of 'pre' in the term Pre-tribulational implies the church will be raptured 'before' the 7 year tribulation.

The next position I want to give you is the Pre-millennial, Post-tribulational view. By the name, you can see that it still believes in a literal millennial kingdom, but in this position there is the implication that the church will go through the 7 year tribulation. The gospel and the church will continue through the tribulation, the spread of the gospel will continue and Christ will return at its conclusion. The Pre-millennialists who are Pre-tribulation lists is where this school stands. But there are also some Pre-millennialists who believe that the church will go through the tribulation, so they are called Post-tribulationalists. And as the word says, they believe that the Rapture will take place at the end of the tribulation period before the millennial kingdom. And of course, that means that the church goes through the tribulation period.

DIAGRAM

Pre-millennial, Pretribulation time Line & Christ's return with the Church



In addition, just to confuse you more, some believe the church will be raptured in the middle of the tribulation. This is the mid-tribulation view. Nevertheless, in each Tribulation view, of the power and influence of the gospel in the church due to the impact of gospel teaching on human minds while the church existed (Pre-tribulation), or while the church continues to preach the gospel through the tribulation (Post-tribulation) people will continue to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ' work of the cross and resurrection.

You have in your notes the term 'Eschatology.' It's the study of 'last things.' Unfortunately, the church has viewed these 'last things' from our perspective rather than from Adam's perspective. I would qualify this definition and say 'true Eschatology' is the study of the last things of the 'days of the seed.' Let me give you the last term and then I will do a little lecturing to explain.

In some of the books that you read you will read the term 'CHILIASM'. It's just another term for millennialism. It means the same thing: 1000 years. And to help you understand why there are 2 terms, the term 'CHILIASM' comes from the Greek language. And the term 'MILLENNIAL' comes from the Latin language.

3. Day of the Lord

If you study Eschatology from Adam's perspective and look at the promises of the seed of the OT properly, you will come out pre-millennial, pre-tribulation. When the promise of the seed is realized as literal promises, then it is understood that they are fulfilled only when the seed truly comes to the earth as King. Our timeline visualizes events *after* the Lord's first coming in the days of the seed; his birth, his ministry; his death, his

resurrection, his ascension. The timeline above begins at Pentecost, the birthday of the church, which commences the 'Church Age' leading its rapture, the Tribulation, His Second coming and 1000 year reign, White throne Judgement and eternity's New Heaven and New Earth.

The NT writers who knew Christ and were taught by Christ anticipated His return to set up His kingdom. Even they struggled at first when He came and they accepted Him as the Messiah, they struggled to realize He was talking about dying. In their minds He was the promised seed that would restore the kingdom, restore paradise. When He talked about dying, Peter took him aside and said 'no, you are mistaken.' They did not understand that the days of the seed involved 2 comings of Christ. But when they finally got this in their head by the Spirit of God leading them, Paul began to talk about the second coming as the hope of all God's people. They began to realize that the days of the seed involved a first coming, and during this coming the character of the seed was humiliation. But they understood after He began to teach them that there will be a second coming.

As Christ began to teach the details of these two comings of Christ and all they included truth started to come together for them. They started to understand this business of the OT 'Day of the Lord.' Within the days of the seed, there is the first coming in humiliation involving His vulnerable humanity, then the second coming of exaltation, involving His Reign and triumph. In the days of the seed there is this OT idea of the 'Day of the Lord'. Because the OT spoke of the trials that Israel would have to change their heart, the Day of the Lord included suffering and difficulties. But also in those same OT books, especially the Minor Prophets, the 'Day of the Lord' also involved Israel's salvation and reign.

All of this suffering or blessing had to do with the Messiah reigning on the earth. The Spirit of God began to teach the apostles and the writers of the NT how the Day of the Lord fits into the second coming of Christ. That's when the 70th week of Daniel began to make sense to the apostles: a 7-year period in which God would restore Israel through suffering. We have in the 'Day of the Lord' this 7-year period. This would prepare Israel for the millennial reign of Christ. They still understood the reign of Christ, but they also understood the tribulation. The 'Day of the Lord' included suffering that defines this tribulation and the 'Day of the Lord' also defined the blessings of the reign of Christ. You see in their minds there was a distinction between the suffering that would bring Israel to Christ as their Saviour and the reign of Christ with Israel, they are separated. The

second coming of Christ to be exalted obviously for the world to see that He is King. They understood very clearly that in order for Christ to reign for this 1000 years, He had to come at the beginning of this reign. This part here obviously comes here after Christ comes back to Jerusalem.

The 'Day of the Lord' addresses the second coming, not the first coming. The first coming was humility- He died for our sins. The second coming, He comes to reign in the world. But Israel has to be won over to Christ before He can reign and establish believing Israel as His priesthood. Israel's conversion, as part of the Day of the Lord, must come before the millennial kingdom because that is what prepares them to serve Christ as priests in the millennial kingdom. In the book of Revelation we see that this tribulation period comes before the actual literal return of Jesus Christ. The promise of the seed is fulfilled in two comings of Christ. The first is the suffering Saviour to die for the world. The second is the sovereign King reigning in the world. Israel will be His holy priesthood during this reign. Obviously the reign begins when He returns to the earth. But the OT said that Israel would suffer and their hearts would be broken, their spirit would be broken so they would come to Christ so they could serve Him during this reign.

Yet Jesus made a unique statement in Matthew:

Matt. 16: 18: *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."*

Jesus promised to build His the church. The church is not Israel. The church is the people of God, the body of Christ on the earth since Pentecost, serving Jesus after His first coming. Paul clarifies this in his Epistle to the Ephesians:

Eph. 3:3-12: *by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)... 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel... 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*

Paul says 'this is a mystery, meaning something not revealed before. We live in a time where Jew and Gentile are joined together as the body of Christ and where the slave and the free man are equal in the body of Christ, where man and woman are equal in the body of Christ. This is a mystery, never before seen or understood in the OT times. In Romans Paul says because Israel has been set aside, we have been grafted into the prom-

ises. The promise of Jeremiah 31 states that God would write the law in the hearts of Israel. This is experienced in the church. The ‘Day of the Lord’ has not come yet. Christ has not been seen by the world nor yet exalted by the world. But after His first coming, at Pentecost, the church became the first people of the true nature of the godliness of the kingdom, where the Word of God is written in their hearts.

The NT church is the people of God today. We do not replace Israel because God still has a plan for that nation. We are the bride of Christ and there are special promises given to the church. Now the Spirit of God, through the Apostles, helps the church understand what happens when the Day of the Lord comes. They answer what the role of the church is and define the ‘Church Age’ not in years but by events within the Days of the Seed: between the First Coming and the Second Coming. The church is people forgiven, justified, and sanctified in the righteousness of Christ. There is no condemnation. Will they go through this 7 years of Tribulation that is for Israel to repent and the world to be cursed? No.

Paul tells us in Thessalonians 1 that during the church age there will be Christians who will die. He assures that ‘to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ Paul further says in 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff that the time will come when the church, those alive on earth, will hear a trumpet and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they will be changed. The live people of the church will rise up to meet the ascending Christ with those that have died are with Him. Paul also says in 1 Thessalonians 5 that the church will not go through the hour of trial:

2 Thess. 5:9: *For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

The context clearly indicates that Paul is talking about the rapture where the churches, both the dead and alive, are united with Christ in the air and are forever to be with Him. Therefore, the church is removed from earth before the tribulation.

Student Question: I have a problem with saying the tribulation is before the Tribulation because in Matthew 24 when he says because of the elect, those days will be shortened. The elect that is referred to the church and they will go through some part of the tribulation.

Prof. Response: We are going to look at the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. The problem that you have is to miss the questions that Jesus is answering.

Jesus is answering the questions of His disciples who are Jewish regarding the Day of the Lord and when the kingdom will come. His answer is not regarding the church. His answer is what takes place during this suffering period as we go towards the reign. In the Bible, OT and NT, the elect are those called to salvation. Were there elect in the OT before the church? Yes. Were the people of the church called 'the elect'? Yes. Because we are called to salvation the same as David, the same as Adam, the same as Abraham., when the church is gone during this period of trial people will still be saved, and they too are called 'the elect'. But in this period when people come to Christ, they are treated so terribly, they are suffering they are persecuted so greatly, God says 'I will make this a very short period for their sakes.

There are people who are pre-millennial, pre-tribulational, who have written books which I believe do more damage to this position than if they had been quiet. You have in your library books by Tim LaHaye, about the rapture and the tribulation and the millennial kingdom. His books were so popular in America that they have made movies regarding these events. The problem is, LaHaye uses Matthew 24 information to explain when the rapture will take place. He takes the predictions of Jesus Christ for Israel during the tribulation period and applies them to the church. This is one reason why there is so much confusion about the elect in Matt 24; whether there are signs for the Rapture that is coming. That kind of teaching is the reason for much confusion.

Student Response: I am understanding what you are saying, all through, there's the elect. Where do the 144000 come in?

Prof. Response: Let me give you that answer when we start dealing with the Tribulation. It has to do with the beginning of Israel's heart changing. The Jehovah Witnesses try to tell us that the 144000 deals with the church. That's not true.

We started with the promise of the seed, we see how the Day of the Lord involves suffering and blessing and therefore, the reign and before the reign, the tribulation. According to the promise that God gave Abraham the seed would also bring blessings to many nations. In this we see the place of the church between the first coming and the second coming. We see the mystery of the church unfold from Paul, that at the very beginning of the Day of the Lord it is raptured and with the Lord forever. On the earth time goes on. But the church in heaven now faces the judgment

seat of Christ where believers are judged regarding their works and receive their crowns.

During this continued tribulation time people on earth will continue to be saved, but at great suffering. Their tears are brought to the attention of the raptured church with Christ according to Revelation. I don't know the reasons, perhaps for prayer, perhaps for God to be glorified. Just prior to the Lord's coming, the church in heaven is united with Christ at the marriage feast of the Lamb. The promise for the church to reign with Christ begins when she, the bride, in glorified bodies, returns with Christ for the 1000 year reign. They are perfected people, with no sin, now on the earth bringing God's rule to the people that are continuing to produce children and form nations. Jesus is in Jerusalem. Israel as a nation is serving as Christ's priests and the whole world is worshipping Him. That summarizes the church during the tribulation and during the millennial, the period of the Day of the Lord.

Focussing back on earth, there are 3 purposes for the Tribulation of the Day of the Lord. The first is to break the heart of Israel so they will believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The second reason is to bring judgement upon the whole earth for its rebellion against Him. The judgement of God is not restricted to the spiritual realm at the end which we call hell. Remember when Adam sinned, sin entered into the whole world and therefore death entered into the whole world. With Adam's sin not only did man fail in his purpose, but animals failed in their original purpose. When Adam delivered the keys of the world to Satan, Satan started to mess up the purposes of all creation. Animals, instead of being satisfied with just eating vegetables, began to eat one another. There was violence in the animal kingdom. There was perversions in the plant kingdom with weeds that choke out other plants. And there was the continued wickedness of humanity.

During the tribulation period God sends judgments. The earth is judged severely with catastrophes. The stars fall from the sky and the water is poisoned. Curses come: biting insects and plaques are brought to all of nature and humanity. During these 7 years our planet is in absolute chaos and turmoil. In my calculations, at the end of the tribulation period, only 20% of the population are still alive. 80% of the population of the world is destroyed through the events during the Tribulation. The planet itself is being judged by God; this is a judgment time. That's the second purpose of the tribulation. God uses a part of this judgment on the earth to break the heart of Israel because they go through the suffering as well.

Now there's a third reason for the tribulation. It is vindication. Vindication means to prove that God is right and His people are correct. Let me give you an example: Let's assume that I am a successful doctor, a medical doctor. And I come to Cameroon and see that many people are ill. I say to you: "You are ill because you eating too much foo-foo. If you stop eating foo-foo and eat more rice, you will get healthy."

You say: "Oh that is foolishness. We have been eating foo-foo for many years. Your advice is crazy and we won't do it." But there is one village in Cameroon that says: "We are going to do what you say. We are going to stop eating foo-foo and eat more rice."

Time passes and all of a sudden Cameroon looks at this village sees these people are living a long time and they are not sick. This village is doing wonderfully because it is healthy and strong. In this "I have been vindicated."

The tribulation period will prove that the church message and the people of the church were right. They will see that the church was removed from all this catastrophe. Just like they said they would be. God will allow Satan to rule with the Beast and the false prophet and the Anti-Christ, as the church predicted. Wickedness will be worse than ever before and the people of the world will realize sin and wickedness cannot be overcome sin with human effort. The people of the church were right. There is no salvation in works. I will go no farther in this synopsis but at least you can see how the Tribulation also vindicates God and the church.

I have homework for you: Go back to the definitions and try to draw a diagram picturing the definition. Try to make a diagram to help you see what the definition are and that would make sense to your people in your culture.

CLASS 4

III. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

A perusal of the terms of Eschatology reveals that there are many different views and theories. This begs the question: Why so many, isn't the Bible clear? The answer to this question is: It depends on what Hermeneutic, or method of interpretation is used. For this reason I have included in your notes a section dealing with proper hermeneutics. Hermeneutics deals with the science of interpreting Scripture. The following are considered the basic, proper principles of interpreting Scripture and must be applied to all Scripture including Prophetic Scripture.

A. What is Hermeneutics?

The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek ἐνέργημα (*energēma*), meaning “to effect, working, a working, an activity.” The English transliteration “Hermeneutics” has come to define the science involving the principles of INTERPRETATION, In the NT, it is used only in 1 Cor. 12:6, 10 of the results of the energy of God in the believer. Though ‘*energēma*’ is translated “operations,” it is actually the results energized by God’s grace.²

Jn. 1:38 : *Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated (ἐρμηνεύω, hermeneuo, Teacher), "where are You staying?"*

B. What is the Literal Method of Interpretation?

1. Interpret

To interpret means to explain the original SENSE of a speaker or writer.

2. Interpret Literally

To interpret literally means to explain the original sense of the writer according to the NORMAL, CUSTOMARY and PROPER usage of words and language.

3. Problem

How does one determine the normal and customary usages of Bible language?

One must consider:

- i) the rules of GRAMMAR and RHETORIC
- ii) the factual HISTORICAL and CULTURAL data of Bible times.
- iii) This is called the GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL Method of Interpretation.
- iv) A word should normally possess ONE (1) intended sense or meaning.
- v) To understand any writer, one must assume that he is using words NORMALLY and without MULTIPLE meanings.

C. The Bible Uses Literal and Figurative Language

All languages properly use both figurative and non-figurative language. Here are several examples of Figurative language in the Bible:

1. Metaphor:

² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Matt. 5:13: *You are the salt of the earth*

2. Personification:

Psalms 98:8: *Let the floods clap their hands;*

3. Anthropomorphism:

Ex. 6:6: *I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.*

We could conclude that figurative language is NORMAL and CUSTOMARY in the language. The interpreter must be careful not to identify as a figure that which is actual.

D. The Literal verse. Spiritual

There are those who believe that since the Bible is spiritual in nature, the interpreter needs to penetrate the written work in order to discover the SPIRITUAL meaning. They believe to interpret LITERALLY is to miss the true meaning of the Bible. These non-literal interpreters believe that portions of the Bible have secret meaning and mystical, hidden senses:

PRESUPPOSITION

(Scripture is secret writing with mystical hidden meaning)

INTERPRETATION

(Understanding necessitates finding the Spiritual or Allegorical Meaning)

Therefore, the implication is that the Bible cannot say what it means.

E. The Allegorical Method of Interpretation

Some interpreters in the early church regarded the literal words of the Bible only as a means for arriving at the HIDDEN, more SPIRITUAL, and more profound sense of Scripture.

Tan notes, "Interpretation, therefore, lay in discerning the spiritual meaning of the text hidden beneath the letter, which could often for all practical purposes be discarded." Those holding to the Allegorical method of interpreting Scripture also felt that the hidden, deeper sense is the real meaning.

What is wrong with this method?

1. The NORMAL sense of words is ignored
2. IMAGINATION and SPECULATION can run wild.

F. Brief History of the Allegorical Method of Interpretation

1. The Alexandrian Jews

In an attempt to reconcile Greek philosophy and the Word of God adopted the Greek method of ALLAGORIZATION.

Philo of Alexandria, a philosophical Jew possessed a reverence for the Mosaic revelation and admiration for Greek metaphysics. To Philo, the

literal sense was ‘milk’ and the allegorical sense ‘meat.’ He believed that great spiritual meat lay beneath the literal surface.

2. Pantaenus (A.D. 180)

- teacher of the school at Alexandria
- first to adopt the ALLEGORICAL method of interpretation
- interpreted O.T. as a MYSTERIOUS collection of isolated oracles all pointing to Christ.

3. Origen (A.D. 185-254)

- deserves title “Mr. ALLEGORISM”
- followed the path of Philo (assumed O.T. and N.T. contain deep and hidden meaning).
- he also believed that the Bible contained fables that did not exist.

4. Augustine (A.D. 354-430)

- modified allegorism, confining it to the PROPHETIC Scriptures.
- interpreted non-prophetic LITERALLY and the prophetic ALLEGORICALLY.
- thus, he is considered to be the ‘father of DUALISM’
- he is regarded by many to be the ‘father of AMILLENIALISM’
- his view of the millennium was incorporated into Roman Catholicism
- he rejected the literal millennium as too MATERIALISTIC and CARNAL.

→interpreted millennium SPIRITUALLY as fulfilled in the Christian CHURCH.

→while rejecting earthly 1000 yr. kingdom, he accepted literality of 1,000 years of Rev. 20

→expected the second coming of Christ to occur around 650 A.D.

5. The Reformers

The reformers stressed the literal method of interpreting the Bible. They refused to get involved in PROPHETIC interpretation. Thus, the whole of Protestantism went the way of R. C. Amillennialism. The reformers were involved in the doctrine of salvation and the church.

G. Why Interpret Prophecy Literally?

We must ask ourselves the question: Why do we as pre-tribulationist, pre-millennialists interpret the Scriptures literally? Because this is the issue when it comes to Eschatology and all the views. As you study hermeneutics you will come to realize there are different approaches to understanding prophecies, allegories and all this. And so we have reasons for interpreting prophecy literally. We have some verses I

want you to read, so let's take turns and you can assign these verses to the students

Reason #1: Scriptural Authority

The first reason that we interpret literally is because of Scriptural authority. For Scripture to be authority in our lives, it must speak clearly and define truth.

Luke 10:25, 26: *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"*

This verse shows us that answers are found by reading the Scriptures, not by spiritualizing them or making them our own interpretation.

Matt. 24:15: *"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),*

This passage tells us that the Word of God is to give us understanding, not confusion. When I talk to my brothers in Christ who do not hold to the Scriptures literally in the area of prophecy, they have so much confusion in their minds. Some denominations do not even preach and teach the book of Revelation because they just have no idea what it means. I think that is very sad because God intended people to understand and in Revelation we are even told there is a blessing for those who read and who hear it read.

John 14:2: *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

We are called upon to believe what God says. I know that today even when Bibles are being translated, there is a tendency for the people to try and interpret our own ways of understanding this. If we apply this approach to prophecy then what would cause us to not apply it to other passages? And we see that this is exactly what has happened. The Scriptures very clearly say that homosexuality is a sin. You can't read through the Law or Romans 1 without seeing this. But now this is being re-interpreted to apply only to cultural situations of the time of writing. So when we are told to believe what God says, we must understand that He says just what He means. That's the significance of God giving us His great knowledge in human language.

2 Pet. 1:19: *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*

This passage declares the words of the prophets as ‘sure’. This has the idea of trustworthiness. We believe this because we believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. so the words of the prophets were the very words that God chose to give us. And in that passage He says ‘take heed to listen to it’.

Deut. 29:29: *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

God says the things that He has revealed belong to us. And when He uses the word ‘reveal’ it is dependent upon understanding. And so that assumes that we take the words literally.

The first reason for interpreting prophecy literally is Scriptural authority. And this declares that not only does the Scripture indicate we should take it literally, but practically the Scriptures cannot have authority in our lives unless they give understanding. If I have to add my own thinking and logic to a passage of Scripture to determine what it means, then it has no authority in my life because it depends on my interpretation. You can understand how in the time of Jesus Christ, the Pharisees had authority rather than the Word of God having authority, because they had their own interpretation. The average Jew in the day of Christ thought ‘we must listen to the Pharisees to give us an understanding because we cannot arrive at that ourselves.’

Prof. Question: *Can you think of a denomination that is called Christian today that has the same idea?*

Student Response: *Roman Catholicism*

Prof. Response: *Yes, RC says the priests have the spiritual language that must teach the people. I am not happy about the charismatic movement which is emphasizing the wrong things, but at least the charismatic movement has brought many Catholics back to the Bible. Do you agree?*

Student Response: *Maybe the impact is not very strong here in Cameroon but I know I agree because I know international how it has.*

Reason #2: Historical Fulfillment

The first reason for literal translation is Scriptural authority. The second reason is historical fulfillment of prophecy. This is one of the most amazing and exciting studies of Scripture. To understand how in the OT the prophecies were given and so many of them are already literally fulfilled. For example, just in the life of Jesus Christ there are over 300 OT

prophecies, many of which were fulfilled in His first advent. If many have been fulfilled literally, we can believe that those that relate to His second advent will also be fulfilled literally. I have references here with examples of things that were prophesied that became literal fulfilled in the first advent.

Is. 7:14: *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

Here is a prophecy about the birth of Jesus Christ. The NT confirms the conception and birth of Jesus through the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23, 750 years after Isaiah's prophecy. No mere human author would ever imagine this. Micah 5:2 tells us He is born at Bethlehem. We won't take the time to look at all these verses. I will just give you the prophecy and you can write it down. Here is a partial list of OT prophecies regarding Jesus Christ:

Jer. 31:15 -His birth caused a slaughter of the children.

Hosea 11:1 -He would be called out of Egypt

Isaiah 11:2 -He would be anointed by the Spirit.

Zech. 9:9 -He would have a triumphal entry into Jerusalem

Psalm 41:9 -He would be betrayed by a friend.

Zech. 11:12 -He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.

Isaiah 50:6 -He would be spat upon and scourged, or whipped.

Psalm 34:20 -in His death no bone would be broken.

Psalm 69:21 -He would be given gall and vinegar to drink in His death.

Psalm 22:16, 18 -His hands and His feet would be pierced. And his clothing would be divided up and lots cast for it.

Isaiah 53:5 - it was a substitutionary death.

Actually we could look closer at Isa 53 and find out there is not only this prophecy, but the prophecy of his rejection, substitutionary death, and His resurrection. I give you these to show you how accurate the Scriptures are and how they are translated literally. If you were a gifted mathematician you could calculate the probability of all these prophecies, and there are just 13 here, being fulfilled. If you use the mathematical formulas for probability even for 13 prophecies, the number is astronomical in terms of the probability. Yet every one of these prophecies were literally fulfilled. Of course there are other prophecies in the Scriptures that are literally fulfilled and we can examine them.

For example- in Ezekiel 16, Ezekiel prophesied the destruction of Tyre. And we can see historically that the details of Ezekiel's prophecy were fulfilled in every part. Historically we see Nebuchadnezzar attack and brought great destruction. Even after 13 years, he never really cap-

tured the whole city because the people moved their city to an island. They rebuilt the city on an island. When they saw how Nebuchadnezzar could choke the city by surrounding it and keeping supplies and things from coming in, they actually after the war, took the stones of the buildings and made a pathway out to this island ½ mile out into the Mediterranean. And Ezekiel prophesied that Tyre would be reduced to bare rock where fishermen would cast their nets to dry.

That actually became fulfilled when the city was moved by dismantling the buildings to make the causeway out to the island. It was not completely conquered according to Ezekiel's prophecy until Alexander the Great, 200 years after Nebuchadnezzar. It was not the people that did this but Alexander the Great. Under Nebuchadnezzar they left the city and they moved to the island for protection. And that's why Nebuchadnezzar could not conquer. It's easy to defend an island from soldiers. But when Alexander the Great came, he was the one who took the empty city, stone by stone, and made the causeway out to the island and conquered it. If you visit the area today you would still see the bare rocks and the fisherman's nets drying in the sun. and you would see Alexander's causeway and the island city.

There are many other examples of literal interpretations and fulfillment of Scripture. It is interesting that the liberal churches that do not want to take the Bible literally as the Word of God have to deal with the fulfillment of these prophecies. Do you know what their answer is? They say the prophecies that are given in the OT were not written before the activity but after the activity. They do not accept the Hebrew dating or the early dating of the OT or NT manuscripts. And the thing that amuses me is that in the liberal churches, they cannot agree on the dates, they are always changing them. Human wisdom, the Bible says, God laughs at.

Reason #3: Early Church Precedent

The third reason for taking prophecy interpreting literally is the church precedent, the early church precedents. And what we are talking about are two beliefs that have been held by the early church. We can read the pastor's writings of the early church fathers, isn't it? You know that the early church fathers did write books and commentaries the same as pastors do today. These are not inspired, but they show us what the church believed as the pastors wrote.

i) The belief in the earthly reign of Christ

And without exception these early church leaders believed in the earthly reign of Jesus Christ to come. Every time in their writings that they

spoke of the kingdom, they were talking about an earthly reign of Jesus Christ, not a spiritual reign.

To justify the Amillennial method of spiritualizing the kingdom they must begin with Augustine and skip over many generations of the church practiced literal interpretation. When you are studying hermeneutics you realize that the beginning of interpreting prophetic Scripture by allegorization was Augustine. I don't think there is a doubt that Augustine was a born-again believer. But he had grown up in a school that taught allegorical methodology as a deeper meaning of words. It was a part of the philosophical thinking of his day. And so as he became prominent in the church and started to write his own books, he allegorized the Scriptures especially the Prophets and Revelation and that is what created so much confusion.

Much of Roman Catholic doctrine is based upon Augustine's writings and his interpretation of Scriptures. Nevertheless, every time the early fathers spoke of the kingdom in their writings, they were referring to an actual reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

ii) The belief in the imminent return of Christ

Also in their writings you can see a belief in the imminent return of Christ. The concept of imminence has the idea that Christ would come at any moment, without any fulfilment of prophecy to predict this. No prophesied event stands between the believers and that rapture. This is supported in by Paul:

1 Cor. 16:22: *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

Paul used the term 'maranatha.' This was a common expression in the early church. It meant 'the Lord is coming.' The early church was practising what Paul was telling us, that Christ's coming was then and is now our hope. We needed to keep this certain promise before us. When the early church greeted one another, they would not say 'bonjour,' or 'good day, they would say 'the Lord is coming (maranatha). Maybe we should do the same. That would help keep this before us all the time.

You can see how important what the people believed in the early church was. The point that I want to make is that they believed that it was imminent. They did not do what Tim LaHaye has done with his books by trying to show there are signs of the Lords' coming. We talked about that before in answer to your question the significance of the information in the Olivet Discourse. Be disciplined in your sermon preparation to 'rightly divide the Word of God.

Student Question: How do you know if Matthew 24 is not referring to the church.

Prof. Response: We are going to look at Matthew 24 later in our class. But my simple answer is: This passage is about Israel, to understand that He is coming. We know this because He answers the questions of the disciples who asked: 'When will you set up your kingdom?' He is giving the information from a Jewish perspective because that's where the apostles were in their expectations. They wanted to know what would transpire and what Israel should look for just before He sets up His kingdom.

Reason #4: Practical Necessity

The fourth reason for translating and interpreting prophecy literally is the practical necessity. If we use the allegorical or spiritualizing method of interpretation, then it is the interpreter who becomes the authority. We are told in 2 Peter that no Scripture is for private interpretation. This is the dangers of Allegorization. I will go through these quickly because we already covered this in hermeneutics.

Student Question: What do you mean by allegorization?

Prof. Response: Have you taken hermeneutics? Go back and study your notes. Allegorization is to find hidden meanings and deeper ideas in words. An allegory is a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one. As a literary device, an allegory is a narrative in which a character, place, or event is used to deliver a broader message about real-world issues and occurrences. The book 'Pilgrims Progress' is an allegory of the spiritual journey" You have French dictionaries, Bible dictionaries, any time you have questions that I don't answer go to your library and look it up. There would be examples there of allegorization. Look up hermeneutics, it will give you the history, it will give you the methodology if it's a good book.

H. The Dangers of Allegorization

There are 4 dangers of practicing in translating and interpreting Scripture:

1. The method does not INTERPRET the content and original intent of the Bible authors.

Although that sentence is self-explanatory, Allegorization is not. Without the guidelines of common language principles of understanding there can be no communication. Whether English, French, Chinese, OT

Hebrew or NT Greek, the only way to know the meaning of the speaker or writer is to adhere to common language rules.

2. The basic authority ceases to be Scripture in the mind of the INTERPRETER.

For example, I heard a man talk about the valley of Armageddon, which is where the battle of Armageddon will take place. He looked at the history of this valley and the troubles that it brought to Israel. Therefore, when he looked at Revelation where it talks about the battle of Armageddon, he interpreted this as another time when Israel will go through various trials and troubles again. He is saying that the phrase ‘battle of Armageddon’ represents the historical troubles of Israel and therefore, all it talking about is Israel going to have more troubles.

To say Armageddon is a symbol of problems is to ignore the details that are given, I don’t know how they do this, but this is what they do.

Student Question: Are you saying it a danger to allegorize the Bible?

Prof. Response: We allegorize only where the Scriptures allegorize. For example, Christ taught with parables and we could say parables are allegorization. Not exactly but we could say it is allegorization.

Christ is the best teacher of how to interpret the Scripture. When He refers to the OT, He interprets literally most of the time unless He sometimes gives his own allegorization. He did not “a man should leave his father and join his wife and become one flesh” that this is a symbol of human unity. No. He confirmed the words ‘man and woman as a husband and wife’ despite the liberal theologian’s acceptance of homosexual marriages. He said ‘God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. He did not say: “God created the world over a period of ages,” which is represented by days therefore we have to understand that the earth is millions of years old.

3. How can one test the CONCLUSIONS of the interpreter?

One of the unique things about understanding the Scriptures literally is what we call ‘propositional truth.’ In the Bible statements of truth we measure their accuracy. For example: ‘whatsoever a man sows, that also shall he reap’.

Prof. Question: What does that mean?

Student Response: For very work of a man he receives recompense.

Prof. Response: It's not just 'If he puts in the ground, he's going to get corn.' We know it means 'If I conduct myself with anger toward everyone, I'm going to get anger back.' If I do business with deceit, I eventually am going to be deceived myself. That is the essence of a propositional truth. We can look back on human experience and see the truth work, whether the Bible statements are true or not true!

Is it true that if I am always angry toward people, they will be angry toward me? Yes, my experience proves this. We see that if I deceive people, I'm going to become a victim of deception. That is measureable truth or 'propositional truth.' It's like the discovery of the law of gravity. The scientist says the law of gravity causes things to come to the earth where it is denser and heavier. Therefore I will not throw a rock up in the sky and stand underneath and watch it fall on my head. It will hit me in the head! The scientific discovery is given in propositional truth and we can test it. The rock comes back down. If we allegorize prophecy to something that is in the mind of the reader or listener, how will we ever test if this is true?

One interpreter could say 'Armageddon is a symbol of Israel's trouble.' But Armageddon was also a place where the crops grew. So another man could say 'Armageddon is a place of blessing,' or Armageddon is a place that receives much rain. Therefore, it is a symbol that there will always be a 'cloud of uncertainty' over my life. I could be a good allegorist because I have a great imagination. But how do we ever know whether it is truth or not, when it is always just in the interpreter's mind that gives the authority?

4. If consistently used, in other words, if allegorization were used all the time, this method would destroy all Bible DOCTRINES.

We can see this even in the Doctrine of Salvation. The liberal churches do not accept the Bible as the Word of God, therefore, they must interpret it according to their understanding, so that it will have spiritual value. Therefore, they say that the death of Christ is the symbol or example in which God calls man to love one another in self-sacrifice. His love was shown when Jesus died and we need to show our love by being sacrificial toward others. The liberal churches have campaigns to feed the hungry which is a good thing. The liberal churches have campaigns to clothe those who have no clothing, and to build houses for people who have no houses.

These are all good things. But that's not the gospel. The gospel is Jesus died for me. He took my death penalty for my sin and justified me with His imputed righteousness, securing my with His resurrection. You see that the Doctrine of Salvation (which includes much more than I have stated), if allegorized, is corrupted, as all doctrines are when allegorized. We see this in the church today in the area of Eschatology. It was allegorization that Amillennialism by denying the literal 1000 year Kingdom. I am laying a foundation for why we are determined to teach the pre-millennial, pre-tribulation Doctrine of Eschatology which is our conviction, not just as another approach. Each of you students must arrive at their your own convictions. I cannot force my convictions on you. We have our method of interpreting which will bring an understanding of the literal kingdom of God. It will bring understanding of a literal tribulation.

I. What Arguments Do Allegorists Use in Order to Prove Their Method of Interpretation?

1. The N.T. use of Paul's Allegory

As I said, there is place in the Bible for allegory: Paul uses allegory in Galatians 4 where he is talking about Law and Grace:

Gal. 4: 22-24: *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants...*

i) What is the allegory here?

Paul is using the two sons of Abraham here to allegorize the Law versus Grace. He is using this living example of Abraham's sons born from either the free woman or from the slave as an allegory to demonstrate the Law and the Grace and its impact on the believer. The child of the bond women represents the Covenant of the Law which brings bondage (verse 25), the child of the freewoman represents the Covenant of Promise, the children of Jerusalem above who are free (verse 26).

ii) Evaluation of their argument

People who use allegories say Paul uses allegory, therefore it is legitimate to allegorize in interpretation. However, you read through the Galatian passage there is no prophecy. This is not a PROPHETIC passage, but historical. Our answer to the approach of using allegory for prophecy is just that: There is no a prophecy in Scripture anywhere that incorporates allegory. Galatians 4 is not prophecy. But, if Paul used the life of Abraham's wives and sons as allegory, does that mean all the HISTORICAL events of the OT are to be interpreted allegorically? Does this mean that

all OT historical events are allegorized? Our answer is: Paul is using this OT incident for an ILLUSTRATION.

When you think about this, Paul was wise to use the bondwoman and the free woman with the child under a slave and the child under freedom to represent Law and Grace. It is a good illustration because the Law never set anyone free, never brought salvation. When all the ceremonial laws and all the sacrificial laws were looked at, it was a burden and a bondage for the people. But the illustration emphasises that in Christ (the promised Messiah) we are not under the Law. In Christ believers have been liberated and the Word of God is written in their hearts, the Law itself is written in their hearts. In our study of Christology we examined what it means to be free from the whole Law.

2. The Bible is filled with figures of speech which obviously should not be taken literally.

The argument that they give is that the Bible is full of figurative language that cannot be taken literally. For example, Jesus is called the “LAMB OF GOD.” Jesus couldn’t be a four-footed lamb that goes ‘baaa’. Our answer is the same: You still take the NORMAL method of interpreting. Figures of speech are NORMAL means of conveying literal truth. Just because the Bible contains figures of speech, this does not mean that the whole thing should not be interpreted. To interpret a figure of speech is one thing but to allegorize a literal statement is another.

Every language in the world has figures of speech that are not allegorical, they are just interpreted and understood to be figures of speech. In your many African languages you have figurative speech. Something that you call someone, or something that you use that everybody understands. It’s not literal but it means something that represents it because of the words that are used. For example, in English, if a man seems to just refuses to listen and understand, he is called a ‘blockhead’. It doesn’t mean his head is a block of wood; it means that he’s acting that way, that nothing is getting in, it’s like his head is a block of wood. Figures of speech are normal means of conveying literal proof. Therefore, figures of speech do not justify allegorization.

Prof. Question: Give me an example in your African language of a figure of speech.

Student Response: When they want to mean that someone is very strong, they call him a lion.

Prof. Response: Ah, very good figure of speech.

3. The Bible has many types that teach spiritual truth.

The third argument that they give is that the Bible has many types that teach spiritual truth. For example, Moses was called upon to lift up the stick with the serpent upon it. And this is a type obviously of Christ's work on the cross, because Christ on the cross defeated the power of the serpent. That freedom or delivery comes by faith. In this situation, the serpent was the literal animal that was poisoning the people, and delivery from death was to look in faith at the stick with the serpent wrapped on it.

In the interpretation of types the literal historical actuality of the type is important. The allegorist says the historical is insignificant. As well, the types expressed had a meaning for the people of their day. Our answer to excusing allegory because types are used in the Scripture is a simple answer. Types are historical situations, actual events, real things. Therefore, when the allegorists says the historical is insignificant, we have to spiritualize, we have to find a deeper meaning, we have to interpret types, they are harming their own argument, because it is the historical significance of the types that make a type significant.

We have answered the arguments of the allegorists. The allegorist will look at the prophecies of Scripture and find a 'special' meaning that is not literal but what they consider to be deeper and spiritual. The result is evident, when they come to passages such as the entire book of Revelation, they see terms like the 'Armageddon' as symbolizing 'troubles of various kinds' or meaning something else, resulting in human arrived at opinions rather than objective, stated truth.

Now please understand that many true born again believers are Amillennialists. Nevertheless, you cannot be an Amillennialist unless you practice allegorization. You have to understand that this does not mean they allegorize for all the Scriptures and therefore, they are not teaching the true gospel. They follow the practice of Augustine and his understanding of the book of Revelation which leads people to Amillennialism. Nevertheless, many false 'Christian' denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church who believe that their church will bring in a spiritual kingdom of God, are Amillennialist.

Student Question: In Matthew 25 what can you say about this passage concerning the army.

Prof. Response: This again is part of the Olivet Discourse. We talked earlier in our terminology about judgments. And I said there are many judg-

ments and that is a reference for one of the judgements as we enter in to the millennial kingdom. What Amillennials do with that passage, I have no idea. It's been my experience that Amillennialists around the world are inconsistent with their interpretations. So they may have 3 or 4 different interpretations for what the significance of that passage is, I don't know what they are. OK?

I think you should know that most of the evangelical Christian world is not pre-mil, pre-trib. That may surprise you. But most of the evangelical world today is 'Amill.', is reform theology. And I believe that we have arrived there because of a historically weaker attitude toward the interpretation of Scripture by the church. What is happening to the church is seen in Israel. When they were received the Law from Moses, they made a commitment that this would be the path they would follow, this would be the words that they would obey. And we can see that every generation of Israel in the OT weakened that commitment, weakened that commitment. So that by the time we got to the period before the OT and the NT we saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees become prominent in the Jewish faith. Both of these sects which are leaders in the Jewish faith, had their own methods of hermeneutics. And both of them were problems. The Pharisees reinterpreted the Law according to their understanding. They were zealous about it. The Sadducees interpreted the Law as liberals and dismissed it as God's Word. But they were zealous about it. So I say this to help you identify that it seems to be one of Satan's methods of destroying the people of God, undermining the proper interpretation of the Bible. And sometimes Satan introduces a methodology that later on is accepted even by believers even though it is not consistent with what I see as proper interpretation. If you are committed to a literal interpretation of Scripture you will probably not be popular among the clergy of your community. I wrote a newspaper column that interpreted the Scriptures literally and I was not popular among the clergy. But what I discovered was, when you preach the Word of God, God builds the church and my church became the biggest church in town. And I give God the glory.

CLASS 5

IV THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS AND ESCHATOLOGY

A. Introduction

We began our study in Eschatology by looking at Adam's Eschatology. In the fall of Adam, God spoke of the future seed of the woman that

would destroy the seed of the serpent. Adam's hope for restored paradise was the promise of the seed that would come. The Scriptures are filled with God's promises to man. We look at the promises of God seriously because God never fails in His promises. Because God promises and never fails, we could say that His promises are binding.

1. The Hebrew word that indicates the idea of a binding promise is the word 'ברית' (b^eriyth).'

We translate this in English by the word 'covenant'. We are looking in your notes at point #4- the Biblical covenants and Eschatology.

This word 'covenant' is used over 300 times in the OT. So obviously we have covenants or promises that God makes to man, and we have covenants or promises that man makes to fellow man, and we even have promises that man makes to God.

Prof. Question: What is the difference between the promises of God to man and the promises of man to God?

Student Response: -First God always keeps His promises, is always faithful, and man tries and has conventional methods but God has all the methods at his disposal

Prof. Response: For man, many times a promise is just good intentions. Good intentions often fail as circumstances change or as attitudes change or sin comes or many other things. We see this very evident in Scriptures when God gave Moses the Mosaic covenant, Moses repeated this to Israel and Israel responded by saying 'every word we have heard we will do.' God accepted the intentions of man, of Israel by acknowledging that this was a secured covenant but God's next words were 'Oh, that Israel had a heart to really do this.'

2. In your notes we have some examples of some of these covenants that God has made with man.

Genesis 31:44-45: *So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap.*

Here we have Jacob and Laban in their situations where a promise between people. There was fear from Jacob that he would never secure his wife and in all the issues that Jacob and his father-in-law had. There was not good peace but they finally made peace. It's significant that to secure this promise to one another, they shared a sacrifice and a meal together.

The symbols of the promise binding together is another study. For our purposes we just want to look at the concept of a promise or a covenant. **1Sa. 18:1:** *Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

Here David and Jonathan made a covenant of friendship together. You should maybe write down in your notes the context of these In **1 Ki. 20:24:** *So Ben-Hadad said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then Ahab said, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.*

In this passage we have kings making a covenant together. The unique situation, especially in Palestine where each city had individual government, is something that relates to the way God designed the Mediatorial Kingdom. So when you are looking in the OT and study about kings, you should search to see if they are kings of nations or kings of cities.

2 Ki. 11:4: *In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds — of the bodyguards and the escorts — and brought them into the house of the LORD to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.*

Again we have the king making a covenant, this time with his people.

Mal. 2:14: *Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.*

The OT word **ברית** (b^oriyth), translated 'covenant' in English, is first used in Malachi when talking about the marriage contract or the marriage covenant.

3. Synonyms for Covenant

We can say that a covenant is a BOND, an ALLIANCE, an AGREEMENT, a COMPACT a TREATY, a CONTRACT.

Its essential idea will be union between God and man. God offers man partnership with Himself. It is a union based on a binding LEGAL contract.

4. The Greek word for covenant is **διαθήκη** (diatheke).

The term is used more than 30 times in the N.T. You would have in your own African languages synonyms that would define what a covenant,

or a contract, or an agreement is. And I know that in your culture you also have the symbols of these contracts or these covenants especially in marriage because that is what the dowry is. Among the Ewe people of Ghana and Togo that I ministered to for 8 years, a marriage is not legal until the dowry is paid. I say this because in every culture there is it seems an understanding of this idea of a binding covenant that is greater than just a promise.

We begin to look at God's covenants in the NT we must see that the essential idea is 'the union between God and man.' God offers this partnership as a legal contract, a binding legal contract. Now, understand that it is not a legal document in man's understanding that binds God to man. It is not a legal document that binds God to His promise. Nothing is more binding to God than His Word. However, in giving us His will and His purposes, God chose to use this word so that man would understand from man's perspective the binding nature of God's promises.

5. A Biblical covenant is a sovereign promise of God.

He establishes a contract with man to bring to pass certain blessings either conditionally or unconditionally.

I give you a definition and define the significant differences between the promises that God makes to man. I'm saying that some of the promises of God for blessings some are conditional, some are unconditional. What do I mean by these terms?

i) To be conditional means having God expected conditions such as, a way of living, something to complete, certain met demands.

ii) To be unconditional means not having God expected conditions such as, a way of living, something to complete, certain met demands, being free as defined by the term 'grace.'

Prof. Question: For your homework tonight I ask you to read Exodus 19 and determine whether the Mosaic covenant is conditional or unconditional. Write your answer out on a separate piece of paper with your name on it. Give me your reasons for conditional or unconditional as you understand the Mosaic covenant and give me verses to support your reasons. I'll give you 2 other references that may help you—Exodus 19 is the introduction to the Mosaic Covenant. It is a very extensive covenant, covering several books of the Pentateuch. It has many different aspects. There are two other reference that may help you understand this: Deut. 7:12, 13 and Deut. 8:11-19.

Exodus 19 if you read it carefully will give you the answer. But now we want to look specifically at what we call the eschatological covenants. And we talk about these as eschatological because they are indeed the extension of the promise of God to Adam regarding the seed. And we will see how the single promise of the seed to Abraham now through eschatological promises starts to expand into other areas. This really becomes the foundation for our understanding of Eschatology.

6. The Mosaic covenant is definitely a **CONDITIONAL** covenant because it was conditioned upon Israel's **OBEDIENCE**.

Ex. 19:5: *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.'*

The very 6 first words of the Mosaic Covenant spell out the condition of Israel's obedience along with the promised blessings: *"a special treasure", "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."*

7. The eschatological covenants are **UNCONDITIONAL**

i) Abrahamic Covenant

I want you, we begin first of all with the Abrahamic covenant. In round figures, we are talking about 2000BC.

Gen 12:1-3: *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

This is the announcement of the promise of God to Abram.

Prof. Question: *In this statement is there any indication whether this is conditional or unconditional?*

Student Response: *-It is conditional. -It is unconditional.*

Prof. Response: *How many say 'conditional? Give me your reason.*

Student Response: *I see another condition in verse 30, that it is conditional on the fact that those who bless Abraham will receive blessing and those who curse will be cursed.*

Prof. Response: *Any other reasons for this to be a conditional covenant? No, then those who say unconditional, give me your reasons.*

Student Response: *In the first verse, God is not asking for a favour in return, he is saying 'go' and the promises are not conditional on Abraham.*

Afterword God tells him, this is what I'm going to do, God is not saying if you believe, I will.

Prof. Response: *Is everyone completed in terms of the unconditional. Do you have something to add?*

Student Response: *I see both Conditional and unconditional. The first verse is conditional because Abraham has to obey. So if there is no obedience to the command in the first verse, the promise given in the second verses won't be accomplished.*

Prof. Response: *OK. Before I answer according to the text, there is another way that God helps us understand this particular covenant, and how it was ratified in chapter 15. Let's go on with our study notes.*

Genesis 15:5-8: *Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"*

I want to give you a context. Remember, I said one of the necessary studies we are not doing is what the Bible demonstrates to be the symbols of a contract between parties.

Prof. Question: *We have already looked at Genesis 31, the contract between Jacob and Laban. How did they seal that covenant of blessings*

Student Response: *They shared a sacrifice and they shared a meal.* *Prof. Response:* *Yes, and that is the beginning of helping us understand what a legal contract involved in terms of its symbol or its finalization. The mutual agreement was sealed by the sharing of a sacrifice, something that they did together. Now we come to Genesis 15. Here God is reminding Abram that He's the one that brought him out to give him this land, so it's a reminder of what He's promised him. God is taking him back to Genesis 12 where He made this promise to him. In verse 8 what does Abraham ask?*

Student Response: *He says 'how do I know?'*

Prof. Response: *In essence Abram asks 'give me a seal, show me a sign' because in his understanding there has been no official seal of the covenant. God responds to him, in verses 9. What does God ask for?*

Student Response: *A sacrifice*

Prof. Response: *What was done with the sacrifice?*

Student Response: *He cut them off*

Prof. Response: *Yes, They were cut and separated. Now they're getting ready for the sealing of the covenant.*

Gen. 15:12,17-18: *Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him... And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates ...*

Abram saw that God himself passed through the sacrifice, not Abraham, just God! Because God only participated in the sacrifice as the symbol, the covenant is therefore unconditional? The very symbol of this covenant; the sacrifice, in which Abraham did not have any participation in, was God's way of showing him what he asked for. Abram asked 'How will I know? The fact that God did not allow Abraham to participate in the official symbol of the sacrifice was the answer to Abraham: 'I'm going to do this for you, Abraham. You have nothing to do with this.

If we were to go back and look at Genesis 12: we would see that God did not make any conditions on Abram. One of the ways we identify this with language is the absence of this little word 'if' in the text. In Genesis 12 God did not say to Abraham 'IF you go to this land, then I will bless you.' That would make it a conditional covenant. Nevertheless, IF is absent, therefore this is an un conditional promise.

Student Question: *If Abraham had decided to disobey, and then not go, what would have happened?*

Prof. Response: *Let me go back to Matthew 16: Peter made this great statement "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." I suggested that this declaration of faith would become the message that would bring salvation to the world. But two things help us understand the nature of the gospel in that very context.*

Jesus said to Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed that to you, but my Father in heaven." So it was not the personal choice of Peter to recognize Christ as the Messiah. That was a revelation of God. Salvation does not begin with man choosing God; it begins with God choosing to open man's understanding.

I am trying to use the teaching of salvation which is a covenant of God; our salvation is a promise of God to help us understand the nature of this covenant as well. I do not deny that each of you accepted Christ as your Saviour, as a choice. We have all done the same thing: accepting Christ as our Saviour at some time. But we cannot call that a free choice, it was entirely by grace, entirely by God. He called us before the foundation of the world.

It is the same with Abram: God chose him to be the father of the nation Israel. God raised him up for that purpose. And God gave him, the faith to step out and do what he had to do. Nevertheless, it was God empowering him all the way,. It was God moving him and God directing him. It was God's grace, it was all of God and that's why He demonstrates this symbol of the sacrifice where He alone participates. If you are struggling with this, that's a good thing because it's hard to understand. I myself have wrestled with these concepts and still do sometimes. But that is why I believe God has helped us by making clear language regarding His covenants, especially when it comes to His conditional covenants. The conditional promises are very clear because God says: 'if you do this, I will do this.' You will find the conditional promises have more to do with the responsibility to follow God after we have secured a relationship with Him.

When we go back to the promise that God made to Adam in the garden, it's clear that that was unconditional. We can see that the promise of the seed is totally the foretelling or the promising of God. That helps us understand another nature of promises of God. I said that Adam's Eschatology is the foundation that spreads out into what we call the Eschatological Covenants. One of the things that's consistent is that a promise that is extended with more revelation keeps the same nature of the promise: if it is originally unconditional, it will continue to be unconditional.

We don't have time to go into all the details of the Abrahamic covenant but I think you will understand that it involves 3 aspects. God promised him unconditionally that He would give him THE LAND. God promised him that He would make A NATION out of him that would possess and keep and own that land. And God promised that nations that would bless Him would be blessed by Him through this nation. So we have a land, we have nation, and we have A BLESSING. Now when we look at the middle one, the nation, we see that for Abraham, God made that a special test of seed. Because remember Abraham got the land, Abraham possessed it and had much riches and Lot came and had much riches, but

Abraham had no son. So Abraham became focussed on this aspect of his promise- the see that will bring the nation. And of course, we can follow through in the genealogies in the NT that that seed of Abraham's was the foundation for the nation Israel and from the nation Israel, a line of that seed continued on until the very birth of Christ.

And it's very interesting and very significant that when we come to the NT and the gospels, 2 of the gospels trace the line of Jesus back from the stepfather Joseph as well as Mary, the mother- all the way back to Adam, the other back to Abraham, but both of the going back to Abraham in 2 different directions. When I return in May and teach a course on the kingdom of God we will look in more detail on the necessary aspects of the 'Mediatorial Kingdom.' But we will find that the last step of God keeping the promises to Adam of restoring paradise, the last step before paradise is the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom.

So we have then, from the Adam Eschatology, the promise of the seed, the Abrahamic covenant. With three aspects: land, nation (seed), and blessing.

Now in your notes I give you the texts of the three continuing eschatological covenants that give more information on each of these aspects.

ii) Palestinian Covenant

Deut. 30:4- 5: *If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. "Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers ...*

This is the Palestinian Covenant. In that particular promise the extent of the land that Israel will possess is clearly defined. The Palestinian Covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise. It is important to see that the nation has never as yet taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant (see Gen.12:2, note), nor has it ever possessed the whole land (cp. Gen.15:18 with Num.34:1-12).³

iii) Davidic Covenant

2 Sam. 7:16: *...And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever...*

This is called the Davidic Covenant (vv. 8-17) upon which the future kingdom of Christ, "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom.1:3) was to be founded, provided for David: (1) the promise of pos-

³ Schofield Notes, Duet. 30:4-5.

terity in the Davidic house; (2) a throne symbolic of royal authority; (3) a kingdom, or rule on earth; and (4) certainty of fulfillment, for the promises to David "shall be established forever."⁴ Again we see no conditions for its fulfillment. Therefore the Davidic Covenant is unconditional.

iv) New Covenant

Jer. 31:31-40: *Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people...*

The New Covenant of 31:31-40 and 32:40ff. is one of the significant covenants of Scripture, and is remarkably full, stating: (1) the time of the covenant (vv. 31,33); (2) the parties to the covenant (v. 31); (3) the contrast in covenants—Mosaic and New (v. 32); (4) the terms of the covenant (v. 33); (5) the comprehensiveness of the covenant (v. 34); (6) the basic features of the covenant (v. 34): (a) knowledge of God and (b) forgiveness of sin; (7) the perpetuity of the people of the covenant (vv. 35-37); and (8) the guarantee of the covenant (the rebuilt city) (vv. 38-40).⁵

The deeper study of these covenants falls under the details of the Mediatorial Kingdom. Nevertheless, for the purposes of our seminary course, our approach to Eschatology focuses more on what these covenants with Israel mean to the church. We are trying to find out what the church's Eschatology is. Our goal is to understand how the promises of God for the church's future relates to this big plan. For this reason, we will not go in to the details of these eschatological covenants that relate to the Israel promises. We will do this when we look at the theology of the kingdom.

God's prophetic utterances involve ¼ of the Bible content. This school actually have 3 specific courses that deal with all of these. The first is 'Daniel/Revelation' which examines 70th week as it relates to the NT prophecies. The second is the course on the 'Kingdom' theme in Scripture. The third is this course entitled Eschatology.

Student Question: I have a question on the Abrahamic Covenant. The Israelites went down and spent 400 years in slavery in Egypt. Was that be-

⁴ Schofield Notes, 2 Sam. 7:16

⁵ Schofield Notes, Jer. 31:31-40

cause Abraham cut up all the animals instead of the birds? Was it because they were rebellious? Or was it just part of God's plan? Was because he left the land. He did not trust God when there was a famine and he went down to Egypt.

Prof. Response: That is the simple answer. And absolutely correct answer. He did fail to trust God to provide for him when he lived in the land, so God let him go there and providentially used this to develop the nation Israel in a period of bondage for 400 years. Jacob made a mistake. He was the one who went as well, (I've got the right person? I'm so bad with names, he's the one who went to Egypt, right?) He was the one that looked at the circumstances and said I can't trust God. I've got to go find food for my family. I don't want to say too much because you have homework dealing with the covenant whether it is conditional or unconditional. But the judgment of Jacob to be separated from the land had more to do with the Mosaic covenant.

The questions that you are asking are good questions but they really focus on the development of the promises for Israel. We really don't fully understand that until we start to look at the details of the Mediatorial Kingdom and how Israel was in a sense the proto-type of this. All I can say in answer is that God did restore them back to Palestine. But even having come back, the question has to be asked- did they ever get the land that God said He would give them unconditionally as part of the Palestinian Covenant?

We who are part of the church, have different opinions about this. And they really relate to whether you focus on theological covenants or whether you focus on Biblical covenants. There is a significant difference as we look at the next set of our notes. All the way through this course, I have been giving arguments that will defend against an Amillennial perspective of Eschatology, or some other position.

In your notes, I give a bit of information to help us see the background of why there are different approaches to Eschatology.

B. How Do Biblical Covenants and Theological Covenants Differ?

We have already looked at the fact that it is a difference of hermeneutics. In the church today we have what we call Reform Theologians or Covenant Theologians. The Reformed Theologian (also called Covenant Theologian) interpret the Bible by laying stress on Theological covenants. Pentecost states, "He [the Reform Theologian] sees the ages of history as

the development of a covenant between God and sinners, by which God would save..." through :

1. The Covenant of Redemption

Titus 1:1-2: *Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,*

Here it is clear that God made a covenant or a promise before the world began to redeem man.

Heb. 13:20-21: *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you*

Paul speaks of an everlasting covenant which brought Christ back from the dead make believers complete to do God's will. The text talks about the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Now of course, the teaching of this covenant is that this happened in eternity past. And of course, our argument regarding this is that no one can deny that God planned salvation for the world in the past. The difficulty here is that in Scripture there is no support for this being worked out between man and God. Obviously God made provision for salvation in Christ because He knew man would fall. And these passages that refer to a covenant obviously talk about God Himself making the decision to save man. But can we truly say that an agreement between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to provide salvation is really the same thing as a binding covenant with man? No, there is no evidence in Scripture for such a 'salvation' agreement' between God and man. There was no communication with man, since man was not created yet, therefore it is an error to say that this is any kind of a binding covenant that brings the prominence of salvation to the plan of God

2. The Covenant of Works

Reform theologians claim this was an agreement between God and Adam (mankind) before the fall, Adam was related to God by a covenant of works. They teach that before the fall Adam was related to God by a covenant of works. The essence being that if Adam doesn't sin there is blessing, if he does sin there is punishment. Again we would not deny that God made it very clear that he could eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And clearly there was the statement of the

consequences if he would eat the fruit. But to look at this as a conditional promise is a problem because the language is not ‘if...then,’ nor ‘if you do, then you get.’ It wasn’t a matter of ‘if you obey I will continue to bless you,’ because he was in the midst of the garden, he was in a perfect environment, he was blessed completely before the fall. We look at this not as a conditional covenant of blessing but as a test of confirmation of Adam’s holiness.

3. Covenant of Grace.

Third, Covenant Theology teaches a covenant with all mankind to provide salvation by grace on the merits of Christ’s death. I will be honest with you, I am not certain whether reform theologians would look at this as a conditional or unconditional covenant but it seems to me to be consistent for them to look at it more as a conditional covenant. In this there really isn’t much to complain about because, as I shared with you, we believe that salvation is a promise of God. The single difference between Covenant Theologians and Dispensationalists has to do with where you put God’s work of grace for salvation in priority. In this we see that Covenant Theologians are guilty of ‘reductive error.’ This is Dispensationalist’s way of saying Covenant Theology reduces God’s entire program to administering grace and saving sinners. We would say God has a Soteriological or Salvation program. We do not argue that God has a plan to save people. But, we do not say that this is the all consuming purpose of God. Our position is that we believe the ‘Glory of God’ is His all-consuming purpose. Dispensationalists would say the fuller purpose of God is Doxological, not Soteriological.

I am trying to help us understand how we can have so many Eschatological positions from the same texts of the Scriptures. It really has to do with your pre-suppositions. If you believe that God’s focal point and His entire purpose is to save sinners, then you are going to look for the confirmation of that theologically in Scriptures. And with that in mind, I can fully understand how a couple of verses would result in a Covenant of Redemption and God dealing with Adam through a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Grace. I can see this as a logical conclusion when your eyes are looking through the purposes of God as salvation alone.

However, if on the other hand, your whole idea of the purpose of God is to be glorified, your approach is different in terms of seeing the texts of Scripture relating to this purposes. Therefore, not all covenants are condition and not all are unconditional. Just as not all people will be saved and not all people will be lost. But here is the thing that Dispensationalists

hold to: God is equally glorified by the lost as He is by the saved. In the lost, His condemnation of sin is verified; is vindicated. In the saved, God is glorified in bringing children to Himself and transforming their lives in His righteousness forever. Therefore, His Word is true and His name is honoured, and He is glorified.

Student Question: What is the difference between these 2 words: Soteriology and Doxology?

Prof. Response: We have a course in our seminary called Soteriology. It means the doctrine of salvation. Soter is the Greek word for salvation, so it is the doctrine of salvation. The Greek word 'doxa' is 'glory' as in Glory to God. So doxology is basically a study of the glory of God. I am saying that there are those that see salvation as the only purpose of God, before anything else. The salvation of sinners is foremost and there are those that say: "No, we agree with salvation as 'a' purpose of God, but what we think is foremost is the 'Glory of God.' It is good to hold to salvation and it's good to hold to the glory of God, but which one do you see as prominent? That's the key.

CLASS 6

Prof. Question: I want someone to share what this class that has meant to you.

Student Response: -The fact that the church will not have to go through the tribulation urges me to continue in the faith.

- First of all, that the tribulation and how this class has responded to some of the questions I had regarding where did this come from, is it something from God, has been encouraging.

- The understanding of the purposes of the tribulation. God uses that for a punishment for those who don't believe in Him and for preparation for Israel, even things afterward have helped me understand God's plan.

- I'm understanding more thoroughly. I used to think that there were things that deal with the church, I am understanding now what part is dealing with the church and what part God is dealing with Israel.

Prof. Response: When you preach a topic like Eschatology in your church, so often it only speaks of future things and we fail to make applications now. I don't know about Africa, but in America people love to speculate. They love to imagine what will happen in the future. I had a friend who

used to preach seminars on Eschatology and when he started to get practical and how it affects our life now, people started to complain. So I think whether we are preaching in chapel or teaching in a class, it is important for any teacher to bring practical application now: What this means in our lives now. I hope from chapel and from these classes there are two applications always in front of you. In light of the fact that we are talking about the Lord's coming, the first is hope. We have great hope in our future with Christ. The second is holiness. We must live in holiness because this could happen at any moment. We do not want to face our Lord Jesus Christ in shame.

As you continue through the covenant of the Mosaic Law, God clearly determines the blessings if they obey and the curses if they do not obey. So the question is: "Why did Israel depart from Egypt when God unconditionally promised to give them the land?"

The answer of course is that the unconditional promise that God has given Israel is not fulfilled until the millennial kingdom. The people in each generation are responsible for their response to this unconditional promise. To be unconditional does not mean Israel accepted. We see that God is dealing with Israel in the OT and at the conclusion was the rejection of Israel belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

Matt. 12:31-32: *Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

According to Matthew 12, the Pharisees sought to turn Israel from believing that Jesus was "the Son of David" (the Messiah) and committed the unpardonable sin of "blasphemy against the Spirit." The text suggests that this was a nation sin where Israel rejected Christ, and Christ rejected that generation of Israel, and 'grafted in' a new people of God called the church (Rom. 11:13-21), consisting of Jews and Gentiles. Nevertheless, the unconditional promises to Israel still stand. The church does not replace Israel. This nation will rise and be the people of God as a priesthood in the millennial kingdom.

I hope that we are privileged, as the glorified church, to witness the event when the entire nation of Israel turns their heart in belief at the end of the tribulation. I cannot imagine the joy in heaven and the joy on earth when one whole nation in a single day receives Christ as Saviour!

C. The Abrahamic Covenant

We are looking now at specifically briefly the covenants that we introduced the other day. Although we did not talk about God's promise to Adam as one of the eschatological covenants, it truly is because that's the introduction of the theme of the seed. But we see from the other day, the one promise to Adam became 3 promises to Abraham.

Prof. Question: What were the three promises in the Abrahamic covenant that God gave to Abraham? Give me one.

Student Response: -Blessing. -A great nation.

Prof. Response: - Yes, that focuses on the necessity for the seed to come from Abraham and the promise that his line will have the promised seed of Adam's. OK, there is the blessings and the nation with the seed. What is the third?

Student Response: -One who causes the sin of curses.

Prof. Response: That is a part of the opposite of the blessings, so I would not put that in the third part. But, because as we learn that these three promises come to fulfillment in the millennial kingdom, this shows us that the necessity for the judgement of the nations before the millennial kingdom in order that only those who are in Christ enter into this kingdom. There is still one, though.

Student Response: - It's the Palestinian Covenant.

Prof. Response: Exactly, the land, the territory. When we see the greatness of the kingdom and the details of the kingdom, we will see that this promise necessitates a literal kingdom. We talked about some of the approaches of Eschatology, one of them being that there is no kingdom, another that the kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, but that dismisses the promise of God for Israel to have a geographical area.

1. Content of Abrahamic Covenant

It is these three aspects of the Abrahamic covenant that are developed in the rest of the OT. Now we have the content that we see developing from Genesis. In chapter 12:1-3, we see that the promise given, and then in chapter 15, we see this established.

2. Importance of Abrahamic Covenant to Eschatology

In your notes, I repeat how this covenant developed into the three covenants, the land covenant is the Palestinian Covenant, the seed is the Davidic Covenant, and the blessings are the New Covenant. In your notes,

there is a statement 'b' that says the Abrahamic Covenant demands the permanent existence of ISRAEL as a nation to inherit the land.

Prof. Question: Here is your homework for this night. We are saying that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional and we discussed the purpose for this. But I want you to answer the question:

"Why does the Abrahamic Covenant demand the permanent existence of Israel?"

This is one of those questions where you are not going to find a single verse for the answer. You're going to have to think about it and give an answer. For example: Why couldn't this become a spiritual kingdom? (I have already shared why!)

I want you to think through- look at the promises, the 3 promises and logically give me an answer why this must be a permanent Israel. Please, no more than one page. I say this because I know that preachers like to go on and on and on and on.

3. Proofs that the Abrahamic Covenant is Unconditional

Here are Biblically-based, logical reasons for why the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional:

i) No conditions were stated in the INSTITUTION of it in Genesis 15.

When we were looking at this originally there was confusion when we only examined Genesis 12 which was the introduction of the covenant. We concluded after discussion that because the specific language in Gen 12 did not include 'if...then' that you could determine from that, that it was unconditional. But Genesis 15 removes all doubt because when Adam asked for a sign God clearly indicated that the institutional symbol of the sacrifice Adam had no participation in.

ii) It was confirmed repeatedly in the OT despite DISOBEDIENCE.

If it was conditional upon obedience of Israel then many times God would have revoked the covenant because they were very disobedient. We see with the example of the conditional Mosaic Covenant sometimes disobedience is not acted immediately upon by God, but it always is. However, repeatedly in the OT when Israel disobeyed, they were reminded of God's faithfulness to them in keeping the promise He had given them.

There are three examples of this in your text.

Jer. 32:37-42: *Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I*

will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely... 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them,

In this passage God chastises Israel for their disobedience but then He confirms that He is keeping the promise.

1 Chron. 16:15-17: *Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations. The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel for an everlasting covenant,*

God calls this the everlasting covenant. So when God says something is everlasting, it's true. It never ends. To me this is one of the key arguments for those who think you can lose your salvation. God calls salvation everlasting life. If it's everlasting, how can I lose it? Just like if the promise for the Abrahamic Covenant is everlasting, Israel can never lose it. I think I've just given you one of your arguments for your homework.

Psalms 105: 8-10: *He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant,*

Here God says He has remembered His covenant forever. The first reason is that the conditions were not listed in any way in the institution of Genesis 15. The second was that in spite of disobedience, God repeated the promise to them. And in repeating the promise to them, God often called this an eternal promise.

iii) It was called an ETERNAL promise.

There are 3 texts there that use this phrase 'everlasting covenant, Jeremiah 32, Genesis 17 and 1 Chronicles 16. The fact that God calls it 'eternal' means that it never ends, even if they are disobedient. And Israel was disobedient, yet disobedience, although delaying the promises for God's purposes, does not revoke the promise as God's Adamic Covenant promised:

Gen. 3:7 (13, 17): *And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you*

In reality, the covenant is an example of our salvation promise.

iv) The way it was established in that GOD only passed through the pieces of the sacrifice (Gen. 15).

God alone passed through the pieces.

v) It was fulfilled partially in Abraham's day in spite of DISOBEDIENCE.

Abraham and Hagar's child was a child of the promise. If their part of the promise was fulfilled in spite of Israel's continued disobedience, why not all?

This point is more focussed on Abraham himself in that he was taken to the actual land that would be his, despite his own disobedience with regard to the promised seed. Think of this; Abraham is waking by faith leaving Ur of the Chaldees. He is going to the land that God promised him. He's never seen it, but he is going. God takes him on a mountain and says 'as far as you can see, I will give you the land.'

Now, he is one man with one very large and very prosperous family. And he and Lot's success become so great that they have to divide because of the greatness of their family. So that should have been an indication that God is blessing him and what God promised will come to pass. Even though his family didn't have all of the land that he saw from the mountain, it was growing, it was blessing, God was indicating that I'm doing what I promised. But it seems when Abraham gets a little older, he wonders about 'how am I going to have a nation when I don't have a son'? and so he takes things into his own hands and has relations with Hagar to produce a son to fulfill the conditions.

He had a lapse of faith. He did not trust God to complete the promise on His own. But even with that lack of faith and true disobedience, God does restate 'I will give you a son even in your old age. I will keep my promise'. Really, Abraham is almost a symbol of what will be true for all his nation in the OT, always wanting to complete the promises in their own power and in their own strength. This demonstrates the wonderful character of God in His faithfulness and in His love. God repeated the promise to Abraham that He would secure the nation even though God knew that every generation after Abraham of Israel, every man would do the same thing- walk away from the promises of God. and then the last statement really is the nature of God. God's covenant is immutable.

vi) God's covenant is IMMUTABLE

God never changes, and everything that God says is equal to His nature, so when He says something, it doesn't change. Like God Himself, His Word including His promises and covenants are immutable, they never change. They are the same yesterday, today and forever.

4. Amillennial Arguments that Abrahamic Covenant is Conditional.

Now we have in the next section just some arguments that Amillennial theologians would give to dispensationalists about the nature of the Abrahamic Covenant. These arguments are as follows:

- i) Obedience is always a prerequisite for blessing.
- ii) Conditions may be involved even though they are not stated.

Prof. Question: What is your answer to Obedience is always a prerequisite for blessing? Is the statement true; that obedience is always a prerequisite for blessing?

Student Response: -No

Prof. Question: There's one word in Scripture that denies that possibility. What is the word?

Student Response: --Grace

Prof. Response: Exactly, grace. If this statement were true, that obedience is always a prerequisite for blessing, no one would be saved. It is by Grace that we are saved, not of ourselves according to Ephesians 2.

Prof. Question: What is your answer to Conditions may be involved even though they are not stated?

Student Response: –Yes, because God didn't tell Moses all the condition for the people so God's will would always continue. It was only Moses, if he gave them the Law so the promise would continue.

Prof. Response: So, you understand that the Law was how this promise continues? I don't understand.

Student Response: --In the beginning with Abraham there was no conditions, but when it got to Moses so God could continue to bless, he had to put conditions in their Law.

Prof. Response: I hear what you are saying but you are mixing the 2 different covenants. We are arguing with Amillennials that the Abrahamic covenant is always unconditional. So we have to combine the idea of the blessings here, the specific blessings from that covenant, not all the blessings.

For Amillennialists to say that conditions may be involved, they mean from the beginning. Therefore, #1 is an argument from silence that proves nothing. #2, in the context of God affirming His covenant in disobedience, He is always referring back to the words He gave Israel. #3, does God ever hold people accountable for anything that He has not revealed in their lives? No! For example—if a person in the world never

sees or hears one word of the Scripture, is he responsible for his sin before God?

The Scriptures say: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Rom. 3:23. This is so because, even without the written Word of God, He has revealed His existence in nature and they should seek Him.

What else though? There is something even more important.

What is Paul's argument in Romans for the guilt of the world without the Bible?

Student Response: Human conscience

Prof. Response: Ok, Conscience establishes guilt. Amillennialists made argument this is the reason there could be additional conditions. Yet, how could a conscience give additional information? It could not!

A conscience deals with moral situations, but in the case of the Abrahamic Covenant, which promises land, and nation and blessings to other nations, there is no way that additional conditions could be added by conscience or by a general revelation. Additional conditions must be stated by God. And none were.

Scriptures show us that God does not hold people accountable for things He has not revealed to them.

iii) The fact that Esau and other unbelieving Hebrews was excluded from blessings of covenant prove that it was conditional.

Esau and other believing Hebrews were excluded from the blessings of the covenant proves that it was conditional. Here the Amillennial argument is Esau did not get the blessings that Jacob got.

Some say Esau did not participate because he sold his birthright, making this a conditional promise. Nevertheless, it is very clear that in the plan of God, the seed that is the promised, and the completion of this whole covenant, comes through Jacob, not through Esau. So you cannot talk about Esau being disqualified to determine whether the promise is conditional or unconditional. It has nothing to do with Esau.

When God made the promise of the land, the blessings and the seed, He obviously had a plan to accomplish this. The fact that there would be individuals or even whole nations that would not be a part of this because the plan was still in execution does not disqualify it from being completely by God. Esau was not disqualified from the promise, Esau was never included in the promise. He was not disqualified because he was never included.

Remember we were saying that reform theology focuses on soteriology, on the purposes of God begin completely the salvation of people. If they're going to use this argument regarding the conditional promises of Abraham, then we could also say by consistency, if God's plan is focussed entirely on salvation, everyone would be saved. We know of course that even though salvation is a response to God, it is a gift of God based upon His choosing man.

Salvation is dependent upon election. The Amillennialists are very strong on election, it is the teaching of Scripture. Therefore, they should concede that the same principle applies to the Abrahamic Covenant: There were those who were chosen to be saved which had nothing to do with their obeying or their fulfilling any conditions. It was all of grace, God's undeserved favour. Paul reminds us in Romans "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" (Rom. 9:13).

iv) Circumcision was instituted as a condition of the covenant.

Of all the Amillennial arguments, I think that one is the best one. If anything could be seen as a condition, this would be it. But a careful examination of the Scriptures shows us that circumcision is not a condition. Circumcision came 13 years after the covenant was established. I think that the delay of the giving of the circumcision was the plan of God so it would not be confused as a condition.

In Genesis 17, where circumcision was established, it is called 'a sign' of the covenant. A sign or a symbol is not a condition. The example that is in your notes is the wedding ring that we wear when we are married. You notice I don't have a wedding ring on my finger although I have been married for 40 years. Unfortunately, I was swimming in a lake and it came off my finger. But I'm still married whether I have a ring on or not. The ring was a sign of marriage, not a condition. Certainty of fulfillment of Abrahamic Covenant is not based on conditions involving sinful man--- it depends wholly on obedience of Christ.

5. An Important Question –Was The Abrahamic Covenant Fulfilled by Solomon?

We have examined and refuted some Amillennial arguments claiming the Abrahamic Covenant as conditional. Now there is another argument, not a common argument today, but it is still in many of the books that you will read. This argument states that when Solomon was the king, God fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant. Amillennialists have said that all the land was possessed when Solomon was the king, blessings came to the nations

because of Solomon's wisdom, the nation was established, therefore all has been fulfilled, God is not obligated anymore.

This is a simple argument to refute. First, the BOUNDARIES or the territory are not the same as mentioned in Genesis 15. Even to this day, Israel has never held all the land that God mentions in Genesis 15. Second is the insurmountable argument: Solomon's reign was not FOREVER, even though in the OT God talks about the reign of the Messiah being forever. Third, the boundaries or the territory under Solomon was NOT POSSESSED by Israel, Solomon just reigned over these territories. It is a different thing for a nation to have political rule over a territory than for the people of that nation to own the territory. Solomon only had political rule and collected the taxes.

The Israelites never owned the land. As a matter of fact, many of the Gentile people still lived and owned property within the reign of Solomon. Then lastly, if Solomon's reign fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant why would later prophets continue to repeat the promise that was still to come? Later PROPHETS after Solomon's time still promised a re-gathering to the land, in other words, still promised that it was to come. Jeremiah 16:15; 23:1-8; 30:3; Ezekiel 7:21,22; and Amos 9:15, are prophet's texts, after Solomon's time, still promising fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

In all of the verses that you are given there, God is promising to re-gather Israel. I think it was 1947 when Israel was acknowledged as a state by the United Nations. Now that is a significant date for the nation Israel, but is it a significant date as many teach, for the plan of God? This is a question that you will have to think through yourself. There is a movement within evangelical Christianity to favour Israel in every capacity of the Abrahamic Covenant, as a nation now. The argument for that is the statement that God has fulfilled this promise by having the world recognize Israel as a nation. My own personal understanding does not lead me to that conclusion. In these passages, I think he's talking about God uniquely gathering His people back as a special work of His. Israel even now has not got the territory that is promised in the covenant. There are some sections like the Gaza Strip and the East Bank that are totally out of their control right now.

But the biggest thing I have a problem with is the fact that Israel is not a believing nation. Israel is in as much darkness as Iraq. And for Christians to favour Israel as our friends and look at Iraq as our enemies is not Biblical. Now I am not saying our countries, yours and mine, should for-

get about the struggle between Israel and Iraq. No, we should work toward helping all nations come to peace no matter who the nations are. The true church today should have as much passion for the Muslims in Iraq and Iran as we have to reach Israel for Christ

Student Question: Since you don't have that position in your view, how do you think God is going to bring all the people back to Israel? And how is God going to accomplish this?

Prof. Response: I do not know the 'how.' I just know it is possible because all things are possible with God.

I tell you the example that I have: Twenty-five years ago the world saw an Iron Curtain that was a fixed wall between the communist world. There were places in Germany where this was a literal wall. The Communists were here, the free world was there, and no one in between. There was no going back and forth. There were two world wars that established this wall and even as much as 25 years ago there was a Cold War between the free world and the communist world.

The Iron Curtain was a political boundary dividing Europe into 2 separate areas from the end of WW2 in 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. On the east side of the Iron Curtain were the countries that were connected to or influenced by the Soviet Union, while on the west side were the countries that were NATO members or nominally neutral. It became a term for the 7000 km long physical barrier of fences, walls, minefields, and watchtowers that divided the 'east' and 'west'. The Berlin Wall was also part of this physical barrier. The Berlin Wall was built in 1961 and ended one of the easiest places to move west across the Iron Curtain. This great wall affected all of the world's politics. This wall affected most of the world's economy. It was a fixed wall that in the imagination of man could never be removed. If you are old enough to remember, the Iron Curtain fell in just 24 hours. It was there, everything was in place, and then 24 hours later it was gone. The guards were gone, the wall was toppled, and it was a different world, all in 24 hours.

The United Nations rejected Israel as a nation and gave all the property to the Palestinians and said 'you must be under the rule of the Palestinians. This did not change one thing. Closer to our memories, September/ 9-1-1 was one day that also changed our world

Therefore, I do not dismiss God's ability to use political situations to achieve His purposes. God can change the world in the snap of a finger.

Student Question: What is the plan that God would bless Israel, that Israel would be blessed? I look at Iran and Israel and see blessings for both, yet God said blessings and cursing's would come based upon how we treat Israel. Is that not an argument against unconditional covenant?

Prof. Response: But again how do you interpret the idea of the blessing? I believe that when God promised Abraham the blessings as well as the land and as well as the Seed, that all of this would be as a result of the ministry of the Seed, who is the Messiah. And so in this idea that the seed has come in its first advent, therefore we are living in the 'days of the Seed.' The only blessings that come to nations now, until the second advent, are the blessings of the salvation provided by the Seed.

Jesus said 'go into all the world and make disciples.' Israel with the means of forgiveness through the Law, was supposed to be a light to all the nations in the OT. So for me to say that Canada is going to be especially blessed if we remember to pray for Israel as a nation now, I don't see that as an interpretation of that passage. I may be wrong, but I don't see the separation of the blessings in a political way or economical way now, when Israel is not even established with the covenant in their own land. I limit the blessings between the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ to the ministry of the Messiah to bring salvation to the world.

Don't accept my word for this, do your own study. If you come to the conclusion that the blessings are for nations today, come and convince me because I want to know.

Student Question: What concerning the land, is it during the tribulation that Israel will conquer these nations or whatever and gain this territory or this land?

Prof. Response: We will be going through the details of the tribulation when I return in May, but the answer is, no, Israel entering the tribulation period buys into the world-leader of the Anti-Christ. It seems as though Israel, understands this man who is the Anti-Christ, is viewed as their Messiah. But half-way through the tribulation period, this Anti-Christ, the world political leader, and the false prophet and the Beast (the trinity of Satan so to speak), turn against Israel and make Israel the enemy of the world. Therefore, half-way through the tribulation there is a unique change in the world politics. This is why some people see the church on earth through the first half of the tribulation.

Student Question: At the mid-point of the tribulation is it at that point that the ones that don't have the mark, will not be able to buy and sell.

Prof. Response: I don't remember all the details. Remember I told you that if you want to know more, study the tribulation in the book of Revelation. That is the book that gives us all the details.

In English there are not only many translations, but the methodology of translations vary. Some of the English translations are so bad I would never even read them. But there are some that although different approaches, are still pretty good translations.

I had a professor, a scholar say to me, it is good to read the Bible in as many good translations as you can, because the many ways of saying the same thing will help fill in our understanding. I suggest that you take the time and get 4 or 5 good French translations, reading through the book of Revelation in each one to get a feel for what is happening.

CLASS 7

Prof. Question: Please read your answer for the Abrahamic covenant demands Israel's permanence.

Student Response: -Because Israel is a nation God promised to Abraham. Israel had the promise of blessing and cursing that involved all the other nations of the earth. Israel has to be permanent so that they can be that aspect of blessing to all the other nations, so if they go away, then the blessings would cease.

Prof. Response: That's good, very good.

Student Response: --God sealed a covenant by saying I will be their God forever.

Prof. Response: OK, excellent. One more

Student Response: -It is permanent because his descendants are on the throne forever. He also promised this territory and gives it to Israel as their eternal possession. In Genesis 15:18 we see that God himself walked along through and participated in the covenant and in Jeremiah 32 God promised that despite their disobedience Israel would never lose their salvation. In conclusion, seeing all those, we conclude it is an eternal covenant.

6. How is the Church Related to the Abrahamic Covenant?

The Abrahamic Covenant is related to the church in its universal aspects, but it does not mean the covenant was made with the church. The church is promised eternity with Jesus Christ, as ruling with Him during

the Millennium even as Israelites are Christ's priests. All are united with Christ in the New Heaven and Earth forever.

D. The Davidic Covenant

1. Content

2 Sam. 7:12-16: *When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom... And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.*

Here God is specifically promising David the aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant of the seed on the throne. As you continue through the passage, you will discover that there is really no time given to us in Scripture in which God made the sacrifice and walked alone between. Whether God did something with David, we don't know, but there is no record of the symbol of this covenant.

In your notes we see there are really 3 promises within this promise that are all focussed on the same thing:

2. The Promises of the Covenant

i) David would have a POSTERITY, a seed.

We discover that actually David had 17 sons.

ii) David's THRONE was to be established FOREVER.

iii) David's KINGDOM was to be established forever.

We were reminded the other day that there is a difference between having political control over a country and owning the property that is of that country. I believe this is why there is the distinction of the throne or the authority forever, and the kingdom forever. These are two distinct promises.

3. Reasons Davidic Covenant is Unconditional

Again I want to give you the information about why the Davidic Covenant is unconditional:

i) First of all, because it is called eternal.

2 Sam. 7:13, (16; 23:5): *He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

Isa. 55:3: *Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you — The sure mercies of David.*

Ezek. 37:25: *Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.*

Every one of these texts refers to the promise given to David as an everlasting covenant.

ii) Because the promise to David amplifies the idea of the seed promise that was given in the Abrahamic Covenant and if the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional.

Therefore, this aspect of the seed must also continue to be unconditional.

iii) The covenant was re-affirmed after repeated acts of disobedience.

In the full context of this verse David's sins would be forgiven and his posterity would be on the throne, unlike Saul, whose sin removed his seed from the throne. Even in the passage God is saying "Even if you disobey, my mercy will continue, I promise this forever."

4. Proofs that Davidic Covenant Should be Interpreted Historically

We have to recognize that Amillennialists do believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promised seed. There is no argument there. We have unity with Amillennials in the fact that they believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. But the issue is whether the promise to David is fulfilled spiritually in some way or literally in history.

i) That which has been fulfilled, has been fulfilled HISTORICAL-LY.

Our argument would be: "If Jesus, was the literal fulfillment of the Seed, that aspect of the covenant, then all the other aspects will be fulfilled historically as well.

In other words, if the promise was that His posterity will rule forever, then why also wouldn't it be a literal kingdom forever?

ii) Another argument that we would make is that Solomon, David's son, understood the covenant HISTORICALLY.

We see this in 2 Chronicles:

2 Chron. 6:16: *Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel,*

Not only does Solomon understand these covenants to be literally historically, he understood that although certain, obedience was necessary as he goes on to say:

2 Chron. 6:16b-17: *only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' "And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.*

Once again we see the necessity of belief and obedience of the generation that would see the Davidic Promise, nevertheless, the unconditional character of that promise as 'God alone' will bring it to pass. The point I make is that an unconditional promise from God can never fail to be fulfilled as God himself produces the 'necessity' in His perfect time.

iii) OT PROPHETS understood Davidic Covenant literally but also the prophets of the OT:

Isa. 9:6,7: *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Jer. 23:5,6: *Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely;*

Jer. 33:17: *For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;*

Psm. 89:3-4: *I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 'Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.'*

These passages of the OT prophets all speak of the Davidic Covenant as a historical promise and expectation.

iv) Believers in Jesus' day interpreted this LITERALLY (HISTORICALLY):

Lu. 1:30-33: *Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

Matt. 20:21: *And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."*

Acts 1:6: *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

There is the argument today that believers in Jesus' day interpreted literally Luke 1 and Matt 20 and Acts 1, the believers were all looking for a real kingdom to come through Christ. So our argument would be – if the disciples and others asked Jesus when the kingdom would come literally, historically, and they were wrong about that, Jesus would have corrected them- He would have said, this not going to be a spiritual kingdom, it's going to be a historical/literal kingdom.

All of these texts (and many more) demonstrate that the true believers in Jesus day, represented by the NT writers, believed a historical Kingdom of David was promised by God. They expected this promise to be fulfilled without reservation, and longed for it.

v) The true church today believes in the HISTORICAL Jesus.

For example, in Isaiah 9 'a child is born.' All true Christianity understand the child to be Jesus Christ, a historical person. Most of the world measures dating in terms of Before Christ (B.C.) and after Christ (A.D.). That same passage says 'the throne of David forever.' This kingdom must also be a historically fulfilled promise, as Jesus was.

vi). Answer to Amillennialists

Lastly as we look at an answer to an Amillennialist who would say the kingdom promise has been fulfilled spiritually, we would argue if David's throne historically was real, actually a throne in Jerusalem which he sat upon, which he ruled from. If that were literal then how could God's throne in heaven be the fulfillment of that because God's throne in heaven was at the same time as David's. This argument is inconsistent with proper Hermeneutics.

If David's throne and God's throne were entirely equated as a throne in heaven, then the 50 references to David in the NT would indicate such, but there is no NT a text where David and Christ are EQUATED. This was very evident when Jesus was defending His pre-existence before the Pharisees. He actually used David's words:

Matt. 22:43-45: *He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"*

Christ is saying how could David call the seed 'Lord' if the seed was not God. Jesus is actually making a distinction between David's reign and the seed's reign after David: Jesus Christ, would be 'Lord' of the eternal kingdom.

I am not going to personally look at the Palestinian Covenant with you. I have presented the essence of this on page 64 of your notes. As it refers to Israel's land acquisition, which has little to do with the church, our studies emphasis, I will leave you to do your own study of Deut. 29:24-28; Deut. 30. I suggest you read and identify the specific details of the Palestinian Covenant.

E. The New Covenant

1. Scriptural Content

Jer. 31:31ff: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them..."*

This is an exciting passage! In the context of Jeremiah where so many things are going wrong for Israel, God is bringing a renewed hope and a renewed promise. Jeremiah had a ministry of around 50 years. Yet, he did not have enough believers to put into this room. In human standards we would say he was a failure. But he was not a failure, he was fulfilling the purpose of God for his life. One time the king was so angry at him, they threw him into a sewer.

Here's the issue: When God gave us this chapter, He gave us a repeat of an aspect of the unique covenant of God. It is a repeat of everything yet, at the same time, it is a focus on the blessings that will come to others. First of all, he says in verse 32 we read: this is 'not like the covenant I made with your fathers on the day when I took them by hand to bring them up out of Egypt.'

Prof. Question: *What do we call the covenant that God gave them when He brought them out of Egypt?*

Student Response: *-Mosaic*

Prof. Response: *And God says that this covenant that he is now giving is different than the Mosaic Covenant. What is different?*

Student Response: *-no response*

Prof. Response: *We spent the last 2 classes talking about the conditional and unconditional nature of God's promises.*

Here God is saying this is not like the Mosaic Covenant: "If you fail I curse you," Here Jeremiah is saying to the people what God demonstrated with Abraham, when He Himself went through the sacrifice.

He calls this a New Covenant, that would bring ‘a new heart’ (verse 33). He is basically showing that this new covenant is “internalized.” He says ‘I will write the Law in your heart.’

So what is He talking about?

Student Response: *-A new heart for Israel.*

Prof. Response: *And how does one get a new heart?*

Student Response: *-by the Spirit of God*

Prof. Response: *And how does the Spirit of God enter into the heart?*

Student Response: *-By accepting Christ, by salvation.*

Prof. Response: *Yes! This New Covenant is the application of Calvary.*

2. People whom made the New Covenant with

i) Made with ISRAEL and JUDAH.

ii) Made with same people with whom God made the Mosaic covenant.

We have the benefit of all the NT theology to show us that this here promise was the unfolding of salvation not just for the Gentiles, but specifically for Israel who have not yet come to the salvation. We need to understand the reality of salvation throughout history.

Prof. Response: *How were people saved in the OT?*

Student Response: *-By faith.*

Prof. Response: *Exactly. Faith has always been the means for salvation. Salvation always brought re-birth, that’s the definition of salvation. We see that Christ speaking to Nicodemus, accused him of missing this truth in the OT: how can you be a teacher and not know you need to be born from above? (John 3:10. What is promised is that the whole nation of Israel will become believers. Yet, when Christ came to this earth as the Messiah and preached the gospel, and they rejected Him and contributed His works as Satan. Therefore, Christ rejected them as a nation. He said this was an unpardonable sin. It was a national sin in which they would not become as a nation saved by God at that time.*

The reason I ask you to continue reading until the end of the chapter was to see the conclusion of this promise was a new heart for Israel. He also says Jerusalem will be established forever. The new covenant declares Israel to become a believing nation and it is tied completely with future Jerusalem being the centre of worship activity for them. The church could never be the spiritual fulfillment of this simply because we are not

worshipping in Jerusalem and Jerusalem has not been established as the worship centre of the world.

During the time of Jeremiah Israel were 2 countries. Israel, the 10 tribes/ Judah the 2 tribes. Both countries had to be included to relate to the complete people that the Abrahamic covenant included.

It would have been easier for our thinking if we had come up with 2 different names of the countries instead of one, being Israel. It reminds us that as we are reading through the OT, when the word 'Israel' is used, the context determines the meaning: Is it the 10 tribes, is it 12 tribes, is it the land, or the collective nation of the Jewish people wherever they are?

3. Provisions of New Covenant

i) In the New Covenant we see the provision of the forgiveness of SINS.

This includes Israel's REGENERATION or conversion as a nation. It includes Israel's RESTORATION to the Lord. And from Ezekiel 36 it also includes the indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Eze. 36:26-27: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

We also have to acknowledge that it included MATERIAL blessings as well. Clearly it included the re-establishment of Jerusalem and Israel as a world-dominating centre of religious activity.

4. The Character of the New Covenant

As with the other covenants, other eschatological covenants, it is of course, unconditional as indicated by God's statement: "I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART". You see the introduction that we read in this covenant very similar to the Abrahamic Covenant where God is saying 'I will do this, I will do this', so the terminology is unconditional- God alone is saying He will do it.

It is certainly unconditional because the SPIRITUAL condition of the people during Jeremiah's day was totally disobedient and rebellious. The OT is full of revelation of the character of God. In this very passage, at a time when the prophet of God was being mocked and mistreated, God did not come down with a fist and destroy Israel. His eternal patience in waiting for the people to return, brought God's discipline upon them, so they would return. God here was still promising that He would make them a new nation.

Where I live I have several Jewish neighbours. Unfortunately, my ministry has not given me much opportunity to sit down with more than one family and talk about Christ. But I would love to be able to sit down with someone who is an Orthodox Jewish believer today and ask them to explain this passage to me. I don't know what their understanding of this passage is. I know that I have talked to Jewish people about Isaiah 53. They say that the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 is the nation Israel itself. They point to the holocaust during WW2 and other times in history, when nations crushed them and brought great suffering, as what Isaiah 53 refers to.

Nevertheless, I would love to know what they understand God giving them a new heart means. In the context of the Jeremiah, Israel deserved to be eliminated, but God said: "No, I will restore, I will put My Law in your heart." So going back to why this is unconditional, the terminology and the spiritual condition of the people prove it, as well as it is stated to be ETERNAL. We have already mentioned this regarding the Davidic Covenant. Yet, the New Covenant is but an ENLARGEMENT or continuation of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. So if the first was unconditional, the second enlargement was unconditional

The last argument for it being unconditional, is that it involves SALVATION, and salvation is never given to man on a conditional basis. Man cannot earn the gift of salvation, nor lose the gift of salvation.

5. Time of Fulfillment

i) The return of MESSIAH

We have to give some thought to the time of the fulfillment because we are talking about an actual event. Although these notes are included under the new covenant, you understand we are talking about the complete fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant in all of its capacity. There was a necessity for the return of the Messiah. Therefore, the new covenant involves the establishment of Christ as the Messiah of the kingdom on the earth.

From the perspective of the Jeremiah 31 there was still an understanding that 'the days of the seed' appeared to be a one event activity. After Jesus Christ was born, from Paul's perspective, we see that the Messiah's coming as the promised king of Israel is still to come. This makes the coming a two events activity. From these texts (and many more) two prerequisites of the completion of the New Covenant are evident, Christ's coming is a two event culmination

Heb. 9:28: *Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

#1 The coming of the Lord first involved His coming in humility to die for the sins of the all humanity as a one-time sacrifice:

Heb. 10:10: *By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

1Jo. 2:2: *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

#2 The coming of the Lord involves his coming in exaltation when all the world will see Him in His glory.

Rev. 1:7: *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*

Readers are exhorted to **look** for **He is coming**. This is His second coming which will be **with the clouds** (cf. Acts 1:9–11). **Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him**. Though the literal executioners and rejectors of Christ are now dead and will not be resurrected until after the Millennium, the godly remnant of Israel “will look on [Him], the One they have pierced” (Zech. 12:10). This godly remnant will represent the nation... Christ’s second coming, however, will be visible to the entire world including unbelievers, in contrast with His first coming at His birth in Bethlehem.⁶

Christ’s Rapture involving His coming for the and this second coming of Christ in His Exaltation will be dealt with later in our notes.

ii) The restoration of LAND.

Nevertheless, in relation to the New Covenant and Israel, Christ’s second coming also will involve the restoration of the promised land to Israel.

Jer. 32:37 (41): *Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:*

⁶ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 1:7–8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Not only was it the Messiah coming, it was also the restoring of the land according to Jeremiah 32.

F. The Gospels and the Biblical Covenants

1. The Attitude Toward O. T. Prophets by the N.T. Believers

It is important then for us to step into the NT churches and the time of the apostles to see what their attitudes are regarding the OT prophets. As much as we see in the OT the development of the promises of the covenant, we have the Abrahamic Covenant developing into three covenants: Palestinian, Davidic, and then New.

i) NT writers

In your notes I have marked a number of NT texts that convey NT believer's attitude, expressed by the apostles, toward the OT promised historical kingdom, here are excerpts of a few:

Matt. 3:16-17: *The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Luke 1:31-33: *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS."He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

John 3:5: *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Each of these texts expresses a belief and expectancy of the promised historical kingdom of God. These promises must have immediately reminded Mary of the promise of Yahweh to David (2 Sam. 7:13–16). As Martin suggests from Luke 1:

David understood the prophecy as referring not only to his immediate son (Solomon) who would build the temple, but also to the future Son who would rule forever. David stated that Yahweh had spoken of the distant future (2 Sam. 7:19). Mary would have understood that the angel was speaking to her of the Messiah who had been promised for so long.⁷

⁷ Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Lk 1:32–33). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The world saw Jesus as an ordinary man but God said He will have the throne forever. So after 400 years of silence from the OT to the NT, the gospels pick up exactly where the OT left off. We read earlier in the OT situations the understanding of the promises were literal, even in the prophesy that came many years after the promises. The OT prophets, even though they were after the giving of the covenants, talked about the covenants or promises still being expected literally. And we see exactly the same thing in the NT.

ii) The Problem Question

The question has been raised: What if Israel had accepted the Kingdom? Would there have been an age of grace? Here is my answer:

All of this Eschatological study is a response to Adam's Eschatology. When God made Adam, He gave him the authority to dominate and subject the world. God put Adam on the earth as king. Adam walked with God as truly a theocratic kingdom in which man was ruling but in total harmony with God. We call that Paradise. We could say this paradise was 'Kingdom #1,' what God intended.

Nevertheless, Adam sinned. He gave the keys to Satan. But God promised He would restore the kingdom to man with the Seed. We know that the Seed involves the coming of the Lord and the 'days of the seed' involve two 'coming' events: in humility and in exaltation. God intends, by His own power and plan, to re-establish this kingdom with the Seed. The seed is the God-man, who will live on the earth as Adam did, but who is in perfect harmony with God perpetually.

Time passes until God chooses a nation to bring forth the Seed. This nation is from Abraham. Abraham is going to give the promise of the seed, which is developed in these 3 covenants after Abraham. But, God not only desires to give the promise of a hope, He also wants to teach the world the nature of this kingdom. Therefore, He chooses to identify a special people with a special leader and a special Law that will characterize this coming kingdom.

God gives Abraham's offspring a Law that will demonstrate the righteousness of His kingdom and character of His rule on earth. The Law includes a political system of rule. The Law includes a spiritual form of worship. The Law includes a civil standard of dealing with one another. It is all a perfect Law. The problem is God has to deal with the human weaknesses of Israel. They, like all humanity after the fall, are an imperfect people. Therefore, this perfect Law must include the provision for

forgiveness in order for Israel to have a relationship with God's rule in their nation.

Thus, this perfect Law, called the Mosaic Covenant, shows the character and nature of God's Seed for a New Kingdom that is coming. This will be a perfect Kingdom, where there is no tolerance for sin. To demonstrate that this kingdom will be intolerable regarding sin the Mosaic Covenant, and the OT history of Israel, shows the flawed character of the kingdom in an imperfect environment.

Nevertheless, by the grace of God, He also provided salvation, which has always been by faith in the temporary OT sacrifices, now through Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the perfect standard of this Law, qualifying Him as the suffering sacrifice and redeemer from sin for the world. God knew Adam would sin by virtue of Adam's creation with free will. God knew Israel would fail, by virtue of human depravity. Therefore God determined that the nature of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant was entirely different from the nature of the conditional Mosaic Covenant to complete His purposes. For the church, God says the Law, meaning the Mosaic Law, is a tutor (KJV: school-master) to bring us to Christ:

Ga. 3:24: *Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Student Question: *I want to know if the Law was a pre-figuration of the kingdom.*

Prof. Response: *Alva McClain wrote a book called The Greatness of the Kingdom. In the book McClain says that after Adam gave away the kingdom, there is nothing that man can do to bring about this righteous kingdom. So even having a people on the earth with the Law of God written in their hearts is not going to bring the throne, it's not going to bring the kingdom, it's not going to work because their children will still be born with the sin nature. This is another reason that the true church on earth is not the spiritual kingdom. The Roman Catholic Church has been trying it for many years. Now they have war within themselves.*

I am not certain whether McClain's view is the same as my view. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this course, the order of these events are defined as the Pre-millennial, Pre-tribulational Eschatological Position. And the Abrahamic Covenant brings forth these three covenants. When we get into the NT we are given more information about the Seed and its two advents. My only struggle is the choice terminology. This I am still working out myself.

The thing that I think is important is that you men are facing teaching that is very pointed and very direct and you will have to make decisions. In all of Canada I only know one school that takes this approach. All the rest basically teach every position and let the students work out the details. The result is that when men graduate, they do not take the time to pursue their own studies and therefore pastors in pulpits are ignorant of how to teach Eschatology. That means by necessity they have to ignore ¼ of the Bible. This may sound strange to you, but I have more respect for a pastor who is an Amillennialist and teaches with conviction than a pastor who teaches nothing and leaves the people untaught regarding one-quarter of the Bible.

CLASS 8

In our study of Eschatology we see that, although there was a time for Israel, while in the land, to be disciplined because of the disobedience, this did not affect the promise of God to eventually give the land? In the same way, they did not receive the Seed and each existing generation passed in death. Has Israel ever had all the land? No it has not.

We see that, due to the unconditional nature of the Eschatological covenants, God will eventually give Israel, as a nation, a new, believing heart. The Law will be written in their hearts. Then they will have the land restored, they will have the God-man king, they will have the His righteous reign. We will talk more about this kingdom when I teach the Kingdom course, nevertheless it is good for us to remember that the land was God's land. It is His claim as King.

It is important that we recognize God used Israel as the agent of securing the land. This helps us understand some of the things that transpired in the OT, where Israel was destroying nations and killing children. Many ask 'how could Israel be blessed in destroying nations when they were just as evil as those nations. We need to realize that in going into the lands and destroying the nations, they were the agent of God's righteousness, as Ninevah was the agent of God's righteousness in defeating the northern 10 tribes. God is justified to deal with nations as He pleases. He is sovereign, He is righteous and no one is comparable to Him.

Student Question: Why was it necessary for Israel to kill all the people in order to possess the land, the territory. Why was it necessary for them to kill?'

Prof. Response: I see two Biblical answers for this question. First of all, the danger of entering into a land and not destroying the nations was the intermarriage with other nations. That would prevent the continued line for the Seed to be established. And we see by the time Malachi was the prophet that this was already happening. The nation had not eliminated all the other nations and therefore, they had begun to intermarry.

The second reason Biblically is the necessity for Israel to maintain it's pure and true religion in order to bring the mediatorial kingdom of the righteousness of God in that land. We talked about this in the last class. Although the preservation of the Law which defines that righteousness, was essential, through Israel's failure to keep the Law, God was teaching the principles of a true mediatorial kingdom even though it is not established. The world, with its many different government models, some of which are based upon God's Law, will not be complete in righteousness until the Seed brings the 1000 year reign.

Student Question: If we are talking then about the purity of the line for the Seed, how then can we see for example Rahab and Ruth, who were foreigners, in the line of Christ?

Prof. Response: The only thing I can say is that it is by the grace of God they did become believers. It was also because of the grace of God to allow believers in these women in the line. This was a rebuke to unbelieving Israel because there was genuine faith outside Israel when there was so little inside Israel. Other than that spontaneous answer, the only true answer is 'God has His purposes and the clay cannot question the potter who, in this case, is perfect God!'

2. The Great Question of Matthew's Gospel: Is Jesus the Son of David? Does He have the right to offer the Kingdom?

We want to go to the next section of your notes dealing with the question of Matthew's gospel. We know that each of the gospels has a specific purpose. Matthew presents Christ as the Messiah, the King, the Son of David. Mark presents Christ as the great Servant. Luke presents Christ as the man, God the man. Of course, John presents Christ as the Son of God.

Of all the gospels, it is Matthew who focusses on Jesus the Messiah, which relates to the eschatological covenants. The question that has to be asked is: "Does Jesus have the right to offer the kingdom?"

As we follow through the book of Matthew we will see how Matthew gave the evidence of Christ as the Messiah. The first 7 chapters lay down the foundation to prove that He was Messiah:

i) Chapter 1: The Legal Right

Chapter 1 deals with the chronological line of Christ and proves that He has the legal right to the throne. In other words, you can trace from the book of Matthew the line of the Seed from Abraham all the way through to Christ. The legal right of being King of Israel must come through the man and therefore, this genealogy traces Abraham to Joseph who was the supposed father of Jesus Christ. Now that's the legal right.

ii) Chapter 2: The Royal Right

But there is another aspect and that would be the blood line, the actual blood line that would put Jesus in the royal line through blood. Luke traces that line from Adam because he's speaking of the humanity of Christ and therefore he begins with Adam and all the way through Abraham to Mary who was the blood mother of Christ. We call this the royal line, the royal blood line. God did not give us this genealogy to prove the royal line, instead he showed that Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that was the place where the blood line would be evident. So chapter 1 says he had the right family; chapter 2 says he was born in the right city according to the OT.

iii) Chapter 3; The Divine Right

In chapter 3 we see that Jesus has the divine right because at His baptism the God, from heaven, declared "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well please." That was a confirmation of his ministry and of His Messiahship. That was a confirmation that indeed Jesus was God. In Isaiah 9 we are told that "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *Almighty God*, Prince of Peace."

iv) Chapter 4: The Moral Right

In chapter 4 we see Satan tempting Christ and Jesus having victory over Satan, "the God of this world." Matthew declares that Jesus had the moral right to become the Messiah because He was sinless and therefore not vulnerable to Satan's influence

v) Chapters 5-7: The Judicial Right

We come to chapter 5 -7 and in this passage we have the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon Jesus demonstrates that not only does He know how to interpret the Law, He can qualify it even to a higher extent. He says in this sermon "You have heard it said" (He is referring to how the Pharisees have taught the OT Law). For example: "You have heard it said thou shalt not kill." "But I say to you that if you hate in your heart, you have broken that commandment." Jesus demonstrates His judicial right to declare the true intent of the Law. He declares His judicial right to enforce

the Law in terms of bringing condemnation. He knows the proper interpretation and true applications of the Law in contrast to the Pharisees who perverted the law in their teaching for their own purposes and profit. **Mt. 23:16:** *Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.*

vi) Chapters 8-10: The Authoritative Right

In chapter 8-10 we see Christ verifying His message with authority the proof of miracles and performance of the supernatural. Here we see the authoritative right. His authority of the message that claims Him to be the Messiah was confirmed by these wonders, miracles and signs. Remember what I repeated in every class "The miracles prove the message." And it was the message of His authority as Messiah that the miracles proved.

vii) Chapter 11: Rejection Anticipated

What happens in chapter 11 is interesting because after all of this evidence from chapter 1-10 the rejection of Christ is anticipated. Beginning at chapter 11 we see the people having doubts and withdrawing from Jesus a bit.

viii) Chapter 12 Final Rejection

Finally at the end of chapter 12 we have the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. After this Christ gave no more offers for the kingdom to that generation. The Pharisees rejected the proof of Christ's message by the power of Spirit of God, therefore the kingdom offer was withdrawn. From this point there was a shift in the ministry of Christ. Now He is shifting from 'the kingdom is at hand' to the 'Saviour is here.' This pointed to the truth as well as the guilt of Israel's stubborn unbelief.

ix) Chapter 13: Pictures of Postponement

In chapter 13 we have seven parables, the purpose of which is to 'clarify those with faith' and 'conceal the truth from those who are hardened in heart.' These 7 parables are really parables that picture the age of the Kingdom's postponement. I urge you, in your own time, to go through these parables, summarize them, identify how Christ's emphasis has shifted, and determine yourself that the offer of the Kingdom is withdrawn and the parables are to keep the Israelites blind. I believe you will see that there are continuing signs and continuing rejections.

Conclusion:

For the purpose of saving time, I am not going to go through the remaining chapters of Matthew in class. What has been covered reflects Matthews proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the true, sinless, omnipotent God-man who has the authority to offer the promised Kingdom to Israel. Let me conclude with these thoughts and recommendations for your further study:

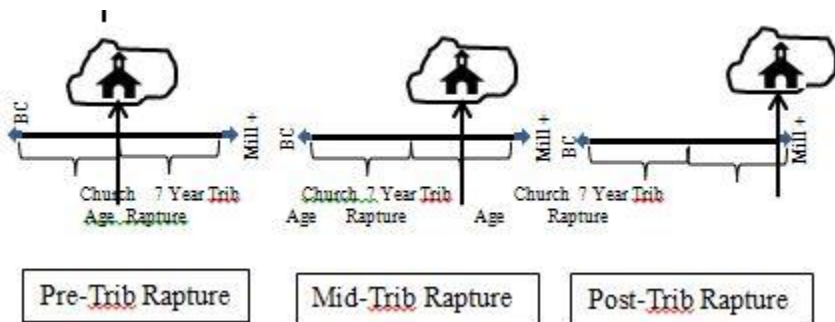
It is interesting that although the work of the cross is evident in Matthew, the teaching aspect of Jesus concludes with the Olivet Discourse of chapter 24, 25. It is important when you look at chapter 24's introduction to the Olivet Discourse, to listen to the questions that the disciples ask. I don't think that the disciples of Jesus fully understood the shift that Jesus' ministry took leading the rejection of the genuine offer to Israel as Messiah. But whether they understood or not, they wanted to know when the kingdom was coming.

Perhaps it was because they did understand this rejection and their genuine anticipation of the coming Kingdom led them to want to know "How long will we have to wait? When is this going to happen?" With such anticipation in view, consider what the anticipation level of the church now says about God's people today. And do something about it!

V. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

A. Diagram the 3 Views Regarding the Rapture

We want look at the details of the Rapture. There is a space in the beginning of your notes, under the title Rapture, in which we define by diagrams the 3 views of the Rapture: They are 'pre-tribulation,' 'mid-tribulation' and 'post-tribulation.'



B. The Meaning of the Church

The first thing we have to remember is that according to Matthew 16 the church was INITIATED by Christ.

Matt. 16:16, 18: *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ... "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

That is a very unique passage, it is the promise of Christ to build the church as early as Matthew 16. You can see from the chapter that it occurred after the rejection of Christ by the Pharisees. And Matthew gives us the details. He says *that Peter's confession, 'thou are the Christ the Son of the living God', is the rock that this will be built on.* Jesus declares very clearly that He will build the church. I will be giving more explanation of this in my pastor conference next week if you join us.

1 Cor 12:13: *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

We are baptised by one Spirit into one body. Therefore, it is important for us to see that the church does not place us in CHRIST, but Christ places us into His CHURCH. This is important because Roman Catholicism teaches that it is the church that places us in Christ. We have Christ and the work of the cross, and we have the believer. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, we are regenerated. This regeneration is putting the life of Christ in our life.

We could call that 'indwelling.' But there's also the idea of the body of Christ on the earth today being all of God's born-again people. Therefore, according to this passage in 1 Corinthians, the baptism of the Spirit places us in the body of Christ. So the picture is complete. The body of Christ is called 'the church,' the 'ecclesia'. Regeneration gives us individual life, and the baptism of the Spirit gives us corporate unity. Probably the best way of understanding this is to see this as an the experience of new birth as declared by Jesus (John 3). In this regard we are responsible to act out the unity of the true church as we are personally get involved in a local church which is working with other local churches.

Point 3 is that there could be no church until after Christ's PERSECUTION, DEATH, RESURRECTION and ASCENSION FOLLOWED BY advent of the Holy Spirit. And there are 2 reasons for this statement: Jesus is the head of the church and therefore He had to be in a position of

resurrection and ascension to exercise the headship as from the throne of God. And Jesus had to ascend to fulfill the promise of sending the Spirit of God with the special ministry of baptizing believers into the body of Christ on the earth.

Paul calls this whole concept of the church, the body of Christ ‘a mystery.’ Now the word ‘mystery’ in the NT does not mean it is something that is hidden and we don’t understand it. ‘Mystery’ in the NT mean something that was not known in the OT times, but now is revealed and understood through the NT revelation. It was very important for the Spirit of God to lead Paul to clarify this as a mystery because the Jewish people at Pentecost who were saved would never imagine that Gentiles and Jews would be united in one organization.

Since the giving of the Law Israel understood itself to be the special people of God and if Gentiles were to find the true God, they must be converted to Judaism. So the idea of the unity of the body of Christ including all people was against thousands of years of Israeli tradition. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, we will use the term ‘church’ or ‘ecclesia’ and ‘body of Christ’ as synonyms, meaning as the same thing.

C. The Meaning of the Rapture

Now we come to the meaning of the word ‘rapture.’ I believe that in this class I do not have to explain that the true church is born-again people only. The Roman Catholic Church is not the body of Christ. Baptists are not the body of Christ. It is not a denominational thing, it is a new birth thing. Manifested in the world in local churches. You also know that the church will be raptured. This is a firm belief of this school. However, the word ‘rapture’ is not a Bible word. Therefore, the meaning of rapture is in your notes. The word ‘rapture’ comes from a Latin word meaning to ‘catch up,’ ‘to cease,’ ‘to snatch away’.

D. Illustrations of the Rapture in the Bible

As we go through the passages, the concept of rapture will be made clear. There are examples of ‘rapture’ in the Bible even before we come to the church. We have the example of Enoch in Genesis 5:24 where it says *‘Enoch walked with God and then he was not’*. He disappeared. God took him straight to heaven. In Hebrews 11:5 we are given more information because it says *‘Enoch by faith was translated so that he would not taste death.’*

The text does not say ‘translated’ as the English text says, rather it says he was ‘taken away’ like the French word implies. The NT Greek

word ‘μετατίθημι’ (metatithemi) means to transpose, to transfer.⁸ It’s the same word that we use when we talk about transmitting a radio message: it starts here and it goes out and it ends up someplace else.

We also have the example of Elijah in 2 Kings, Jesus in Luke 24, and the two witnesses in Revelation 11:

2 Kings 2:11: *as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

Lu. 24:31: *Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.*

Rev. 11:12: *And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

CLASS 9

We began a look at the topic of the Rapture in our last class. After looking at the meaning of the word ‘rapture’ from Latin ‘to be caught up’ or ‘to be taken up,’ we looked at illustrations from Scripture. The first example was Enoch in Genesis 5 who was ‘no more,’ Hebrews 11 says he was translated, or taken from one place to another. We also briefly saw example of Elijah, Jesus and the two witnesses of Revelation.

In these texts we see that God has the choice, in His will, to remove His people from trials and tribulations. We come to the NT and see that Christ’s ascension was also an example of a rapture. He ascended in a cloud into heaven. When we examine the tribulation we will see the role of the 2 witnesses. It is very interesting that they are witnessing to Christ and they are put to death and their bodies are left for all the world to see and to mock. But with them, God has the final word because while the whole world views the bodies with mocking until they rise up from the dead and disappear in the air.

Now some say these two witnesses could be Elijah and Enoch. The reasoning behind this is that the Bible says ‘it is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgement.’ Therefore some say Elijah and Enoch had yet to die. I don’t necessarily agree with this because when we talk about the rapture of the church, there will be many that will not see death but be immediately translated into heaven. My last statement is just a mat-

⁸ (Online Bible Greek Lexicon) <3346>

ter of clarification: We cannot spiritualize these passages for language would have no significance. Christ went up literally, bodily, visibly therefore, the church will be raptured at His appearing the same way.

E. The Rapture is a Mystery

Paul, in giving us the information about the rapture, calls it a ‘mystery.’ We want to briefly define the idea of mystery even though we’ve talked about this before. The first point is that the truth of the rapture is not revealed in the OT, nor is it revealed by Christ in the GOSPELS. In Matthew 16 Jesus did not say ‘*I will build my church and the gates will not prevail against it because I’m going to remove it before the great tribulation.*’

1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 are passages that reveal the mystery:

1Cor. 15: 51-52: *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

1 Thess. 4: 16-17: *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Here Paul says the rapture is a mystery. He explains not all believers shall die but all will be changed. We will look at this text in more detail later, but Paul uses the term ‘mystery’ and he goes on to describe the calling up, the snatching away, the deliverance of the church into heaven. In 1 Corinthians 15 he focusses on the characteristics of the transformed body in resurrection and in rapture. But in 1 Thessalonians 4, the emphasis seems to be on the event which involves the coming back of believers in Christ that have died. They are joined in the air with those believers who are still alive.

So in a moment the bodies of dead saints are raised and restored with to souls descending with Christ. The result is they become glorified people along with the living believers who are also transformed into glorified people, continuing with the Lord forever.

Student Question: *Since there’s certain people that won’t see death because they are still live, will this transformation of their bodies be a sort of death.*

Prof. Response: There are believers who have died spiritually in Christ. This physical death is defined as the separation of body from soul/spirit. That will never take place with believers who are alive when Jesus descends to rapture the church. These believers have their soul/spirit and bodies at that moment. Their bodies and soul/spirit will become perfect with Christ. According to Corinthians, this will all take place when the trumpet sounds and it will happen so quickly the Bible uses the word meaning you can't divide the time. Therefore, in one way these saints will not experience death, however, In my opinion, the text "it is appointed once to die" has been fulfilled because all believers have died in Christ.

Point #3 in your notes states that there are truths relating to the rapture. In 1 Corinthians 15:51 (previous page) we are told that Christians will not enter into the kingdom of God without perfected bodies and souls. Our present sin corrupted bodies do not belong in the kingdom of God, that's why they must be changed. We can understand this because we live in this age in which the Law of death is a part of our whole being. When we enter into the kingdom, the Law of life will reign.

I've already mentioned before that the word 'mystery' means something that has not been REVEALED BEFORE. Hal Lindsey speaks much about the rapture and the future. However, much of what he says I disagree with. Nevertheless, he makes a good point in sharing the idea of mystery coming from a Greek word used to refer to fraternities and societies with special SECRETS. I don't know whether you have a society called the Masons. They are a secret society, they have a special ring and they have secrets they keep to themselves. That's the idea that Lindsey is talking about. And so he suggests that this is applicable to the church because we have this kind of a unique initiation and unique relationship with Jesus Christ. We are separate from the world. Lindsey is not giving us theology, he is just giving us an idea of why a mystery is special to God's people.

There are certain truths that God shares with His CHILDREN. If you recall the parables were given so that God's words would blind the unbelievers but enlighten or open the understanding of the believer. When you are in ministry preaching, you need to be aware of the truths that really belong to God's people, not the world. I think one of those truths is the doctrine of election. When God speaks of election, He's talking to His people. I believe He revealed this truth to us to help us understand that we cannot lose our salvation because He has chosen us.

But I believe it is a mistake when we are preaching to unsaved people to say to them ‘you must accept Jesus as your Saviour if you are elect.’ I actually witnessed to a man who attended a Dutch Reformed which emphasised the doctrines of Calvin, especially election. In sharing with him the gospel, he told me he knew Christ died on the cross for sins but he could not be saved until he knew that he was elected. Be careful when you preach to know your audience. There is a difference between teaching God’s people in you church you know, and preaching before the lost you do not know.

Student Question: Where are those who are not alive at this moment? We know from God where believers are they found at this moment because we know Jesus is at the right hand of God so, believers are with Jesus. But where are unsaved who died at this moment of my life. Second question is, if somebody has been burned and the body destroyed what is it going to happen to them?

Prof. Response: Paul says ‘to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord’. So what happens to the body at death, the physical part of man goes into the ground and it begins to decay. Burning is just faster decay. As believers, the spirit and soul goes into the presence of Christ, that’s why I say it is immaterial. It is real and obviously recognizable in heaven. So the soul and spirit of believing individuals return with Christ when He comes in the air at the Rapture. The bodies of believers are raised and united with the soul and spirit in a moment, in the flash of a moment.

What happens to people who were not buried, who were burned or lost at sea eaten by sharks? Death and decay, no matter how they come, all do the same thing: the physical part of man is reduced back to the dust of the earth. When God promises to raise the dead, He does not need to have all the dust of the body all in one little spot to do it. When we burn a body, all we are doing is making the deterioration faster. It all goes back to dust. Even if some people can say ‘well, if there’s an atomic explosion, even the dust is disintegrated’. No, even the dust that is disintegrated or vaporized into gases do not disappear, nothing is ever completely annihilated. God is able to take gases of what used to be a person, (perhaps some of the gases are in African and some of the gases have blown to Australia), yet God is able to take the gases and re-form the body? If He created the world out of nothing, then He can certainly bring back the molecular leftovers that are scattered everywhere.

Student Question: Those who rise in their bodies physically, where are they now?

Prof. Response: We know when Christ was on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah visited Him. We know that before Christ died, was buried and rose again, there was a separation between Abraham's bosom and where people were suffering. There are various views, but my opinion is that all the OT believers who died physically were in the bliss and the joy of Abraham's bosom. As Jesus ascended after the resurrection it is suggested from Ephesians 4 that Abraham's bosom was discontinued when the Lord rose and ascended into the presence of God He took all the soul/spirit OT saints to be with Him before God. Their bodies, with the possible exception of some who also rose with Christ, remain in the grave.

Continuing with 1 Corinthians 15:5, Paul says 'we shall not all sleep.' Paul is referring to the believers that will not see death but be alive when He descends and meets the raptured church in the air in a 'moment.' This is the Greek word ἄτομος (atomos) which is as 'a blink of the eye,' a point of time that cannot be divided. The emphasis is the instantaneousness of the event, like snapping fingers. Paul also says that this will take place at the "last trumpet." This term comes from the OT, first found when Israel defeated Jericho (Jos. 6), then when Gideon defeated the Midianites (Jud. 7) and the camp of Gibeah (Jud. 20). The trumpet sounding is referred to sixty-eight times in the OT, as a call to battle, a call to announce victory, as a call to gather up and move. Appropriately, here in 1 Corinthians 15 is the last trumpet; the final call of God's people as they ascend in final victory to be with Christ forever.

F. The Participants at the Rapture

There are some personalities that are involved in this 1 Corinthians 15 passage. First of all, the Lord Himself shall descend, so we have the LORD JESUS 'CHRIST. Secondly we have the voice of THE ARCH-ANGEL, from the OT we see that the archangel is Michael. We also see him again in Rev. 12. We have the DEAD IN CHRIST. That is the people the believers whose body is in the ground but their soul/spirit is with Christ. Paul in Corinthians says that that state of being, the body being in the ground and the soul/spirit being with Christ is better than living on the earth with all the trials and temptations. But he clearly says this is an unnatural state, like being out of your house. So he speaks then of our uniting of our soul and body with together as the perfected completed state. The

last people are the TRANSLATED BELIEVERS, or those that are alive on the earth at the moment that the rapture takes place.

G. The Rapture is to be Distinguished from the Revelation

Now we all know that there is a distinction between the rapture of the church and the Apocalypse or Revelation of Jesus Christ. But it's good for us to see the Scriptural evidence of this. There are 4 distinctions between the rapture and the revelation of Jesus Christ. **Matt. 24:21, 29-30:** *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world... Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

We see here that the REVELATION does not occur until after the TRIBULATION. This is clearly evident in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24. We also learn this as we study and interpret the 70th week of Daniel that this means that the 2 appearances are separated by no less than SEVEN years. So the first appearance of Christ in the clouds is separated from the coming of Christ on the earth, by 7 years at least.

2 Thess. 1:6-7: *since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,*

Here Scripture says 'the Lord shall be revealed from heaven.' From this we can understand that the revelation of Christ presents Christ coming in the flaming FIRE, taking VENGEANCE on those that do Not know God. Obviously, this text could not be the rapture, it is definitely the coming of Christ to the earth to begin His reign. Evidently the revealing that is mentioned here from heaven is for the whole world to see.

Jude 14-15: *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

This text says 'the Lord comes with His saints.' This is also said in the 1 Thess. 4 passage. Because it says He comes 'WITH this saints' rather than 'FOR his saints,' it is obviously he is coming to the earth as the King, whereas, the rapture is 'coming for' his saints. The distinction is

clearly pointing to two different events.’ We are seeing that the Scriptures give details of a rapture of saints and details of the revelation of Christ. As pre-millennia, pre-tribulationists, we have the Bible evidence of these two separate events. in our hearts.

Zech. 14:4: *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.*

1 Thess. 4:16-17: *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Zechariah 14 says ‘Christ stands on the Mt of OLIVES,’ whereas 1 Thessalonians 4 says Christ descends and meets His people in the AIR.

H. An Examination of 1 Thess. 4:13-18

1. Context

I want to give you a little bit of the context of 1 Thessalonians in light of what we are told about Paul’s journeys in Acts. Acts 17 and 18 is the time frame in which 1 Thessalonians is written. We see that in Acts 17 Paul could only stay 3 weeks in Thessalonica, because there was so much persecution, he had to leave. In Acts 18, when Timothy and Silas report to Paul, they report that some of the people were persecuted to the point that they died.

It appears as though the people of the church of Thessalonica were very concerned about the believers that died because they thought they would miss the kingdom. In some respects they had the same question that our student asked earlier: “What happened to these dead believers, where are they? What’s going to happen with the kingdom is established?”

2. Paul’s Answer to the Problem

The answer is in the pastoral epistles of Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus. The church under persecution was concerned about what would happen to the people that died in persecution, when the kingdom comes. Also, they were also anticipating the kingdom so much that some of them stopped working just waiting for Christ to establish His kingdom. Now you know the background of the pastoral epistles: much persecution, much concern about those who died, anticipating at any moment that the kingdom will be established. Now put yourself in the shoes of one of these Thessalonian church people. Your father, a believer, has died. You know

that Christ is going to establish the kingdom but you don't know what will become of your father. Will he miss the kingdom?

That's the whole reason that the Spirit of God led Paul to write 1 Thessalonians 4 is to bring the realization that the coming of Jesus begins with the rapture. This event happens in a moment of time. Paul did not say *'there will be signs before this takes place..* He allowed them to hold onto the anticipation that 'at any moment' they would be removed from these challenges. He ensures them that the dead in Christ will not miss this event.

And so he explains #1, verse 13 don't be concerned, we have this hope. Christ can come snap, any moment. And it may be today! That was the attitude of the church. He goes on in verse 14 'they that sleep, God will bring with them at this moment'. And to ensure that they understand verse 15 he says the people who are alive will not go in to the kingdom before the people who are dead. And then he shows how this will take place, verse 16, Christ shall descend at the trumpet and the dead will rise first. And the living in Christ will join them in the air.

This passage does not give us information about whether the rapture is before the tribulation, in the middle of the tribulation, after the tribulation. It just says that it is going to happen in a moment.

Student Question: I am a little bit confused with this whole relation between the rapture and the tribulation because I was reading this morning in 2 Tim. 3 where Paul says know that "in the last days, the perilous will come."

Prof. Response: You have to define your understanding of 'the last days'. We begin with whose Eschatology in order to understand?

Student Response: *The Eschatology of Adam*

Prof. Response: *All the OT building up with the covenants, the promises, are focused on 'the seed'. So for all the promises of the OT, the people knew that when the seed comes, that's the beginning of the end. So when did the beginning of the end, begin?*

Student Response: *With Jesus Christ*

Prof. Response: *Yes, as soon as the seed entered history, it was the beginning of the end because that was the promise that God had given Adam. So we have to use the term 'last days' from that context. The 'last days' are not the days that begin with the tribulation. The 'last days' are the days of history from the time that the Seed became man. So, Paul is writing to Timothy explaining that in these 'last days', the days of the Seed,*

there will continue to be hardship and trials. Jesus said exactly the same thing: “if you are my disciples, the world will hate you the way it hated me.” He said ‘you will take the cup of suffering the same as I had to take the cup of suffering.’

What word characterized this time in Christ’s life? The word is implied in Phil. 2 ‘let this mind be in you.’ Paul is describing “Humiliation.” The first coming of Christ when He died for man’s sin.

What describes this 1 Thessalonians event when Jesus returns again to the earth?

Student Response: *Exaltation*

Prof. Response: *Yes. Yet, now, the church is the body of Christ on the earth. What does Christ teach us that this period of time will be for the church?*

Student Response: *-The last days?*

Prof. Response: *Yes! The character of the church from the birth of the church to the rapture is what Paul taught, what Christ taught, what Peter taught: It is Humiliation. Jesus said, ‘they that chose to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.’ So, there’s a parallel, Christ who is the head of the church, He had to experience the humiliation of His birth through to His death. And now the church also must go through the period of humiliation because our cup is the same as Christ’s. The church, in the rapture, will be with Christ in His reign share in Christ’s exaltation. The 7 years of world ‘Tribulation’ will be Christ’s and the church’s vindication where God proves Jesus was right and the church was right.*

I The Resurrection of Church Saints

1. What conclusion would you draw from the following texts:

John 5:28,29: *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

Acts 24:15: *I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.*

In these texts, there seems to be a single resurrection because it speaks of the resurrection of the just and the unjust. If this is so, then how can we separate the resurrection of the saints and the church here, and then speak of a later resurrection at the rapture and the end of the tribulation or the millennial kingdom? The answer is to understand the language of

Scripture. Remember, that OT Jewish people did not think chronologically, they thought in terms of topic or in terms of importance.

In John 5, John is referring to the truth of the resurrection that will raise the just and the unjust in the same way that the OT promised the Seed would come. He is pointing to the fact not the details. Yet, in the NT we learn that the promise of the Seed was two events. When John speaks of the resurrection of the just and the unjust, he is defining that all will rise, but we realize with additional NT revelation that there is actually a distinction of resurrections. We call this in theology ‘progressive revelation’. And so when we come to our next point in our notes, we see that because of progressive revelation 1 Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 20 actually give us the details of the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

2. Since revelation is progressive, what observations would you make from these texts:

1 Thess. 4: 13-18: *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Rev. 20:13: *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

Do you see the uniqueness of progressive revelation. It is not a contradiction in Scriptures, it is common language. If Dr. Simon five years ago said Earl Cooper and Daniel Seeley are coming from America to teach at the school. That’s a true statement. There’s no reference to when we were going to come. And the students might get excited : “Oh, we are going to get new teachers” and think that we are going to arrive at the same time. But then Dr. Simon says a little later ‘Earl Cooper will come in 2005 and Pastor Seeley will come in 2012.’ This is not a contradiction, it’s just more information. Now it’s very interesting as we discussed it, the Scriptures talk about a sequence of revelation in 1 Corinthians 15.

3. The Scriptures set forth a sequence of resurrections?

1 Cor. 15:20, 23-24: *But now Christ is raised from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father,*

In this passage we see that Christ's resurrection is called 'the first resurrection'. And Paul says that now after that, there will be the rest of men resurrected 'in their own order'. So obviously there is an order of resurrections determined by God even before He created the world.

4. The five resurrections of the righteous:

There are six separate resurrections of the righteous indicated in Scripture. I want to share with you in terms of the order of resurrections.

i) In 1 Corinthians 15 we are told that Jesus is the first resurrection. Christ rose from the dead with a glorified body and went into the presence of God. As I give you the remaining list here, we are talking about second resurrections; the order of second resurrections. Christ was first in type because He was glorified. And everyone after Christ will follow the type of second resurrections.

ii) We have in Matthew 27 reference to the resurrection of believers with Christ's resurrection. In other words, when Christ rose, the Bible says the earth opened and believers were raised. We know nothing about these saints that were raised at Christ's resurrection other than they were a testimony of the power of Christ's resurrection. It's possible that this could have been just a restoration like Lazarus who came back to life and then eventually died a second time. And if that was the case, we really could not say this is a resurrection, it is a restoration. But for me, the nature of the context and the purpose of the Matthew 27 text reaffirms the power of God, I believe it was resurrection and these people went to heaven with Christ.

iii) The third resurrection we see is the dead Christians raised at the rapture. Paul gave us the details of this resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 4, in which all the entire body of Christ, dead and alive, are raised in perfection and with Christ forever.

iv) Next, we have the resurrection of the 2 witnesses in Revelation 11. Scripture gives no information about who they were or where they came from but does indicate that God gives them "*power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days*" after which they are killed resulting in world rejoicing after the fashion of Christmas celebrations today. Yet, "*after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God... great fear fell on those who saw them... they ascended to heaven in a cloud.*"

v) We have the resurrection of the tribulation saints at end of the tribulation in Revelation 20. These are people who were in the tribulation period, who accepted Christ as their Saviour and then died probably be-

cause of martyrdom. Most Bible scholars believe that this is also the same time that OT believers will be raised. We have no Bible text to say this, but we have the logic that they were given the promise of the kingdom as well. They looked forward to the participating in the kingdom, so it seems logical that God would include them to be part of the kingdom. Now when you read this text, you will see that this is called ‘the first resurrection.’ And this is not to say this comes before the other resurrections, it is reminding us that it is in the same character and the same nature as Christ’s resurrection. It is talking about the kind of resurrection of hope in suffering, not sequence of resurrection.

vi) We have people born in the millennial kingdom that probably will die, although death will be very rare. There is no Bible text for this but there are 2 ways of viewing this: First, in the 1000 years reign no believer will die, and this is possible. Therefore, death will only come to people during this reign as the judgment of God because of their rebellion because His is a righteous reign. Second, we assume that believers do die during this 1000 year reign, and at the end of it they are raised and enter into the new heaven and the new earth. We do know that there will be natural people who must be ‘born again, and who will have children, who also must also be born again in order to enjoy eternity with God. With the whole Law of Nature changing in Christ’s 1000 year reign, the life and possible death of God’s saints is speculation. One this holds true: the saved will spend eternity with God, the unsaved will endure eternal death.

So this gives us the list of the resurrections, the order of the resurrections of believers throughout history. We have to speculate a little bit regarding exactly when OT saints are resurrected and we have to speculate a little bit if saints died during the millennial when they will be raised. In all this lists, there is no mention of the wicked being raised. We see in Revelation 20:13 that “*The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them,*” and all these stood in judgement by God at “*a great white throne*” (verse 11).

So all the unbelievers that died from Adam through history will stay in the place they are now, separated until the White Throne Judgements. We know from what Jesus said about the rich man that was in torment and wanted Christ to send Lazarus back, that their soul/spirits are in torment all this time.

CLASS 10

J. The Glorified Bodies of the Saints

Rom. 8:23: *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

1. Believers will receive glorified bodies when they are resurrected.

We have been renewed spiritually; eventually we will be renewed PHYSICALLY. In the Bible we have descriptions of the glorified body:

2. Notice this truth in 1 Corinthians 15, and Philipians 3.

Verse 42→ It will be an INCORRUPTABLE body, not subject to decomposition. This means that it is not subject to decomposition. So the laws of nature that are today functioning in the world will no longer exist for us.

Verse. 43→ It will be a body of GLORY, honoured by God and free from the effects of the curse. What this means in its fullness I do not know yet, but I do know it means we will be free from the effects of the curse of death. I think we can assume that it will be a body of power. And that it will not be subject to weakness or weariness or disease. And perhaps it will have a measure of the glory that was evidenced in Christ when He was transfigured on the cross, simply because we will be perfected and in the presence of God Himself.

→It will be a body of POWER; not subject to weakness, weariness, or disease.

Verse. 44→ It will be a SPIRITUAL body – not subject to all the NATURAL limitations of present bodies, which require nourishment, rest, and medical care. It will be a spiritual body although it is a body yet not subject to all the nature limitation of present bodies.

You see there are things about this body that we cannot comprehend because nothing in our existence is like this. As a spiritual body it can go through walls and ascend into heaven. Yet, it is a body able to enjoy the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. Probably, as we reign on the earth, we will be participating in celebrations which include eating as well. The difference will be that the eating will only be as a matter of celebration and the fellowship will have nothing to do with sustaining our bodies because our bodies will not need to be sustained. We will be able to enjoy wine without the threat of becoming intoxicated. And we know that we will because Jesus said *‘I will not drink of this wine until I drink it new with you in my*

father's house.' For me, I'm leaving drinking alcohol for the better beverage I will enjoy with Jesus.

Verse. 51,52→ Those yet living will be suddenly changed and receive these glorified bodies. As reviewed earlier, this time reference speaks of how sudden this will be. It will happen in a moment and we will have these glorified bodies forever.

Verse. 53→ These changed bodies will be INCORRUPTABLE and IMMORTAL. Here it says that these bodies changed will be incorruptible and immortal. So the idea of incorruptible has the idea of being decay and deterioration from within, whereas 'immortal' has the idea of 'existing forever' because no outside force can change the life that is there.

Php. 3:21→ These changed bodies will be "*conformed to His glorious body.*" This body that we get will be fashioned like His glorious body.

That refers to Jesus Christ's glorious resurrected body; when we are raised our body will be like Jesus' when He was raised.

One of the things that I think about is what life will be like after our resurrection. To live as a perfect person is beyond my comprehension but it gets me excited. I cannot imagine having a perfect body without pain and suffering. I cannot imagine having a perfect mind that never drifts towards things that are sin. This will be our existence, and as perfect people we will rule with Christ for 1000 years, representing Jesus Christ, the perfect King in Jerusalem.

3. Notice what was true of Christ's glorified body.

I look now at texts of Scripture that identify the characteristics of Jesus when He was raised from the dead. So when we are raised our body will be like Jesus' when He was raised.

Joh. 20:19, 26: *He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord... Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"*

Although Jesus showed his scarred hands and side, we are told that He appeared in the room without going through the doors; He just appeared there. So obviously this body is not limited by any of the laws of nature such as gravity or physical barriers such as doors and walls.

Lu. 24: 30, 31: *Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.*

Here Jesus is eating with some disciples and after speaking with them He vanished out of their sight. Jesus was not limited by the natural

laws of physics. In Luke 24 the disciples that were on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus Christ because God blinded their eyes (verse. 16). But when Jesus broke bread with them, their eyes were opened and they recognized it was Jesus. This tells us that the body was recognizable. Whether the resurrected body is recognizable or whether in believer resurrection perfect with knowledge we will have an intuition who people are, I don't know.

There are many Bible texts which give details about Christ's resurrected body. In Acts 1:9 we see that this body defied gravity because He ascended into heaven. In John 20 we see that it could be touched and felt and the scars of Jesus were evident. In Luke 24 obviously Jesus had a speaking body. In John 21 Jesus prepared a breakfast for disciples and they ate together after His resurrection, so the body could eat food.

Now let me explain something to you that I think is important. We look at Christ's body and we see things that He did in terms of His glorified body. But in truth, God can do these things for His purpose even with physical bodies. It seems that when Phillip was called to minister to the Ethiopian eunuch, God just snapped him there. Nevertheless, when I contemplate our future raised bodies being like Jesus', All I can say is "*eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither can it enter into our imagination the things that God has prepared for us.*" (1 Cor. 2:9).

I remember a family the church that I pastored. Their 3-year old little girl died of cancer. The mother had all kinds of questions about what would happen when we were in heaven. She knew and believed that the child was in the presence of God, but she asked: "When we are in heaven will Christine still be a little girl? If she is an adult will I recognize her as my daughter?"

I could only answer her with this truth: "Heaven is a perfect place. Perfect in every way: not only without sin but with perfect satisfaction in every area of our life, I cannot answer your specific questions. But I know the grace and the nature of God and the promises of God, that there will be nothing lacking in your desires when you go to heaven. Whatever you require in heaven to be fulfilled in seeing your daughter, it will be fulfilled 1000 times more. I think that's what it means when He says He will wipe away all tears."

K. The Rapture Will be Sudden and Unannounced

We have already referred to this, but just to be sure, I put it in your notes that the rapture will be sudden and unannounced. I don't have it in your notes but you should put beside that line the word 'IMMINENT'.

The rapture is an imminent thing. There is no sign, no prophecy, nothing to be fulfilled. This was the expectation ‘at any moment’ of the church, and still is today.

When we look at the NT where it talks about preparing for His coming, we have to understand that is dealing with His second coming, and implications for Israel in particular. The following Scriptures point out the need to be prepared for the Lord’s return.

Luke 12: 36, 39-40: *“and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately... ”But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ”Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

Luke 17: 26-36: *”And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man... ”Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot... ”Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed... ”I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.*

Heb. 9:28: *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

1 John 3:2-3: *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Here in Luke 12 and Luke 17 the texts speak of the preparation for Israel for the Messiah’s return. As in the OT, the coming of the seed appeared at as one event, so in these texts, the Messiah’s coming is looked at as one event. However, In Matthew 16 Christ predicted He would start something unique, He says He will build His ‘ecclesia,’ the church. Nevertheless, the information about the eschatology of the church didn’t come until after the church was established in Acts 2.

We have previously looked at the rapture information in 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4. Hebrews 9 speaks of believers “*eagerly awaiting*” the Lord’s second appearing, which should be every Christian’s eager expectation. In 1 John 3 we see that the only preparation that the church observes for the imminent return is to daily be holy, because it could be today.

L. The False Views Regarding the Rapture

There are different views of the rapture which cause considerable confusion. Nonetheless, examining Scripture dispels these false views.

View 1: The Rapture is the same the second coming.

In Jude 14, 15 and Rev. 19: 11-16 our answer is in the Lord's SECOND COMING, He is coming with the saints to judge the ungodly. So if He is coming with the saints to judge the ungodly, they must already be with Him and that necessitates a time when they were taken up.

View #2: The rapture will include only 'SPIRITUAL Christians', as a partial rapture- the 'CARNAL Christians' will be left behind to endure the TRIBULATION.

In 1 Cor. 15:51 we are told we *all* shall be changed. And 1 Cor. 3:15 where it talks about the judgement seat of Christ, where all believers will be judged according to their works. The carnal believers will have nothing to show for life, whereas the ones that serve God faithfully will have rewards. This indicates no 'time distinction' in believer's presence with the Lord.

View #3: The rapture will not occur until the middle of the tribulation.

The answer to this is from 1 Thess. 5:9, Paul is given the information regarding the rapture to a people who were concerned because their loved ones were dead and they might miss the kingdom. So, in chapter 5 he makes it clear that the tribulation for Israel, the church would not experience this.

View #4: The rapture will not occur until the END of the tribulation.

We actually have the same answer for this error in 1 Thess 5:9. In Rev. 3:10-11 John was writing to the church, although it was directly from Jesus that the message was sent to the church. Here Jesus said: "...I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly!" This is an introduction to what Jesus is going to say about the tribulation period in the continuation of the book of Revelation.

We talked about the believers glorified bodies at the rapture. We reminded ourselves that it will happen very quickly. We have examined the different views of the rapture; Pre, mid and post tribulation. We are working now through the Eschatology specific to the church. If you remember the diagram, we are talking about the church that will miss the tribulation period; the church will be removed before this.

We are no longer thinking about what is happening on earth. Now we are looking at the church in heaven. We can only speculate regarding the Judgement Seat of Christ and the Marriage Feast in heaven. It is senseless to try and argue that the judgement seat and the marriage of the Lamb will happen at the beginning or the middle or end of the tribulation. We are just not told. For all we know, time might not even exist in heaven. All of these things that we're going to look at now can happen in the time of one second on earth. We just don't know.

VI. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

The wonder of it is that God did give us information about what happens to the church after the rapture. The first thing that we see is the judgment seat of Christ. We are given this information for a purpose. Remember as a part of the church on the earth, we are foreigners, we are citizens of another country: heaven. It could be possible for God's people to say "Well, if I am not a citizen of the earth, it doesn't matter how I live." However, Paul said 'if we know our salvation is all of grace, *should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?*' The assumed answer is No!

There are logical questions that relate to the world Christians live in, even though we are strangers. And they relate to the fact that every citizen of any country has to ask this question: "Can I live in this country and do anything I want to?" We know the answer is 'no.' Yesterday we passed a crowd of people that seemed to be having some trouble. We saw many policemen and 2 young men were arrested. They were accountable for whatever behaviour they were doing. You are here in school. Does this mean you can do anything you want, or will there be a day of reckoning for bad behaviour?

All of society tells us there is accountability. A citizen in a country, a student in a school, an employee with a job, and also Christians before Christ, all give account. That is what the judgement seat of Christ is about. It's not about salvation. It's about giving account to our King as His servants on this earth.

A. Persons at the Judgment Seat.

Let us discuss this day of reckoning for all believers in Christ.

There are verses in Scripture that are clearly showing the believer's accountability:

Rom. 14:10,12: *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

2 Cor.5:10: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

1 Cor. 3:13, 14-15: *... each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, ... If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved...*

All of these verses are written by Paul to the churches of Jesus Christ, intended to inform and comfort the true believers in Christ. Many of these believers were suffering persecution. God, through Paul, was giving them hope and a reason to persevere.

1. Unbelievers will not be at this judgment

Another judgment has been reserved for the unbelievers.

Rev. 20:11-15: *And I saw a great white throne... And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life...*

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The final judgement in Scripture is the White Throne judgement whereby, all unsaved humanity from the beginning of creation, whose names are not found in the Book of Life are judged by God to suffer in the in the Lake of Fire forever.

2. Believers Will be There

Rom. 14:10: *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

1 Cor. 13:13,15: *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is... If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

Romans 14, written by Paul to the church in Rome says “*we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*” And 1 Cor. 13 tells us ‘*each one's work will be clear*’ and ‘*fire will test every man's works*, speaking again of of believers. With these verses we come to the reality of the Judgement Seat of Christ. The first thing that we realize is that the texts always refer to believers, so unbelievers will not be at this judgment. We mentioned that the resurrected unsaved throughout all ages shall stand before the White Throne Judgment.

Revelation 20 gives us information about the Great White Throne judgment that the world is destroyed where all the wicked will stand before God and be judged. Therefore, the White Throne judgment and the Judgment Seat of Christ are 2 different judgments. We know then that unbelievers will not be at the judgement seat, and therefore, it will only be believers that will be there.

3. Jesus Christ will be there

John 5:22,27: *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son... "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.*

Heb. 4:15: *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

We are told in John 5 that all judgment is given to Jesus Christ. John 5:27 is very interesting because it not only tells us that Jesus will judge His people, but the reason for this. God has given the judgement to Jesus because He is the SON OF MAN. The text points not the Son of God, but the Son of man. Hebrews 4:15 helps us understand this reason. As God became incarnate man in Jesus, this verse tells us that He was tempted in all points just like every man, and yet He was without sin. It is significant that the Son of Man is our judge because no one could say that temptation was beyond Jesus, He was tempted to the extreme therefore as a man, He understands men.

Humanity could never say to God “How can you judge us fairly if you never knew what temptation was like’. You have no comprehension of it.” Now we know that God knows all things. But it could be a point to demonstrate injustice. God can never be unjust. For Jesus to judge His people is absolutely just, right and absolutely fair and perfect. The next time you fail in sin, remember that Jesus experienced everything that you experience but He never sinned. First of all, He understands our weakness. And because He never sinned, He can forgive us at the moment we ask because He also paid the penalty for our sin.

We have a unique picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ in terms of its purpose. Paul, in speaking of the Judgment Seat of Christ used a Greek word βῆμα (bema). This was a very common word in the day of Paul.

Prof. Question: *You know what the Olympics are? Where did the Olympics originate?*

Student Response: *Athens*

Prof. Response: *When?*

Student Response: Under the Greek empire even before the time of Christ.
Prof. Response: The first written records of the ancient Olympic Games date to 776 BC.

B. Picture of the Judgment Seat of Christ

The Greek and the Roman empires were advanced, having much leisure activity, especially among the rich leaders who like to be entertained. Because the Greek culture practically worshipped the human body and made it a symbol of perfection, they commonly encouraged men to wrestle together in tests of strength. Societies today do the same with sporting events such as the Olympics.

In ancient times these competitions were before the great crowds. When the competition was completed, the participants came before the Bema. The word for ‘Judgment Seat’ in the Greek is βῆμα (BEMA). This was a familiar word in Paul’s day. In the games arena there would be an elevated seat on which the judge of the contest sat. After the contest, the winners would gather before the ‘bema’ to receive their rewards or crowns.

The man who stood on the Bema, usually the political leader, gave the reward to the victor. The reward was usually some symbol of victory, it could have been a palm crown that was woven together, or other reward. Perhaps even on a rare occasion there would be some gold coins presented. Everyone knew that the ‘Bema Seat’ was the source of the reward for mastering the competition. Today at the Olympics we have the Bema ceremony where all the first, second, third placement athletes stand to receive their medals. The national anthem is played for the #1 athlete.

The Bema Seat conveyed very clearly that this judgment was not a JUDICIAL bench. No one was condemned but the place individuals were rewarded, so it was a REWARD seat only.

Rom. 8:1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

1 Cor. 9:24-27: *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*

Paul made it clear in Romans 8 that the believer is free from the condemnation of sin. Christ has Paid it all! Paul used the illustration of the athlete in comparing the Christian life. He made it very clear that those

who successfully run the race will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ not to be condemned, but to be REWARDED.

Paul tells us that the judgment of believers will be fire that will refine our works. And some of those works will remain and be rewarded as gold, silver, precious stones. Other works will be totally destroyed and there will be no reward whatsoever. So if you see that as a judgment of condemnation, I can understand why, but that is really not what it is. Here the believer brings his/her life works to God, tried (tested) and they are either good or they are not good. There really is no judgment here. It is all the genuineness of a believer's labour, whether good and worthy or poor and unworthy of reward. Your notes give 'modern day parallels.' You may not know the names, but they are athletes who, with disciplined, won Olympic medals.

C. Purpose of Judgment Seat

1. There are Two Things That the Judgment Seat is Not

Having established the meaning of the Bema, we need to recognize the purpose of the judgment seat. There are 2 things that the judgment seat is not: First, the judgment seat does not determine whether a person goes to heaven. In other words it has nothing to do with salvation. The moment a person accepts Christ as Saviour salvation is settled in heaven forever.

Second, the judgment seat is not for the purpose of punishing Christians for sins committed either before or after salvation. Notice I say before or after salvation. It is clear from Scripture that Christ paid the penalty for all our sins, past, present, future. Therefore, there is no condemnation. This means that Christians will not have to answer for sins after this life. There are many texts of Scripture that teach this: Psalm 103 says our sins are removed from us; Isaiah 38 says God has cast all our sins behind our backs. More texts are presented in your notes, these texts are just examples of many more that indicate that there is no sin left to be answered for in the believer's life. This requires for us to understand how Christians are judged.

2. Summary of the Three-fold judgment of all Christians

In the Christian life there is a 3-fold or 3-type judgment of all believers. First of all, the past is judged. God dealt with us as sinners in the past. That judgement was completed on the cross.

Eph. 2:1: *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*
Rom. 5:8-9: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

John 5:24: *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*

We begin our life being as being judged AS SINNERS, by nature and by acts of life. As Scripture states: "*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*" (Rom. 3:10-12).

Second, presently as God's people living on the earth, we are dealt with as 'SONS.' We begin our Christian 'new life in Christ' by being forgiven and removed from the condemnation of sin. As sons, God does not condemn us or punish us for sins, He disciplines us to return to His path and to His will. Because the cross is where we were judged as sinners, we will never again be judged for sin

Student Question: *-I have a problem with Rom 8:1. It says no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Is that not a condition.*

-My version only has there's no condemnation and then it stops there. It doesn't say 'who walk not according to the flesh'

Prof. Response: *My only answer to you is go back and study the context of Romans because in the earlier parts Paul made it very clear that it is the Spirit of God that is in us that confirms in our lives that we are the children of God. I see it as being a reference back to the fact that we are the ones who are privileged to be walking in the Spirit. The basis for this wonderful assurance is the phrase "in Christ Jesus." In Adam, we were condemned. In Christ, there is no condemnation!⁹*

Prof. Response: *Yes, most commentaries suggest that these words are a requote of verse 4, and not in the best manuscripts. Nevertheless, whether in or not in this text, we have John 5:24, and the entire context of Romans dealing with walking in the Spirit. The book of Romans distinguishes between justification in the first part of the book and sanctification in the second part. In my opinion even if those words were in the text, it still would not justify saying a condition is implied because the whole nature of Romans is the positive results of salvation and the privilege of God ac-*

⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ro 8:1-4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

complishing God's will in God's power. Romans is Paul's declaration that justification and sanctification is a work of God in my life, whereas Hebrews 12 talks about how God deals with disobedient children by chastisement, never condemnation.

CLASS 11

We have been looking at the purpose of the Judgment Seat of Christ, we see that there are 2 things that the judgment seat is not. The Judgement seat is not to determine salvation, nor to punish Christians for sins. In the past we were judged as sinners and according to the Scriptures we will never stand condemned for our sin. But that does not mean that sin has no impact on our lives as Christians. We know that we still struggle with sin. Christians are not sinless people even though we are saved. And John tells us in 1 John that if we say we do not sin, we are liars.

We have not been glorified yet, therefore our minds and our hearts and our bodies are not perfected yet. But Scriptures clearly teach that because we are saved, the pattern and the habits of our life should be growing more like Jesus Christ with increasing victory over sin as time goes on.

Prof. Question: When sin does befall us, what is the thing that we should do immediately? What does 1 John 1:9 say?

Student Response: Several voices: "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Prof. Response: For the Christian, sin is not a matter of judgment but a matter of relationship. As Christian God deals with us as 'sons'.

Presently, while on earth, God deals with believers as sons, so father-child relationship. In our lives as Christians, when sin comes we do not lose our salvation, but we break fellowship with God. The Bible says that we grieve the Spirit of God and we quench the Spirit of God. It is the ministry of the Spirit of God working in our spirit that prompts our fellowship with God. The Spirit does not depart from us, but the Spirit withdraws His ministry in us, except for one ministry: conviction! God disciplines and trains His children.

The purpose of the Spirit of God to bring conviction is to bring us back to Himself. If we resist this, because we are enjoying sin, then it's time for God to discipline us like children. Discipline is not judgment. Condemnation requires the judgment and punishment for sin but discipline

has a completely different purpose. We are never punished for sins. But we are disciplined with hardships of whatever kind that God would chose so that we would come running back to our Father.

Heb. 12:5-7: *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"*

Here Hebrews 12 talks about God chastising us as children. Chastening here it is the same word as 'trials' or 'disciplines.' This is the same NT Greek word παιδεύω (paideuo) meaning to train children; to be instructed or taught or learn, to cause one to learn: to chastise; to chastise or castigate with words, to correct; by reproof and admonition. God uses the term here to train Christians for His purposes. When we do not confess sin, God disciplines us to draw us back to Himself. But God also brings trials into our lives to build our faith and dependence upon Him.

So, how does God deal with judging Christians? He deals with us first of all in the past before salvation, as sinners. Then He deals with us in the present with salvation, as sons (children) with no condemnation. Now He chastises us or disciplines us so that we will continue to walk in dependence upon Him.

Third, He deals with us in the future as we stand before Him, as STEWARDS.

1 Cor. 4:1-2, 5: *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful; that it is required in stewards that we be found faithful... Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

As servants of Christ and His and stewards, Christians are God's purchased possessions, entrusted with His possessions. They are responsible to guard His goods and use His goods with good stewardship. God has authority to deal with those possessions, and His stewards will give accountability to Him of those possessions. So these 3 things are always a part of our purposes before God. first of all, responsibility; we are given possession of what belongs to God. and therefore, as stewards, we have authority to do what is in our mind regarding these possessions but we will give accountability.

The focal point of the judgment seat of Christ is accountability to God as stewards. In the parable of the wise and foolish servants (Matt. 25:14-30) God has taught us that the good stewards will be rewarded well, and the poor stewards will not be rewarded at all. In the same respect we can see the Judgment Seat of Christ as the completion of our responsibility in giving account to God. This has nothing to do with judgment and punishment of sin. It has only to do with the measure of our faithfulness and whether we will receive a reward or not.

D. Payment at the Judgment Seat

1. Is reward a proper motivation?

In the context of Christians being God's stewards the question must be asked: Should rewards motivate us to pursue the rewards that God offers us? Was Paul motivated by reward? Paul indicates so.

1 Cor. 9:24-25: *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

Here Paul is talking about the Christian life as a race and he says 'run to get the reward.' That means the Christian life should involve everything that the athlete would do to gain a reward: the discipline, holding to the rules, pursuing the end of the race, all of these things are included in pursuit of God's reward. Paul was motivated by God's promise of reward.

Heb. 11:24-26: *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

Moses focused on the reward of God in eternity greater riches than the rewards of being the Pharaoh of Egypt. Considering the power and riches possessed by the Pharaoh of Egypt, that was a monumental decision, and a wise one! Moses was motivated by God's promise of eternal reward. All of those mentioned in the Hebrews 11 passage were looking forward to the day when God would complete His purposes.

Prof. Question: *What is the theme of Hebrews 11?*

Student Response: *Faith*

Prof. Response: *Exactly! The same as the Judgment Seat of Christ because it is the responsibility of stewards to be found faithful.*

2. The Classic Passage on the Judgment Seat

In 1 Corinthians 3 we find the details of the Judgement Seat of Christ:

i) The Malady

1 Cor. 3:1-4: *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

Here we can see the problem, or the sickness or the challenge that is here mentioned for the believer. We know that this idea of carnality or acting as though we are still in the flesh is a problem when we are first Christian. And of course we can understand that because a new believer, especially if this person is an older person, still has the mind that thinks the way that he did before he was saved.

If you are a man of 20 years of age and all of your life you have had the habit of having a bad temper, so that all of your life is someone abused you like this, you'd punch them. They would accept Christ as your Saviour, now the spirit of God can by His grace change individuals who are like this, He can do this. But He tells us in Scripture that we need to have our minds renewed by the word of God. So the day after this man is saved and someone pushed him, it is a possibility that he could think about punching and stop because now he is a Christian, or he could just punch and then think 'oh I should not do that.'

So Paul uses the illustration that the new believer is a baby, just learning how to walk the Christian life. But it's different if this man has the same response 5 years after he accepted Christ as his Saviour. That individual has not allowed the spirit of God to take the word of God and to continue to transform his life. So Paul basically says the test here is will we continue in the flesh and let the responses of the flesh or the old man lead us, or will we walk in the spirit and let the Spirit of God mature us in Christ.

Prof. Question: Which one of these individuals is going to be the good steward that operates with faith?

Student Response: The one who lets himself be driven by the spirit.

ii) The Men

1 Cor. 3:5-9: *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*

In this passage as Paul continues to help us understand the significance of the judgment seat of Christ, he reminds us that man are the instruments that God works through. And he simple uses other illustrations in life to show us that if you work, you get the reward. The farmer has to sow the crops. The architect has to use his skills to design the buildings. So if the farmer does not sow, no crop. If the architect does not design, no building is built. Paul is showing us that the idea of the Judgment Seat is the stewardship thing all believers have responsibilities for.

iii) The Materials

1 Cor. 3:10-12: *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

You see in this passage that the materials gold, silver and precious stone, wood hay and stubble- they are the working materials, they are not the rewards. And so he's carrying on with the idea of the labour that we do and he's telling us that we can do the labour with the right materials and they will last or the wrong materials and they will not last.

So Paul is carrying on with the idea of how we operate in the Christian faith, either in the flesh or in the spirit. And so the material that we use when the spirit of God is leading us and we are depending on the spirit of God to serve Him are the permanent materials, gold, silver, precious stones. And the materials that we labour with and serve God with, if it's only in the flesh, are things that never last. And so that's the state of our lives before God, we have either been serving him in the Spirit and have works that will last or we have been serving him in the strength of the flesh and have works that will not last. At this point, all the decisions have been ours.

So, the next part shows us what happens at the judgment seat of Christ- it is like the fire that tests the material. This cannot be seen as judgment because we have made the decisions; we have built with the materials. And God has told us ahead of time- your works are going to pass through the fire. So the choice is totally ours. And the accountability is like the fire.

iv) The Manifestation

1 Cor. 3:13-15: each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Now Paul goes on to talk about the materials we are working. You can see that the judgment seat of Christ is simply the test of what our labours on this life were for, were made from. So can you understand now that this has nothing to do with a judgment against sin? It's simply the fire that is going to show that our labours for Christ have either been in the spirit and are eternal or have been in the flesh and there is nothing left. And remember, He is telling us ahead of time- we know this now; we have a choice right now.

v) The Motive

1 Cor. 3:16-23: *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are... Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come — all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

Paul concludes with what our motives should be. He is basically saying it is our choice. We need to understand that we have the privilege of depending upon and being led by the Spirit of God in our ministry and our work for Him, or we have the choice of serving God entirely in the flesh. Many people have looked at this text and said- this is the difference between the carnal Christian and the spiritual Christian. But truly, operating in the flesh is more subtle than this. A believer can have the right motive of wanting to serve Christ right. I urge you students to take time every day in the Word of God. Deep in the heart of every believer is the possibility to hold onto pride. Pride leads to wanting to achieve in such a way that the world sees the great things I am doing for God. Keeping in the Word will keep you in the straight path.

I suggest that with pastors this is a major problem. In America it is so common for pastors to move on to bigger ministries and move on to more prominence. The way to see this is just to look at the ministries of pastors you know in America, which you don't know very many. I know 100s of pastors and very few of them would ever go from a ministry that is ministering to 400 people to a ministry that is ministering to 80 people, because it is the call of God.

When they talk about the will of 'God' it seems to me anyway, that most of the pastors go from the small ministry to a big ministry because it is 'the will of God.' I am speaking from personal experiences as well. I was 20 years in one church that was in a tourist area and many people from outside our area came for vacation and saw what God was doing in our church. As a result, I had invitations to go and be pastor in churches that were much bigger than what I was pastoring. It was a struggle for me to know the will of God because of the pressure of other Christians who said this is what you should do, this is where you should go, you can do much more in this church. I am not saying that every pastor in America who has a great ministry is only working in the flesh. I'm just saying it is so easy for pastors to desire to do big things for God that they miss depending on Him to lead where He wants them to be.

Our ministry, whether a SS teacher, preacher, or teacher, when people see you are doing a good job, has the potential to lead to pride. You want to do great things for God and such pride can cause you to pursue every means to make your labour bigger in. I believe this passage is teaching us one truth: Always depend upon the Spirit for empowerment and leading in your labours for Him. Before He made any decision Jesus Christ Himself spent hours and days in prayer. And He was a perfect man.

Therefore, bathe every decision in prayer with personal examination of the Word of God. Especially in ministry, humble yourself every day before God by praying: 'Lord I want your will and no other will for my life.' I believe God will answer your prayer because He sees your faith. He will lead you and bless your ministry although it may be small in human eyes, it will be profitable for God. He also just may call you to another ministry because of your faithfulness to the word of God. He may call you to go to a church that He will build to greatness, or he may call you to a church He intends to close down because the people are not faithful. Whatever He chooses remember that there is nothing better in life than following God's Will.

The labour that God's people are called to do is as broad as our imagination could imagine. God gives each believer spiritual gifts. My spiritual gift, I believe, is the gift of teaching, therefore God led me to teach, first as a Sunday School teacher, then as a pastor, then as a professor. Someone else has the gift of encouragement so they become a counsellor. Someone else with the gift of evangelism would be going out to evangelize. The Spirit of God will lead us to the ministry that He has gifted us for.

However, if I see that my gift is encouragement and God moves me to counsel people but I see my brother, whose gift is teaching, and everyone says 'Oh, what a good teacher he is!' I cannot let my own ambition lead me to be a teacher for the same recognition. I too will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The labour or the works that I do are now going to be tested by fire. As I allow the Spirit of God to counselling, there were issues in which I served God and counselled people privately and God blessed that.

That labour stands before God in the test of the fire, and God says '*well done good and faithful servant.*' But, if I pursue teaching in which God did not lead, God will honour the Word of God and people may be blessed from my teaching, however, only because I am teaching the Bible and God blesses the Word. When my teaching labour will not stand the test of fire, God will say to me: '*For those years of teaching, I don't have anything to reward you for.*'

Student Question: I have 2 questions regarding the judgment seat of Christ. Hebrews 12:14 it says 'live in peace with all and holiness without which none will see the Lord.' How does that verse relate to the Judgment Seat of Christ?

Prof. Response: Well, my answer is it has nothing to do with the judgment seat of Christ. This is talking about the character of our walk, what should reflect the character of our walk on this earth. It is in the context verse 11 of the chastening of the Lord. And verse 12 says 'therefore strengthen the hands that hang down.' When God disciplines us, or chastises us, tests us, to grow in the faith 'be strengthened' allow Him to do this in your life. The result of those trials is maturing in Christ and the evidence of that is to be in peace with all people and holiness. And he talks in verse 15 about not allowing bitterness to be built into your life because of the discipline that is there, but to carry on in the grace of God. So this is basically dealing

with the ministry of God in our lives now, has nothing to do with the judgment seat of Christ.

Student Question: *My second question has to do with 1 John 1:9 'if we confess our sins.' What will happen if a Christian does not confess the sins at the judgment seat of Christ?*

Prof. Response: *What does John tell us regarding unconfessed sin? The answer is in 1 John. The whole of 1 John chapter 1 is talking about the fellowship we have with God, which for us is the evidence of true salvation. It does not mean this is the test of salvation, it is the evidence of salvation. We use the word 'assurance.' Assurance is the ministry of the Spirit of God in my life as I walk in the Spirit where He whispers 'you are my child.' The evidence of 1 John is that this fellowship produces a love for the word of God, a love for the people of God, a love for serving God. There are many tests of fellowship evident in the book of 1 John. So you tell me, what happens to a believer who refuses to repent of his sin?*

Student Response: *-I believe that when a believer refuses to confess his sin, that at the judgment seat of Christ that those sins will be exposed.*

Prof. Response: *But that is not what the judgment seat of Christ is for.*

Student Response: *- He will be ashamed.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, He will be ashamed because he has nothing for his life works, therefore no reward, no crown to cast, in appreciation, at Jesus feet. That is the shame. I don't know how I can convince you other than your own study. The Bible teaches that after death the believer never deals with sin. It's done!*

If the believer persists in unconfessed sin after the chastisement of God, it seems from 1 Corinthians 11 that this is the reason some believers 'sleep' or are put to death. God just takes them into his presence because they are of no use on the earth. So, they come before God not to answer for sin, but to answer for their work. If they have none, everything labour in their life to serve does not pass the test therefore there is not reward. I can only encourage you to look into this and do some more studies on your own.

Student Question: *I want to ask you a question about another verse that gives him confusion in what concerns the Judgment Seat of Christ. Matthew 10:26 says: "There is nothing hidden that won't be revealed."*

Prof. Response: *The context again teaches us that He is giving assurance to His own people that in persecution and trials which they will face, those that will persecute them will be revealed. This text, 'for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known' is*

reference to those who are persecuting God's people. They will never get away with this, God will judge them. That's what this verse is about; it has nothing to do with the believer.

3. The Kinds of Rewards

We want to cover the crowns that are mentioned in Scripture. We see that there are 5 that are mentioned. I have no idea whether these are the only examples of many crowns or the complete list, I leave all that with God in terms of what rewards He wants to give. I'm going to go quickly through these as I tell you what the crowns are for according to the text. You should study the text yourself.

i) The Incorruptible (Imperishable) Crown

1 Cor. 9:25: And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown

The word that is translated in English 'crown' is the Greek word 'στέφανος' (stephanos), which is a wreath, a laurel wreath that was put on the winner of the competition. This is not a crown that indicates having rule like a king, but a victor's wreath. This crown or 'victory wreath' is for those who master the disciplined life of the Christian faith. In this text Paul, regarding the judgment seat (1 Cor. 3) illustrates by reference to athletic games, the motive for athletes to compete. Referring to the call for athletes to hold to a disciplined life Paul relates a similar crown for believers achieve life discipline as they serve and walk in the Spirit.

ii) The Soul-Winners Crown.

1 Cor. 3:7,8: *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

1 Thess. 2:13,19-20: *we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, ... For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*

Paul, referring to the labour *planting* the seed of the gospel and reaping a harvest of believers, (*you received the word of God*), mentioned the reward gained, the μισθός (misthos), meaning dues paid for work, or the rewards which God bestows, or will bestow, upon good deeds and endeavours (1 Cor. 3) and again referred to this as a crown, a στέφανος (stephanos), which is a wreath, a laurel wreath that was put on the winner of the competition. This is promised to those that are faithful in sharing

Christ and leading people to Christ. We must remember that some sow, and some water but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3), therefore, the reward has nothing to do with how many people you led to Christ, it is how faithful you were in sharing the message.

ii) The Crown of Righteousness

2 Tim. 4:7-8: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

1 Jo. 3:2: *... but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

This crown, as a ‘στέφανος’ (stephanos) or victor’s wreath, is for those who truly live each day with the hope of Christ’s return, thus being motivated to fight *the good fight*, finish *the race*, keep *the faith*. The hope of Christ’s return motivates God’s people to live morally pure lives.

iv) The Crown of Life

Jam. 1:12: *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

This ‘στέφανος’ (stephanos) is for those who continue to love Christ in the midst of ‘πειρασμός’ (peirasmos).

The Christian who loves God, and who knows that God loves him, will not fall apart when God permits trials to come. *He is secure in God’s love*. He is not double-minded, trying to love both God and the world. Lot was double-minded; when trials came, he failed miserably. Abraham was the friend of God; he loved God and trusted Him. When trials came, Abraham triumphed and matured in the faith.

God’s purpose in trials is maturity. “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” The Charles B. Williams translation says it graphically: “But you must let your endurance come to its perfect product so that you may be fully developed and perfectly equipped.”¹⁰

v) The Pastor’s Crown called

¹⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Jas 1:5–8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1 Peter 5: 1-4: *The elders who are among you I exhort... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly... and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

Here Peter encouraged the elders (pastors) of the churches with the message that God bestows a Crown, *στέφανος* (stephanos), of Glory for those elders who shepherd His flock *not by compulsion but willingly, as examples.*

When the disciples of Jesus disputed who was the greatest Jesus set the matter straight: He said to them, "*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'*" *But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.* (Lu. 22:25-26). For the elders who hold to that that premise, God promises a special victor's **wreath.**

Rev. 4:10: *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

It would appear from this text that when the church comes before Christ in heaven they cast their crowns before Him, so perhaps this is the first expression of worship, appreciation and joy that believers will express as they return their crowns to Him and honour what He's done for them. Hence, the lack of these crowns to present could result in shame. Scripture is silent about the details of that scene of tribute to Jesus Christ. The simple fact of God's promise to bestow 'victor's wreaths' as rewards for our labours is sufficient motive to pursue them, within His will, for each of His children.

VII. THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

A. The Scriptural Fact of the Marriage

i) The Text

Rev. 19:6-7: *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

The scene here is in heaven. The Lord is reigning, His bride the Church is in His presence. From the proceeding texts of Revelation it is evident that this scene precedes the return of Christ and the raptured to come back to reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom. I offer *The Bi-*

ble Knowledge Commentary explanation of the marriage of Christ and the church:

Expositors have debated whether the wedding will be in heaven or on earth. While the difference is not that important, the interpretive problem can be resolved by comparing the wedding described here to weddings in the first century. A wedding normally included these stages: (1) the legal consummation of the marriage by the parents of the bride and of the groom, with the payment of the dowry; (2) the bridegroom coming to claim his bride (as illustrated in Matt. 25:1–13 in the familiar Parable of the 10 Virgins); (3) the wedding supper (as illustrated in John 2:1–11) which was a several-day feast following the previous phase of the wedding.

In Revelation 19:9 “the wedding supper” is phase 3. And the announcement coincides with the second coming of Christ. It would seem, therefore, that the wedding supper has not yet been observed. In fulfilling the symbol, Christ is completing phase 1 in the Church Age as individuals are saved. Phase 2 will be accomplished at the Rapture of the church, when Christ takes His bride to heaven, the Father’s house (John 14:1–3). Accordingly it would seem that the beginning of the Millennium itself will fulfill the symbolism of the wedding supper (*gamos*). It is also significant that the use of the word “bride” in 19:7 (*gynē*, lit., “wife,”) implies that phase 2 of the wedding will have been completed and that all that remains is the feast itself. (The word commonly used for “bride” is *nymphē*; cf. John 3:29; Rev. 18:23; 21:2, 9; 22:17.)

All this suggests that the wedding feast is an earthly feast, which also corresponds to the illustrations of weddings in the Bible (Matt. 22:1–14; 25:1–13), and thus will take place on earth at the beginning of the Millennium. The importance of the announcement and invitation to the wedding supper, repeated in Revelation 22:17, is seen in the angel’s remarks,¹¹

ii) N.T. passages that indicate this truth.

I share four example texts of Scripture which indicate these truths:

¹¹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 19:9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jo. 3:29: *He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.*

Here John the Baptist is called the friend of the bridegroom and Christ is the groom. The friend of the bridegroom was only an assistant, not the main participant in the marriage. The assistant acted on behalf of the bridegroom and made the preliminary arrangements for the ceremony. His joy came when he heard the bridegroom coming for his bride. John the Baptist's work was to prepare for the arrival of Christ, the "Groom." John baptized only with water, not with the Spirit. Therefore Jesus must become greater and John must become less.¹²

Rom. 7:4: *Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.*

The brethren are the ones that are married to Christ. If you and I are represented by the wife, and the Law is represented by the husband, then the application does not follow the illustration. If the wife died in the illustration, the only way she could marry again would be to come back from the dead. But that is exactly what Paul wants to teach! When we trusted Christ, we died to the Law; but in Christ, we arose from the dead and now are "married" (united) to Christ to live a new kind of life!¹³

2 Cor. 11:2: *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The church is presented as a chaste virgin-bride to Christ. So this suggests that in our state now, on the earth, we are espoused or engaged to Christ and the official marriage will be this feast in heaven.

Eph. 5:25-32: *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blem-*

¹² Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Jn 3:29–30). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ro 7:4–5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

ish... This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

iii) The Marriage Supper will celebrate the formal union of Christ and His bride.

In Ephesians 5 Paul shares that the God's intended relationship between husband and a wife is the picture of Christ and His bride the church. The marriage supper of the Christ is the official wedding. The church presently is the engaged bride. It is separated from the groom because He is in heaven and we are on earth.

B. The Service Schedule of the Marriage (Willmington)

In summary, the Scripture presentation of marriage involves three stages:

i) The first stage is called the Betrothal Stage.

In the NT time, the Hebrew society often arranged marriages when children were very young. The groom's FATHER would sign a legal enactment before the judge, pledging his son to a chosen girl.

The groom's father would then offer the proper DOWRY payment. The prospective bride, even though she had never seen the groom, was betrothed or espoused to the future groom. The prospective bride would possibly not see or even know the groom. The families would complete two steps of the Betrothal Stage as evident with Mary and Joseph:

Matt. 1:18: *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together,*

The first step is the selection of the bride. Ephesians 1 tells us that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world, so there is a parallel here. Step two is the payment of the dowry. The parallel with our salvation continues with in Scripture:

1 Pet. 1:18-19: *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

Believers have been bought with a price and redeemed not by corruptible things but by the precious blood of Christ. So there seems to be a parallel with the church in this betrothal stage with the selection of the bride and the 'payment of the dowry.'

ii) The second stage is called the Presentation Stage.

The father of the groom would send servants with the proper contract to the home of the bride. Then the bride would be led from her home to

the home of the groom. The father of the bride would place her hand in the hand of the groom. And so there was this thing regarding the presentation where the bride finally is brought before the groom.

We see this process with respect to the church in Ephesians (see page 143) and Revelation:

Rev. 19: 7-8: *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

Christ gave Himself for the church, in order to present a spotless bride (Eph. 5). In Rev. 19 the marriage of the Lamb has come. If we follow the same pattern of the Jewish weddings, we see that this will take place when we are sent for, which is the rapture. The servant of God blows the trumpet and the church bride is called out of earth into the presence of the groom. In some respects we can say there is a legal document because in heaven the books having the seals of the Lamb's Book of Life are open. The bride is taken to the home of the groom, paralleling Jesus' promise in John 14 that He is preparing a place for us.

iii) The final stage is called the Celebration Stage

This is the marriage feast, or the marriage supper of the Lamb in which the raptured church celebrates with Jesus Christ in His coming and establishing His kingdom. We can see references to this in the parables that Jesus taught in Luke 12: 35-37 (blessed is the servant who watches for His coming); 14:16-17 and Matthew 22:2-3 (go out to the uninvited and invite them to the banquet).

So Scriptures give us the clear evidence that the church is the bride and Christ is the groom. By examination of these example references we can see a parallel with the traditional Jewish wedding stages and the stages of our completion as the bride of Christ. I was blessed, when studying these texts, to understand that the rapture is the presentation stage of the bride to the groom. That was exciting for me. It put the focus where I should keep it; the promise of being with God forever; seeing my Saviour; and being united in perfection with Him forever. It is only in our perfected state that we come before Him as the chaste and pure bride. By the way, this is a good way of teaching your children the importance of being virgins before marriage.

CLASS 12

VII THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

A. The Historical Background of the Prophecy

1. The prophecy of JEREMIAH indicated:

Jeremiah's prophecy indicated that God had determined a SEVENTY year servitude of Judah in Babylon in order that the land enjoy her Sabbaths.

Jer. 25:11, 12: *And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.*

2. Clarification of Duration of the Captivity

There were at least THREE deportations to Babylon.

→606 B.C. (2 Kings 24:1,2; Dan. 1:1). During reign of JEHOIACHIM. (Daniel and others were taken captive.)

→598 B.C. (2 Kings 24:11-17). Nebuchadnezzar again comes and others are taken. Zedekiah is now made king.

→586 B.C. (2 Kings 24:18-20; 25:1-21) ZEDEKIAH rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar comes a third time and destroys JERUSALEM and the temple. More captives are taken.

→538 B.C. (Ezra 1:1,2) A Decree is issued by CYRUS, the Persian king for the first return to Jerusalem. The 70 year captivity is over.

→516 B.C. (Ezra 4:24; 6:15). The Temple was not completed until TWENTY years after the return to the land.

Observation:

From the first deportation 606 B.C. to the first return 536 B.C. there are SEVENTY years.

From the destruction of the temple 586 B.C. to its completion 516 B.C. are also SEVENTY years.

For Daniel, who was among the first captives, the time for the completion of the 70 years was at hand in 538 B.C. when he receives the vision of Dan. 9.

B. The Importance of the Prophecy

If the first 69 weeks of Daniel were subject to literal fulfillment, it is a strong argument that the 70th week will be fulfilled LITERALLY. The 70 weeks of Daniel totally relate to Israel and Israel's relation to Gentile powers and the rejection of the MESSIAH.

Daniel was the Israeli youth that was carried off to Babylon. In his ‘bondage’ he was honoured by God by given to interpret visions. Therefore, received the distinction of being made the second in command over all the wise men. Do not think of Daniel as a small shepherd boy that happened to be taken and living in Babylon in obscurity. He was in Babylon for 70 years, during which time God put him in a strategic place. We won’t go through all the events in his life, but chapter 6 gives the exact situation he was in.

Dan. 6:1,3: *It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom... Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.*

Dan. 9:2: *...in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*

When in this position Daniel came to understand Jeremiah’s 70th week prophecy for Israel (Jer. 25:11-12; 27:7; 29:10). So he begins to pray because Jeremiah indicated ‘time is up’ and the captivity should be over. Being the godly man that he was, Daniel confesses the sin of his people and prays: ‘you have purged us. It is now time to be delivered.’ God answers his prayer by giving him this unique vision of 70 weeks.

C. The Analysis of the Seventy Years

1. The 70 weeks of Daniel 9

Dan. 9:24: *Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.*

God’s plan is for a period of 70 weeks in which certain things will be accomplished. These weeks are not weeks of days, but weeks of YEARS. The Hebrew word translated ‘weeks’ means ‘SEVENS’, and can refer to sevens of year just as well as sevens of days. Daniel refers to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 19:10; 25:11, 12) which states that the nation shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years. The seventy weeks is equal to 490 years. God had determined a 70-year servitude.

Now, it’s interesting that there is a correlation between Israel entering into the Promised Land and the call for Israel to keep the Sabbaths in their promised land.

Lev. 25:3-4: *Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.*

Essentially, the Sabbath year was to be held ever seventh year in which the land was to be uncultivated and left unsown.

2 Chron. 36:21: *And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.*

God had said ‘because you do not keep the Sabbaths, I myself will give the land the rest.’ There were very few years, if any, during the time that Israel were in the promised land that they kept the Sabbath Year. They were in the land a little bit longer than the 490 years. In that period time there would have been 70 Sabbath years which they ignored. Their time of bondage in Babylon represented those 70 years of neglect as God himself that they did not allow the land to stay dormant and recover the Sabbath years.

I think it is unique in the plan of God to see how orderly God is. The Sabbath command was every 7 years. The vision that God gives to Daniel is seventy-sevens. This is not a magical number, it simply tells us that the Lord is a God of order, a God of specifics, a God has a plan, and He keeps accurate record and holds His people accountable.

This judgment on Israel was fulfilled literally, for the nation wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, a year for every day that the spies searched out the land of Canaan.

Applying this principle to 70 weeks, 7 years being equal to one week, we have a total of 490 years. By the time these 490 years run their course, God will have completed six things for Israel:

i) At the end of the 490 years God will **finish** the **transgression** of Israel. The verb “to finish” (*kālā*) means “to bring something to an end.” Israel’s sin of disobedience will be brought to an end at Christ’s second coming when she repents and turns to Him as her Messiah and Savior. Then she will be restored to the land and blessed, in answer to Daniel’s prayer.

In Old Testament days the highpoint in Israel’s festival calendar was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). On that day the nation assembled before God, acknowledged her sin, and offered blood sacrifices to cover that sin.

Though that sacrifice covered Israel's sin for 12 months, it did not permanently remove that sin (Heb. 10:1–3). It was necessary that a sacrifice be offered God that would permanently remove all the accumulated sins. This sacrifice was offered by Jesus Christ who by His death made payment for all sins that had not been removed in the past (cf. Rom. 3:25). So His atoning work on the cross has made possible His future “finishing” of Israel's transgression.

ii) God will **put an end to sin**. The verb *ḥātam* has the idea of sealing up. Here the thought is sealing something up with a view to punishment (cf. Deut. 32:34; Job 14:17). This emphasized that Israel's sin which had gone unpunished would be punished—in or through Jesus Christ, her substitute, who would bear the sins of the world on the cross. Then at Christ's second coming he will remove Israel's sin (Ezek. 37:23; Rom. 11:20–27).

iii) God will **atone for wickedness**. The verb “to atone” (*kāpar*) means “to cover or expiate.” This too relates to God's final atonement of Israel when she repents at Christ's second coming, as the provision for that atonement has already been made at the cross. Israel's day of atonement should be kept in view here too, as in the first of these six accomplishments. On that day God provided a just basis on which He would deal with a guilty people. The blood applied to the mercy seat (“the atonement cover,” Lev. 16:14) over the ark of the covenant enabled Him to dwell among his sinful people. Similarly Daniel's prophecy promised that because of Christ's blood shed on the cross God would deal with sinners, and here in particular, with sinners in Israel.

Being propitiated (i.e., satisfied) by Christ's blood, God can atone for or expiate sin. The Greek words for “atonement cover” (*hilasmos*) “mercy seat” and “propitiate” (*hilaskomai*) are related.

iv) The second three accomplishments deal with positive aspects of God's program. Being satisfied by the death of Christ, God will **bring in everlasting righteousness**. The form of the verb “bring in” here means “to cause to come in.” The word “everlasting” means ages. Thus this phrase (lit., “to bring in righteousness of ages”) is a prophecy that God will establish an age characterized by righteousness. This is a reference to the Millennial kingdom (Isa. 60:21; Jer. 23:5–6).

v) God will **seal up vision and prophecy**. All that God through the prophets said He would do in fulfilling His covenant with Israel will be fully realized in the millennial kingdom. Until they are fulfilled, prophe-

cies are “unsealed.” (“Seal” translates the same verb, *hātam*, used in the second of these six accomplishments.)

vi) God will **anoint the most holy**. This may refer to the dedication of the Most Holy place in the millennial temple, described in Ezekiel 41–46. Or it may refer not to a holy place, but to the Holy One, Christ. If so, this speaks of the enthronement of Christ, “the Anointed One” (Dan. 7:25–27) as King of kings and Lord of lords in the Millennium.

These six accomplishments, then, anticipate the establishment of Israel’s covenanted millennial kingdom under the authority of her promised King. The six summarize God’s whole program to bring the nation Israel the blessings He promised through His covenants (Gen. 15:18–21; 2 Sam. 7:16; Jer. 31:31–34).¹⁴

Student Question: Are you saying that the Jews went into exile in Babylon because they did not respect the Sabbath?

Prof. Response: Exactly, according to 2 Chronicles 36.

There a distinction between the Sabbath Day of every week and the Sabbath Year every seven years.

Israel was to keep the 7th day for worship of God and the 7th year in honour and faith toward God. Also, if you go back and study the Law you will see that every 50th year was another special year. These years were not only to be set aside in faith and honour toward God, but they were also designed to give reprieve to the poor in Israel. Those who fell into financial trouble and had to sell their land to get out of debt, were to have their land restored. Communism is a human attempt to try and keep all the people at an even status. But even in God’s nation, the people, could not accomplish this because of man’s sinful nature.

In the nation Israel, being sinners like everybody else, the wealthy took advantage of the poor. Therefore, to preserve the uniqueness of Israeli family inheritance, God planned periodic times in which everything would get evened up again. The 70 years of Sabbath were a time buy it back. But if you couldn’t buy it back, every 50 years, it was given back to you without payment. The multiple Sabbaths, whether Sabbath days or the Sabbath years, were a way of God saying “I still reign, so do what I say.”

¹⁴ Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Da 9:24). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

There are people who have criticism regarding these Sabbaths because they say the times do not fit. The confusion comes when you try to determine when the captivity took place. However, as you study the Scriptures carefully you will see there were actually three different captivities (see page 146). The 70 years is accurate in two different directions. The first captivity or deportation is found 2 Kings 24:1, 2 (606 B.C.). This is during the reign of Jehoiakim. This was when Daniel was taken to Babylon.

The second deportation was 598 B.C (2 Kings 24:11-17) is during the reign of Jehoiachin. Nebechanezzar invades Israel and others Israelis are deported to Babylon. Zedekiah is now made king. Eventually Zedekiah rebels against Babylon, so in 586 B.C. Nebechanezzar went back the third time and stomped on them by destroying Jerusalem and the temple. More Israelites are deported.

In 536 BC the seventy years is complete, a decree is issued by Cyrus and now the ruling king of Persia (the conquering nation of Babylon). This decree results in the first Israeli return to their promised land. In 516 B.C. the temple was completed twenty years after the first Israelite returned.

What I want to emphasis in this is that Daniel understood literally Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years. He expected that God would keep his word because God never breaks His prophecies. So he began to pray for God to look upon His people, he confessed on their behalf, their own sins so God would look favourably on them and fulfill his prediction of releasing them from their bondage.

2. The 69 weeks of Daniel 9

Dan. 9:25-27: *25 Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes deso-*

late, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

I offer this summary by J.D. Pentecost:

9:25. Important revelation was then given Daniel about the inception of this important time period and its divisions. The 70 “sevens” would begin, Gabriel said, with **the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem**. This decree was the fourth of four decrees made by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews. The first was Cyrus’ decree in 538 B.C. (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13). The second was the decree of Darius I (522–486) in 520 B.C. (Ezra 6:1, 6–12). This decree actually was a confirmation of the first decree. The third was the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (464–424) in 457 b.c. (Ezra 7:11–26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. These three say nothing about the rebuilding of the city itself. Since an unwalled city was no threat to a military power, a religious temple could be rebuilt without jeopardizing the military authority of those granting permission to rebuild it. No one of these three decrees, then, was the decree that formed the beginning of the 70 sevens.

The fourth decree was also by Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued on March 5, 444 B.C. (Neh. 2:1–8). On that occasion Artaxerxes granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem’s city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25.

The end or goal of the prophecy is the appearance of **the Anointed One, the Ruler**. This refers to Christ Himself. God the Father anointed Christ with the Spirit at the time of His water baptism (Acts 10:38), but the anointing referred to here is the anointing of Christ as the Ruler in His kingdom (cf. comments on “anoint the Most Holy” in Dan. 9:24). This prophecy of the 70 sevens, then, ends not with the First Advent of Christ, as some suggest, but rather with the Second Advent and the establishing of the millennial kingdom.

This 490-year period is divided into three segments; (a) 7 “sevens” (49 years), (b) 62 “sevens” (434 years), and (c) 1 “seven” (v. 27; 7 years).

The first period of 49 years may refer to the time in which the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, permitted by Artaxerxes’ decree, was completed (444–395 b.c.). Though Nehemiah’s wall construction project took only 52 days, many years may have been needed to

remove the city's debris (after being desolate for many decades), to build adequate housing, and to rebuild the **streets and a trench**. **9:26a. The 62 "sevens"**. (434 years) extend up to the introduction of the Messiah to the nation Israel. This second period concluded on the day of the Triumphal Entry just before Christ was **cut off**, that is, crucified. In His Triumphal Entry, Christ, in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, officially presented Himself to the nation of Israel as the Messiah. He was evidently familiar with Daniel's prophecy when on that occasion He said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42).

Thus the first two segments of the important time period—the 7 sevens (49 years) and the 62 sevens (434 years)—ran consecutively with no time between them. They totaled 483 years and extended from March 5, 444 b.c. to March 30, a.d. 33. How can 444 b.c. to a.d. 33 equal 483 years?

...According to Daniel 9:26 **the Anointed One** was not "cut off" *in* the 70th "seven"; He was cut off **after** the 7 and 62 "sevens" had run their course. This means that there is an interval between the 69th and 70th "sevens." Christ's crucifixion, then, was in that interval, right after His Triumphal Entry, which concluded the 69th "seven." This interval was anticipated by Christ when He prophesied the establishing of the church (Matt. 16:18). This necessitated the setting aside of the nation Israel for a season in order that His new program for the church might be instituted. Christ predicted the setting aside of the nation (Matt. 21:42–43). The present Church Age is the interval between the 69th and 70th "sevens."

...When the Anointed One would be cut off, Daniel was told, he would **have nothing**. The word translated "cut off" is used of executing the death penalty on a criminal. Thus the prophecy clearly points to the crucifixion of Christ. At His crucifixion He would "have nothing" in the sense that Israel had rejected Him and the kingdom could not be instituted at that time. Therefore He did not then receive the royal glory as the King on David's throne over Israel. John referred to this when he wrote, "He came to that which was His own [i.e., the throne to which He had been appointed by the Father] but His own [i.e., His own people] did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Daniel's prophecy, then, anticipated Christ's offer of Himself

to the nation Israel as her Messiah, the nation's rejection of Him as Messiah, and His crucifixion.

9:26b. The prophecy continues with a description of the judgment that would **come** on the generation that rejected the Messiah. **The city** which contains **the sanctuary**, that is, Jerusalem, would be destroyed by **the people of the ruler who will come**. The ruler who will come is that final head of the Roman Empire, the little horn of 7:8. It is significant that the *people* of the ruler, not the ruler himself, will destroy Jerusalem. Since he will be the final Roman ruler, the people of that ruler must be the Romans themselves. This, then, is a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem about which Christ spoke in His ministry.

When the leaders of the nation registered their rejection of Christ by attributing His power to Beelzebub, the prince of the demons (Matt. 12:24), Christ warned that if they persisted in that view they would be guilty of sin for which there would be no forgiveness (Matt. 12:31–32). He also warned the nation that Jerusalem would be destroyed by Gentiles (Luke 21:24), that it would be desolate (Matt. 23:38), and that the destruction would be so complete that not one stone would be left on another (Matt. 24:2). This destruction was accomplished by Titus in A.D. 70 when he destroyed the city of Jerusalem and killed thousands of Jews. But that invasion, awesome as it was, did not end the nation's sufferings, for **war**, Gabriel said, would **continue until the end**. Even though Israel was to be set aside, she would continue to suffer until the prophecies of the 70 "sevens" were completely fulfilled. Her sufferings span the entire period from the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70 to Jerusalem's deliverance from Gentile dominion at the Second Advent of Christ.

9:27a. This verse unveils what will occur in the 70th seven years. This seven-year period will begin after the Rapture of the church (which will consummate God's program in this present Age). The 70th "**seven**" will continue till the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Because Jesus said this will be a time of "great distress" (Matt. 24:21), this period is often called the Tribulation.

A significant event that will mark the beginning of this seven-year period is the confirming of **a covenant**. This covenant will be made **with many**, that is, with Daniel's people, the nation Israel. "The ruler who will come" (Dan. 9:26) will be this covenant-maker, for that person is the antecedent of the word **he** in verse 27. As a yet-future

ruler he will be the final head of the fourth empire (the little horn of the fourth beast, 7:8).

The covenant he will make will evidently be a peace covenant, in which he will guarantee Israel's safety in the land. This suggests that Israel will be in her land but will be unable to defend herself for she will have lost any support she may have had previously. Therefore she will need and welcome the peacemaking role of this head of the confederation of 10 European (Roman) nations. In offering this covenant, this ruler will pose as a prince of peace, and Israel will accept his authority. **But then in the middle of that "seven,"** after three and one-half years, **he will** break the covenant. According to 11:45, he will then move from Europe into the land of Israel.

This ruler will **end ... sacrifice and offering**. This expression refers to the entire Levitical system, which suggests that Israel will have restored that system in the first half of the 70th "seven." After this ruler gains worldwide political power, he will assume power in the religious realm as well and will cause the world to worship him (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:8). To receive such worship, he will terminate all organized religions. Posing as the world's rightful king and god and as Israel's prince of peace, he will then turn against Israel and become her destroyer and defiler.

9:27b. Daniel was told that "the ruler who will come" (v. 26) **will place abominations on a wing of the temple**. Christ referred to this incident: "You [will] see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation" (Matt. 24:15). John wrote that the false prophet will set up an image to this ruler and that the world will be compelled to worship it (Rev. 13:14–15). But then his end will come (**the end that is decreed is poured out on him**). With his false prophet he will be cast into the lake of fire when Christ returns to the earth (Rev. 19:20; cf. Dan. 7:11, 26).

This covenant could not have been made or confirmed by Christ at His First Advent, as Amillennarians teach, because: (a) His ministry did not last seven years, (b) His death did not stop sacrifices and offerings, (c) He did not set up "the abomination that causes desolation" (Matt. 24:15). Amillennarians suggest that Christ confirmed (in the sense of fulfilling) the Abrahamic Covenant but the Gospels give no indication He did that in His First Advent.

As stated, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel at the beginning of the second half of the 70th "seven," that is, it will be

broken for three and one-half years. This is called “a time, times, and half a time” (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14). The fact that this is the same as the three and one-half years, which in turn are equated with 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6) and with 42 months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), means that in Jewish reckoning each month has 30 days and each year 360 days. This confirms the 360-day Jewish year used in the calculations in the chart, “The 483 Years in the Jewish and Gregorian Calendars” (near Dan. 9:26a). Since the events in the 69 sevens (vv. 24–26) were fulfilled literally, the 70th “seven,” yet unfulfilled, must likewise be fulfilled literally.¹⁵

CLASS 13

The 69 weeks definitely end at the cutting off of Christ. Despite our math we know it begins with the decree and ends with the cutting off of Christ. Since the events in the 69 sevens were fulfilled literally, the 70th “seven,” yet unfulfilled, must likewise be fulfilled literally. The text does not tell us when the 70th seven begins, but the text certainly does have a break between the 69 years and the 70th year. So let’s go through my notes that I have here to show you 7 reasons why there is a gap of time between the 69th year and the 70th year.

5. Seven Evidences for the Time Gap

i) The 70th week in the text is treated separately from the 69 weeks.

When the vision is dealing with the 69 weeks, it clearly says that the 69 weeks end with Messiah being cut off. But the vision also indicates that the people of the prince shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

ii) There were 40 years between the CRUCIFIXION and the destruction of JERUSALEM.

That means that the vision is already introducing a gap of time. So the 69th week ended with the crucifixion, the Messiah begin cut off, but also there is more information given that would be dear to the hearts of the Israelites. And that would be Jerusalem and the temple destroyed.

iii) A time gap is implied in all three of DANIEL’S other visions.

¹⁵ Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Da 9:25–27b). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

In our College course of Daniel/Revelation, as part of Eschatology, we examine all the visions of Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel interpreted. We know that they, the statue with the golden head, the silver shoulders, the bronze chest and the clay and iron legs are historical periods. So do you have the bronze, the gold, the Babylonian empire? The silver, the Persian Empire. The bronze the Greek Alexander the Great's empire. Then the Roman Empire which has 2 legs as well as 2 elements, clay and iron. And at the end of the Roman you see the great power of God coming and destroying the entire system. When we look historically at those kingdoms, we do see gaps in between some of these kingdoms. Not all of those kingdoms happened one instant after the other. And especially we have the great gap between the Roman Empire originally and then the 10 empires at the end with the clay and the iron feet. So, you can see there is a gap that is introduced consistently in Daniel's visions.

iv) In Daniel 9:24 6 items that are to be accomplished in the 70 weeks period. Historically, these events can be seen to be divided between his FIRST coming and his SECOND coming.

Prof. Question: What in verse 24 would be related to His first coming?

Student Response: The first part that talks about making the transgressions cease, putting an end to sin, -making reconciliation, -everlasting righteousness.

Prof. Response: That was the cross. So you can see even in the OT there is the hint of 2 different works-- first the business of dealing with sin in those 3 expressions and the last 3 bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up the vision, anointing the most holy one, is His glorification. Maybe exaltation would be a better word. So obviously you can see that in verse 24 there is a gap of time that is now known from the NT teachings.

I'm showing that in the vision there are gaps of time, that this is consistent. In other visions in the book of Daniel there were time gaps. There is a time gap there between the crucifixion and the destruction of the temple. There is a time gap in verse 24 between the dealing with sin and the anointing of Christ as the King. So I'm demonstrating that if we conclude that there is a gap here between the 69 weeks and the 70 weeks, it is consistent with the book of Daniel.

I say this because when you are interpreting Scriptures if there were no other gaps in any of the other records of prophetic speaking particularly in the book of Daniel we would be really in trouble saying there is a gap between 69 and 70. When you interpret Scripture you look at the context

that helps you to understand to interpret properly. It is in this passage there are gaps in the other sections of the same vision. Do you understand then why we are talking about the necessity of legitimizing a gap?

v) In Matt 24:15, Jesus speaks of the abomination of desolation spoken by the prophet Daniel as a feature of TRIBULATION period.

That phrase is a later part of the same verse we are considering (Dan. 9:27). Jesus thus refers to this verse as involving the tribulation. The Olivet Discourse is about the tribulation period in answer to the disciples question: “When will these things take place and what are the signs?” All I want to emphasize here is that the verse 27 of Daniel 9 is by Christ’s definition ‘tribulation’ because this is the verse that Jesus quotes, where the abomination shall be one who makes desolation. This supports the idea that the abomination of desolation in verse 27 is in the tribulation period and not in the same period as verse 26, about Messiah being cut off.

vi) The 70 week does fit the character of Christ’s FIRST coming in humility. Christ did not minister for 7 years.

If someone were to say “The 70th week was the life of Christ and His ministry,” it is easy for us to prove Christ’s ministry when he came the first time was 3 ½ years. His ministry did not begin at birth, nor when he was 12 years old, nor when he became 30, the proper age for a Jewish man to come into his responsibilities? No.

Prof. Question: tell me what initiated Jesus’ ministry.

Student Response: -his baptism

Prof. Response: Now it just so happens that he probably was 30 years of age when baptized by John. But His baptism and then His immediate temptations and His first miracle at the wedding, initiated His public ministry. His baptism was like everybody else’s baptism- it was a public thing.

Student Question: what would we call it when Jesus was in the temple and his parents brought him to Jerusalem and they left without him and then came back later to find Him in the temple and He kind of said to them ‘didn’t you know I must be about my father’s business’. If that wasn’t His ministry, what would we call that?

Prof. Response: I think God gives us that picture of Jesus to help us understand that even at a very young age, He realized who He was. He said ‘I must be about my Father’s business.’ So we are given a little glimpse of his childhood to help us understand He was unique. At the age of 12 He was challenging the best minds of the Hebrew Scriptures. I remember

begin asked: 'How could He know so much at the age of 12?' Instead of just saying 'because He was God,' I reminded this person 'it was because He wrote the book.' Is it true? Student Response: Yes, He wrote the Book.

vii) The description following in this verse, which concerns developments during the 70th week, does fit the character of the TRIBULATION week well.

So when we read Scriptures in the OT, we see the promise of terrible things happening, the wrath of God falling. When we read about the Olivet Discourse and the skies falling and the great turmoil on the earth. And then when we get the details of this in Revelation with the judgments of the trumpets, the judgment of the bowls, and the judgment of the seals, we see that verse 27 clearly is about this period of the wrath of God.

If we are going to be consistent in taking this vision as historical events in the earth, then we have to realize that nothing in the time of Christ's ministry and nothing between or even prior to the history of Christ fits this picture. It is legitimate for us to say that the 70th week which He is speaking of here, is 7 years, is the tribulation.

6. The divisions of the tribulation.

i) We conclude that Daniel's 70th week is identified with the tribulation period.

ii) This period is divided into 2 equal halves of 3 1/2 years each.

iii) Dan. 9:27 states that at the beginning of the 70th week, a covenant of some type will be confirmed between the ANTI-CHRIST and Israel. This agreement will insure a time of peace for ISRAEL. At the midpoint of the week, the covenant will be broken. Israelite sacrifices and offerings will cease and there will be a time of severe trouble.

We know from other texts in the NT that Satan's representation on the earth is the ruler that is called 'the Anti-Christ'. According to verse 27 the prince will make a covenant of peace with Israel that he will break 1/2 through the tribulation period. So we can say this agreement will ensure a time of peace for Israel that is the blank.

7. Distinguishing between "The Time of the Gentiles" and "the fullness of the Gentiles."

i) The "times of the Gentiles"

Lu. 21:24: *And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations.*

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The phrase ‘times of the Gentiles’ is another term found in Luke 21 that is often confusing. We will examine this in the next class.

CLASS 13

We left off at the last class with Luke 21:24 which mentioned “*Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*” This is a period of time in which the Jewish people are under Gentile domination and when Jerusalem is trodden down by the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles’ domination over Jerusalem actually began when the Babylonians took the city and the nation into Captivity in 586 B.C. Jerusalem will again fall under Gentile domination in the Tribulation (Zech. 14:1–2) just before the Messiah returns to restore Jerusalem. It is that restoration of which Jesus spoke next (Luke 21:25–28).¹⁶

ii) The “fullness of the Gentiles”

Rom. 11:25, 26: *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

There is a “fullness” for Israel (Rom. 11:12) and for the Gentiles. Today, God in His grace is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name (Acts 15:12–14). Individual Jews are being saved, of course; but this present age is primarily a time when God is visiting the Gentiles and building His church. When this present age has run its course, and the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then God will once more deal with the nation of Israel.¹⁷

¹⁶ Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Lk 21:20–24). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Ro 11:25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

IX. THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The ‘times of the Gentiles’ continues into the 70th week. So if you have not figured this out yet, we come to understand that the 70th week is the prophesied tribulation period. So from this point on, we are focusing on the events and the significance of the 70th week.

Introduction:

The word “tribulation” comes from the Latin ‘*tribulum*’ which was an agricultural tool used for separating the husks from the corn. Theologically one can get the idea of PRESSING TOGETHER, AFFILIATION, BRDENING WITH NANGUISH AND TROUBLE, BINDING WITH OPPOSITION.

A. The Names for the Tribulation in the Bible

We want to identify all the Bible terms for the great tribulation:

1. TRIBULATION

Matt. 24:21, 29: *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be... "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened,*

Here, in the English Bible, it is translated ‘tribulation.

2. DAY OF THE LORD

Is. 2:12: *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty,*

Joel 1:15: *Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*

In these texts the term used for the great tribulation period is the ‘Day of the Lord.’ This term is the most used eschatological term in the Bible for the tribulation.

The Day of the Lord (Isa. 2:6–3:26). This is that period of time when God will send judgment to the nations and purify Israel in preparation for the coming of His King to reign in Jerusalem. It will be a time of terrible suffering; the environment will be devastated, and millions of people will die. (Note the repetition of the phrase “in that day”: Isa. 2:17, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1–2.)¹⁸

¹⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted*. “Be” Commentary Series (23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. Day of the LORD'S VENGEANCE

Is. 34:8: *For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.*

4. JACOB'S TROUBLE

Jer. 30:7: *Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.*

5. The SEVENTY WEEKS

Dan. 9:24: *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,*

6. The TIME OF THE END

Da. 7:9: *And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*

7. The great day of his WRATH

Rev. 6:17: *"For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

8. The hour of his JUDGMENT

Rev. 14:7: *saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."*

9. The end of the AGE

Matt. 13:40, 48-49: *"Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.... they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,*

It would appear that this text is referring to both the tribulation and the final judgement which focuses on God's judgement on all the wicked unbelievers:

"The end of the Age" represents the conclusion of the present Age before Christ establishes the messianic kingdom. Thus the parables in Matthew 13 cover the period of time from Christ's work on earth to the time of the judgment at His return. At His second coming, the **angels** will gather the wicked and **throw them into judgment**¹⁹

¹⁹ Barbieri, L. A., & Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scrip-*

10. The INDIGNATION

Is. 26:20: *Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past*

11. The CONSUMMATION

Dan. 9:27: *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*

This verse unveils what will occur in the 70th seven years. This seven-year period will begin after the Rapture of the church (which will consummate God's program in this present Age). The 70th "seven" will continue till the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Because Jesus said this will be a time of "great distress", this period is often called the Tribulation.²⁰

12. The time of TROUBLE such as never was

Dan. 12:1: *And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book.*

We have 10 examples of the names of the tribulation. When you look at these, most of them, except for the idea of the day and the 70th week, speak of terrible things. God's description uses the word 'vengeance' and 'trouble' and 'wrath' and 'judgment.'" He speaks of troubles such as never was in the history of man. This is how the nation Israel was warned about the coming trouble of 'the Day of the Lord'.

B. The Nature of the Tribulation

Now we are going to take a couple of books from the OT and the NT just to identify the nature of the tribulation

tures (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Mt 13:36–43). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁰ Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Da 9:27a). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Isa. 2:19: *They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.*

At Christ's Second Advent (2:19–22) when the Lord's vengeance comes, people will try to escape by fleeing into caves (cf. vv. 10, 21). They will be terrified because God will shake the earth (see comments on Hag. 2:6–7)... Once again Isaiah's sense of irony is strong: things highly valued will be thrown aside to detestable creatures that people hate. In verse 21 Isaiah again spoke of people hiding in caves away from God's terror (cf. vv. 10, 19a) when He will shake the earth (cf. v. 19b).²¹

So the people will be terrorized, hiding from the Lord in fear.

Isa. 13:6-7: *Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt,*

This judgment from the Almighty would cause people to be in extreme distress, in pain like a woman's labor pains (cf. Isa. 21:3; 26:17; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 48:41; 49:22, 24; 50:43; Micah 4:9–10). The day of the Lord, expressing His anger (Isa. 13:3, 13) against sin, will destroy ... sinners (v. 9) and punish the world for its evil and its proud attitude toward God²²

Isa. 24:18b-20: *...For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth are shaken. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.*

The opening of the windows of heaven (Isa. 24:18b) reminds us of the Flood (Gen. 7:11). Jesus said that, before the "Day of the Lord," society would be as it was in the days before the Flood (Matt. 24:37–42). In that day, God will shake everything; and anything man has

²¹ Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Is 2:12–22). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²² Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Is 13:6–13). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

made will stagger like a drunk and collapse like a flimsy hut (Isa. 24:20; see 1:8). The weight of guilt will be too heavy for people to carry.²³

These are terrible days. You can see why God says this is a time of great distress that the world has never seen. These are descriptions from the OT and we have not even got to Revelation yet.

Isa. 34:2-4: *For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. 3 Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 4 All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.*

In God's judgment of wrath against the armies of all nations the dead bodies will rot on the ground. Also the stars ... will be dissolved. Catastrophic events in the sky will accompany the Messah's return to the earth to establish His millennial reign.²⁴ Here God states that the sky, the heavens destroyed, really the whole universe is changed.

Isa. 63:3-4: *I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. 4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.*

In this passage, if it's the same as in English, God is talking about pressing people like grapes in a wine-press. When Jesus came to earth the first time, it was to inaugurate "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isa. 61:2; Luke 4:19). When He comes the second time, it will be to climax "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 63:4; 61:2). The enemy will be crushed like grapes and forced to drink their own blood from the cup of God's wrath (51:17; Jer. 25:15-16).²⁵ If I were in the synagogue and I heard the

²³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted*. "Be" Commentary Series (61). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁴ Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Is 34:2-4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted*. "Be" Commentary Series (159). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

writings of Isaiah read, the hair would stand up on my back, I'd be so terrified.

Joel 2:1-2: *Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: 2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations.*

Joel called on the people to tremble not because of the approaching army but because the army was a sign of the day of the Lord. The coming army, like the locusts that Judah had just experienced, was a sign that the curses of Deuteronomy 28 were coming upon them in full fury. In short, they were to fear the wrath of God.²⁶ The Lord is coming to destroy, terrible days are coming., Clouds and darkness are a stock metaphor for the day of the Lord²⁷

Zeph. 1:14-15: *The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. 15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,*

To awaken the complacent nation to its peril the prophet returned to the theme the great day of the LORD. Grammatically the verse stresses the word near, which is first in the sentence in Hebrew...The fearful wrath of God was to come on the nation quickly²⁸

So Joel and Zephaniah are following the footsteps of Isaiah with the graphic descriptions of terror at the Lord's return is repeated. Now let's go to the NT.

²⁶ Garrett, D. A. (1997). *Vol. 19A: Hosea, Joel*. The New American Commentary (335). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

²⁷ Garrett, D. A. (1997). *Vol. 19A: Hosea, Joel*. The New American Commentary (335). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

²⁸ Hannah, J. D. (1985). Zephaniah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Zep 1:14a). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Matt. 24:11-12: *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

These verses are from the Olivet Discourse, spoken by Jesus. My understanding of the Olivet Discourse is that it is entirely about the tribulation period, the church is not mentioned or referred to in the Olivet Discourse. The persecution of His servants (v. 9) will increase. During the Tribulation, God will seal 144,000 Jews (Rev. 7) who will probably be missionaries to the lost world (v. 14), and through their efforts multitudes will be saved. However, many will give their lives for their faith.²⁹

Matt. 24:21-22: *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

The world has yet to see the great distress which will never be observed again (24:21). Jesus said as much when he indicated that those days would necessarily be cut short, implying divine intervention (24:22). Christ will intervene to prevent complete genocide and the wholesale destruction of the human race.³⁰

Now let's hear what Paul says:

1 Thess. 5:2-3: *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

Paul declared, The Lord will come like a thief in the night...The imagery is taken from Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:39–40: "If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into." The suddenness and surprise of Christ's coming was well understood.³¹

²⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (88). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³⁰ Weber, S. K. (2000). *Vol. 1: Matthew*. Holman New Testament Commentary (401). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³¹ Larson, K. (2000). *Vol. 9: I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Holman New Testament Commentary (68). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Student Question: *I have a question about Matthew 24:22. It talks about the elected ones, but you mentioned it doesn't refer to the church.*

Prof. Response: *When we start looking at the tribulation period, we will see that there will be people saved during the tribulation period. Most of them will be martyred because of their faith. So basically what Jesus is saying there is 'the time will be shortened because of their persecution'.*

For their sake He will not allow persecution to continue.

Will these believers saved during the tribulation be from Israel or will they be Gentiles?

Student Response: *(No response.)*

Prof. Response: *Most will be Gentiles, but I'm sure there will be some Israelites. Just as today there are some Jews who accept Christ as their Saviour. We know this because from Israel there will be 144,000 witnesses raised up to declare the gospel to Israel. That's where the Jehovah Witnesses get the idea of 144,000., but they are in error.*

Remember that 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (pg. 113) says there will be a time when the trumpet will call and the dead in Christ will raise, and those alive in the Lord will be caught up together with them. In 1 Thess. 5:9 Paul says the church, the believers, are not appointed to wrath.

Rev. 6:15-17: *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Many expositors have attempted to see a figurative fulfillment to this prophecy. It is preferable, however, to take this prediction literally. The trumpet and bowl judgments, to be revealed later in Revelation, also include great disturbances in the heavens and on the earth before Christ's second coming.³² All these calamities, the stars falling, the darkness, and that people of every class are real circumstances which will befall the earth and its residence. A will be terrified having no place to hide.

³² Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 6:12–14). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

C. Tribulation Limited for the Elect's Sake

Matt. 24:22: *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

There are four blanks in your notes to help explain what it means for the days to be shortened for the elect's sake:

Christ foretold that the judgments of the tribulation would be so intense that if the period were not terminated, but men were permitted to continue indefinitely in their rebellion, the human race would be completely WIPE OUT. Christ did not mean that the period of tribulation itself would be reduced in length. Daniel gives the exact length of SEVEN years. It is divided into 2 parts of 31/2 years or 42 months or 1260 days. Christ meant that the severe tribulation period is limited to 1260 days. In essence, because these are the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24, and He is the One that is appointed by God to judge, He promises He will not let the tribulation go one day longer.

Student Response: Why does God choose to destroy the people during the tribulation instead of destroying the devil? We know that if there were no devil, there would be no sin.

Prof. Response: Do you believe that if there is no devil, there is no sin?

Student Response: Before the devil there was no sin.

Prof. Response: Man has the sin nature. What happens at the end of 1000 years reign when Jesus Christ has bound Satan so he is not influencing and Christ reigns in absolute righteousness?

Student Response: First thing, the world is 1000 times better than it is right now.

Prof. Response: But what happens at the end of 1000 years? Is everyone saved?

Student Response: No

Prof. Response: *No, there is enough people on the world that they rebel against Christ. We have the final battle where they are destroyed. The tribulation period closes with the battle of Armageddon. The millennial kingdom closes with the battle of Gog and Magog. Satan is not the entire cause of sin. With Satan bound, man still continues to sin, still continues to rebel against God. Satan brought the temptation to Adam and Eve, but they, in their own decision, succumbed. With that decision Adam, the father of humanity, confirmed the whole human race to the sin nature. Every human born since Adam has this sin nature.*

But to answer 'Why does God destroy 8 out of 10 people', (according to my calculations), during the tribulation period; I can only say, to complete His plan. I cannot give you any other the reason.

But I can say this: According to the Scriptural declarations of God's wrath, the very first moment that a child willfully sins, God is justified to destroy that child. God's righteousness ensures that all God's purposes, decisions, and acts are just, right, and proper. But by the grace of God, He is a long-suffering God and mercifully has saved some.

Student Question: *If only the people who are saved during the tribulation will enter into the millennial kingdom, how is it that some of those will rebel at the end and be destroyed?*

Student Response: *1000 years*

Prof. Response: *We haven't studied this but one of the promises of God, is that sickness will be virtually unknown in the millennial kingdom. And people will rarely see death. So it will be much like it was back before the flood when man lived, like Methuselah, 969 years. If man lives that long, how many children could each man have?*

Student Response: *The earth will be re-populated very quickly.*

Prof. Response: *So the millennial kingdom begins with resurrected saints as well as saved natural people entering it. Every child that is born to these natural believers in the millennial kingdom still has a sin nature and must make a decision for Christ to be saved. So at the end of 1000 years, even though it's a perfect environment with Christ on the earth, there will still be thousands of people that never believe. I believe that Satan is bound for these 1000 years to show the world that God is just in judging man because even without Satan, man will sin and merit eternal death.*

CLASS 14

For the purposes of this study of Eschatology we are not going to go into the details of every event in the tribulation period. Eschatology is basically a study of the bigger picture of the events that unfold for all of the future. But to give us a sense of the uniqueness of the tribulation period we are going to take a look at the unfolding of the suffering that God delivers to the earth during this time.

D. The Suffering of the Great Tribulation

In preparation for this judgment to come upon the earth during the tribulation period, John describes the Lamb that holds the scroll with 7 seals. In the English Bible sometimes it is the word 'book' which is not

really the idea. It is a scroll: a roll of papyrus, leather, or parchment used as a writing document. The Roman and Jewish officials sealed these documents. Seals were produced in many shapes and sizes, the earliest being the stamp seal, a flat engraved gem or bead which produced a copy of itself by pressing it against soft clay, however, it was soon replaced there by the scarab (beetle-shaped) seal, which was better adapted for sealing papyrus documents.³³ Seals were so widely used and have been unearthed in such quantity in the ancient Near East that they can be dated within a century or two of their origin.³⁴

In John's Revelation of Jesus Christ there are 7 seals mentioned, each seal is opened to give the pronouncement. Revelation starts with 6 seals. At chapter 6 and 7 each of these is opened up to deliver judgment upon the earth. Following this is some explanation of events. Then seal of 7 trumpets is the opening. As the trumpets blow 7 more judgments are brought upon the earth. And after the first 6 trumpets again there is a space with explanation and information. This brings us to the completion of the first half of the Tribulation period. Then the 7th trumpet blows and introduces 7 vials or bowls.

1. The tribulation seems to be a time designed for retribution in the world because of its sin and the time of Jacob's trouble preparing the Jews to receive the Messiah.

2. The Broken Seals

Seal #1 (Rev. 6:1,2)

Here we see some symbolism, the white horse which speaks of victory. The bow with no arrows. The crown and going forth to conquer. So in a sense you can see that it is an illustration or I guess a picture of someone who has authority but it seems very little power because the arrows are missing from the bow. This seems to be reference to the beginning of the Anti-Christ at the beginning of the tribulation in order to set up the false peace. He's given power, he's given control, he's given a crown but without war.

³³ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (1174). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³⁴ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (1916). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

Seal #2 (Rev. 6:3,4)

Now we see not a white horse, but a red horse. And we see the one on the red horse able to take peace away from the earth. And now there is war. But the greatest conqueror in the war is the one that is on the red horse. So evidently now we see that the Anti-Christ was deceiving the world with the promise of peace now in a position of power, he's bringing war and conquering nations.

Seal #3 (Rev. 6:5,6)

Here we see a black horse and it is the symbol for pestilence, for famine, and what else here? We have Inflation and economic ruin. Don't get the idea that these seals are showing the Anti-Christ riding the horse. The horse and the colour of the horse are symbolic of the period of time that the judgment deals with. So we see in the first seal the promise of peace with a ruler that brings it; we see in the second seal that leader who was given honour and authority now uses this power to bring war against those he wants to have their possessions I guess; this is followed by economic ruin in which there is famine and there is the things the people have are valueless to supply for their needs.

Seal #4 (Rev.. 6:7,8)

The pale horse bringing death, much death to the world. So in this time there is a war because people are killed with the sword. But also people are killed with hunger and people are killed by the beasts of the earth. So this you see begins the great destruction of mankind because in this seal ¼ of the population of the world dies. We read through that quickly but imagine ¼ of the population, ¼ of the people dying. It's almost you would say, the opposite of the millennial kingdom where there is hardly death, here there is death everywhere.

Seal #5 (Rev. 6:9-1)

This is a very interesting seal because it begins with the martyrs in heave crying for God to deliver those that are saved on the earth and to bring great vengeance. So God is uniquely identifying His special people who have given their lives for faith in Him. And He is telling them 'be patient, your number is not complete yet, there will be those in this tribulation period who will be added to your number'. So this tells us that on the earth those that are accepting the Lord as a result of these terrible things and the memory of the church and the message they had heard, they come to Christ, many of them will perish because of their faith.

Here God is uniquely identifying His special people who, during this Tribulation period, have given their lives for their Faith in Christ. Here he is telling them “Be patient, your number is not complete yet.”

Student Question: I have question : What are the white robes of the martyrs?

Prof. Question: *There are white robes on these martyrs. I don't know what more to say. Perhaps it is a reward because of their martyrdom. In situations like this, you could go back and you could study the significance of the word 'white' in the Bible. You could look also at the significance of robes being given to people in the Scriptures. Obviously we know that white does represent righteousness. And robes usually distinguish people as rulers or governors. Remember when they put a robe on Christ, they did so to mock Him because He was saying He was the Son of God. so there are ways in which we can come to an understanding what the Scripture says about these kinds of things, but to be certain we are not given the information. My approach is usually to take the simplest explanation. And what I see is in heaven the martyrs are distinguished from those who are not martyrs because they are a particular moved to understand the situation of those who will die on earth now.*

Seal #6 (Rev. 6:12-17)

In this passage you see much of what Christ described in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. If you just read through this very carefully you see that all of creation seems to be in turmoil. And all of mankind is terrorized by the events that are seen in creation. But it seems very evident that the world understands that this is the judgment from God, for in verse 16 they cry out for the rocks to fall on them so they would be hidden from the One who is delivering the wrath.

The 6th seal is earthquakes, natural catastrophes, the heavens and the earth completely disturbed. And of course man wishing to die. That's the 6th seal. They are not nearly as specific as the trumpets will be, but they do characterize the judgment of God upon the earth. And they become more and more intense with greater destruction as you move through the 6 seals. In chapter 7 basically we are given the information about the 144,000 that are called from to be witnesses.

Seal #7 (Rev. 8-11)

The 7th seal consists of 7 bowels or vials. Now we are going to go to chapter 8 and see the 7th seal open which introduces these trumpets. And

we will again see the intensifying, the growing disasters God brings in His judgment:

1. The Blown Trumpets

Trumpet 1 (Rev. 8-11)

In verse 1 of chapter 8, the 7th seal is opened, and there was silence and then 7 angels with 7 trumpets were presented. And we see the first trumpet blown in verse 7 of chapter 8. God in this first trumpet destroys 1/3 of the trees and all of the grass. So God is bringing His judgment now on actually the vegetation of the world. And of course, the vegetation is part of the way in which man is sustained by God.

Trumpet 2 (Rev. 8:8,9)

A great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.

Trumpet 3 (Rev. 8:10,11)

A a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.

Trumpet 4 (Rev. 8:12)

A third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Trumpet 5 (Rev. 9:1-12)

This is a very unique judgment now in which it seems God is using demonic influence on a prepared creature of some sort to try to bring such affliction on all the earth. Begins with the opening of the bottomless pit by a star that falls from heaven. That may be a reference to Satan. The bottomless pit releases a smoke that covers the earth and cuts off light. And it seems like demon-possessed insects or some kind of a creature begin to torment men for 5 months. These creatures sting men like a scorpion which brings great pain, but never the deliverance of death. It seems to me that these creatures are prepared and awaiting in the bottomless pit, their release God has created them for this single purpose. It is some kind of a living creature but certainly influence by demons that the world has not seen before because there is nothing described anything like this now. I suggest they are influenced by demons simply because at the very last it says they have a king over them; “whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.”

Trumpet 6 (Rev. 9:13-19)

In this trumpet we see 4 angels that are releasing 200,000,000 demonic warriors on horses, some kind of horsemen. And these evil horsemen destroy 1/3 of the population. Now earlier we had 1/4 of the population destroyed. And now we have another 1/3 of the population destroyed. And in between we are told there was still much death that was not numbered. So you can see that already we have had many people die on the earth. We are not given information about how long each of these trumpets continue. We are not told whether the 1/3 of the sea recovers or 1/3 of the fresh water recovers. But certainly the emphasis is on God's judgment upon all of creation which brings great destruction and great death.

Parenthesis (10:1-11:14)

“another mighty angel coming down from heaven”

“the little scroll”

“two witnesses,”

Trumpet 7 (Rev. 11:15-11:19)

The 7th trumpet is going to open up the 7 bowls. So in terms of the time, we are now at the end of the 6th trumpet and probably at 1/2 of the tribulation. During this time of all these 7 seals and 6 trumpets, in the first 1/2 Israel is still at peace with the Anti-Christ. But Israel as with all other nations, have suffered great devastation because of these terrible natural catastrophes. And as with all the rest of mankind, the last verses tell us that they did not repent of the works of their hands, they did not abandon their worship of demons and idols and they did not repent of their murders and their immorality.

Student Question: Is a myriad 100,000?

Prof. Response: In my English Bible it says 200,000. The fact that John heard the number, although he could not count 200 million men, seems to lend credence to the concept that this is literal³⁵

To me the significance is not the number but the fact that both the creatures and the horsemen are prepared ahead of time for this judgment. These beasts exist right now in the bottomless pit waiting for the door to

³⁵ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 9:16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

open. The sovereignty of God is beyond our understanding. He has prepared for the judgment of angels and the judgment of man and He has prepared from creation not only these creatures to bring judgment to the tribulation, but he has prepared the bottomless pit and the lake of fire which will be the eternal existence of the wicked, both angels and men. We cannot separate the great love of God from the holiness of God. He loved mankind enough to make provision for all man through the death of His Son. But there is no such teaching in the Scripture as the final salvation of all people.

We have not looked at the political systems that are going on in the earth during the first half of the tribulation. And we have not looked at yet any of the evidences of the grace of God through preaching of the 144,000. We've not looked at the 2 witnesses yet- we will refer to them briefly in our notes. What I'm trying to do is make a link between what we learned in the OT regarding the 70th week and how this is truly an expression of the wrath of God.

we went through the seals and the trumpets quickly. I encourage you to go back and ready through again and imagine that this begins tomorrow. We are delivered. But it's quite possible and quite probable that in the next 3 ½ years everyone that you know will die a terrible death. With all the devastation and all the death that area there, there may be 1 or 2 that won't die. but in the next 3 ½ years, they would wish that they had died. We're talking about our relatives that don't know Christ, our friends that don't know Christ, we are talking about our adult children if they have not accepted Christ.

There is not exceptions in this world. When I go to Bangalore, a city in India of 12,000,000 people, and you see great crowds of people in the city, I can't help but think if the Lord comes today for us, what will they be facing? God has given us a beautiful planet. I live beside a lake in beautiful Canada. But the promise is that that lake may if the Lord comes today, within the next 3 ½ years that lake may be poisoned and the fish die in it. I live in the middle in the midst of a beautiful forest with maple trees, and oak trees, and birch trees. I try the best that I can to keep my own area of forest clean- I work at cutting the brush down and making it nice and beautiful even for the deer and the animals. But if the Lord comes tomorrow within the next 3 ½ years that whole forest could be destroyed. See, the things that are meaningful to us are very temporal, they are going to be destroyed. And more important to that, the people that we know and the

people that are part of our country and part of our lives that do not know Christ are heading for a terrible destruction.

To go through this study is more than just getting information about the future. There is a conflict of emotions that this study brings to me. It brings to me the joy of promised deliverance, the hope of seeing Christ and being with Him, but at the same time as I rejoice for myself and my brothers and sisters and family that know Christ, I ache within for those who do not know Christ. Because for me and maybe I am just different, the suffering of people bothers me. It moves me. So to me this makes our mission urgent. For the sake of the lost, we cannot afford to be casual about our evangelism and discipleship. Now tomorrow we'll begin where we are, looking at the next part, the last part of the tribulation. We will examine the vials which does deal with even greater destruction.

We saw earlier that when the terrible things were happening, people were crying out to hide from the wrath of God, so they understood this to be God's wrath upon them. But there is still no repentance. Are some people accepting Christ as their Saviour? I believe so. We know right there is 144,000 that accepted Christ, all Jewish people. But for the most part, men are unrepentant.

CLASS 15

We have identified the 70th week of Daniel as the 7-year tribulation. When we think of the term 'the Day of the Lord', the tribulation is the night that precedes 'the day', because God defines day beginning in the evening and then going through the night to the next day. So we have been trying to understand the terror and the destruction of the tribulation. The one word that describes the tribulation is 'wrath'. And according to the book of Revelation we see that God's wrath is poured out first of all in 7 seals. The 7th seal actually begins the 7 trumpets of judgement. The 7th trumpet is halfway through the tribulation. Now we will see that the 7th trumpet involves the 7 bowls or vials..

In the first ½ of the tribulation, the Anti-Christ has been established and set up a treaty with Israel. And while he establishes peace with Israel he does create war to gain power and possessions. But during this first ½ there is also great nature disorder and catastrophe. We are told in the first ½ that there is ¼ of the earth died. Then 1/3 of the earth died. But in between there is also many other deaths. So many have died and we are only

at the halfway through the tribulation period. The last word we get at this point is that in all of this trouble and in all of this disaster, men did not repent of their sins. They continued in their immorality, they continued in their idolatry.

From chapter 10 to chapter 16 we see Satan cast out of heaven, we see the Anti-Christ prominent and we see the false prophet introduced. For our purposes we are only looking at the way in which God poured out His wrath. Therefore, we are going to go to chapter 16 where the 7th trumpet now introduces the 7 bowls.

4. The Vial Judgments

Vial 1 (Rev. 16:2)

“...there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” Only those with the mark of the Beast were affected. Although only those with the mark of the Beast, those loyal to the Anti-Christ could do commerce and live comfortably, they are the ones to receive this terrible affliction. Those that remain true to Christ suffered persecution because they had no mark. Nevertheless, they did not receive the infliction. We can see that at this time, the judgment of God distinguishes the wicked from the righteous. Those that are persecuted and martyred are the ones that the world sees as escaping this judgment.

Vial 2 (Rev. 16:3)

Now the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man: and every living thing in the sea dies. Before it was 1/3, now it is all. You understand the word ‘sea’ means the salt water on the earth. So now all life in the sea is dead. That would be such a great tragedy. Things that die in the sea after a while rise up to the surface and decay.

Vial 3 (Rev. 16:4-7)

Now we have all the fresh water turning to blood. And the reason for this is because they have shed the blood of God’s people so now they will drink blood. Perhaps we don’t know, but perhaps when the first vial came and only the wicked received the physical affliction, perhaps that was a time when they began to kill more of God’s people in vengeance. We don’t know.

How long can a man live without water: usually no more than 3 or 4 days. It depends on the temperature of course. If you stay in your bed, maybe you could live a week. But if you are moving, if you are walking, you need water every 3 or 4 days. This is a terrible situation, man now has no hope of life. I don’t know how long a person could live drinking blood.

Because blood has salt in it, it would only worsen the thirst. I know the worst thing you can do if you are in the ocean and thirsty is to drink salt water. Imagine going to the tap for your water and you get blood. God's judgement here is just because they took the blood of the righteous.

If there are any left that have not been martyred, they would also have the same suffering, but it seems that at this time most that were alive were martyred because of this judgment. We have examples of God's judgment when the 10 plagues came upon Egypt. And the Israelites suffered along with the Egyptians. With the exception of the promise of the blood that would keep the angel of the Lord from taking the firstborn. God has His purposes and we have preaching in our chapel about persecution and the fact that it is the purpose of God for His people to shine to show their faith in their persecution.

Vial 4 (Rev. 16:8,9)

Here we have the sun intensifying so that the heat of the sun is burning the skin of people. If these bowls are consecutive, following one another, we can see this would only increase the thirst of man as well. We have no idea of the length of these judgments, whether they are for a short time or whether they continue all the way through, so that all these continue right to the end, we have no way of knowing. If we take the plagues of Egypt as an example there would be a reprieve after each one of the judgments. The purpose in the day of Moses for the reprieve was for Pharaoh to repent. So perhaps between all of these judgments there is a reprieve to give people an opportunity to repent, that is why at halfway through the tribulation God clarifies that no one repented, no one in great numbers came to Christ.

Vial 5 (Rev. 16:10,11)

Now we have darkness and pain and sores. The pain was so great that they were chewing their tongues. People in great pain will bite their tongue to distract them from the great pain with the pain of the tongue. Notice it says that in this plague they are blaspheming the God of heaven, so they understand this is a judgment from heaven. And you notice that it seems to be limited to the throne of the Beast and his kingdom, so I don't know if this means only a portion of the world is dark or not. I don't know the answer to that.

This could also mean that if there are believers, saints on the earth, they were delivered from this curse as well, because they weren't part of the kingdom of the Beast.

Vial 6 (Rev. 16:12-16)

We can see now we are near the very end of the tribulation. And in this bowl the Euphrates River dries up. Now whether the river was still blood or whether it had returned to fresh water, it doesn't matter because the point is the river dried up to make a path for the armies to attack Jerusalem. You notice that there is some form of beast or a creature that is actually a demon coming from all aspects of Satanic control. One comes from the mouth of the dragon and of course the dragon is Satan himself. One comes from the mouth of the Beast who is the Anti-Christ and one comes from the mouth of the false prophet. So again, what these are, it's very difficult to say. We are told in verse 14 they are spirits of demons and they are performing signs and convincing the leaders of the world to go to destroy the Israelites. So perhaps although they are described as frogs, perhaps they are really not visible, perhaps it is the words of Satan, the words of the Prophet, the words of the Anti-Christ, we don't know but the end is that people are convinced to destroy Israel.

So, these armies now have marched down the dry bed of Euphrates and gathered at Armageddon. It's an interesting valley to examine in Scripture because many battles were fought by Israel in this valley. Interesting verse 15, the warning to those who are the believers—someone read verse 15.

The whole world has been deceived. And all the leaders of the world are bringing their armies against Israel. It is interesting that this is what Israel today fears. There is world pressure on Israel to deliver some of the land they have owned to the Palestinians and to other nations. As a matter of fact, I believe the current president of Israel is willing to forfeit the West Bank. And perhaps the Gaza Strip will come next and more and more land will be forfeited to those who are not the Israelites, to the Palestinians. Now there are still countries like USA and Canada and other countries who are supporting Israel in their defense of these areas. But I think it is true that in the world today, even without the Anti-Christ, the attitudes of nations are changing and more are saying Israel should give up, to give over the land. So for me, it is easy to see how a world ruler who brings peace could turn the whole world against Israel. Right now the prime minister of Canada is a Christian and he is very strong supporter- Israel says he is the strongest supporter of all nations, our prime minister of Canada. I am ashamed to say that at this time, even the Canadian leader will want to attack Israel according to Scriptures. If the Lord comes today, the prime minister of Canada will be gone; he will be with us in heaven.

Vial 7 (Rev. 16:17-21)

These verses introduce the very end of the tribulation period when the world is prepared for the return of Christ. The earth itself is greatly altered through these catastrophe's. The earthquakes are so great that the mountains are leveled and the islands disappear. The great cities of the world are destroyed, especially Babylon, in chapter 17 describes the significance of Babylon in the tribulation period. So this bowls of judgment bring the tribulation to the end as the Lord descends on Jerusalem that is now divided into 3 because of the great earthquake. In your own time I suggest you read about the Final Judgements.

5. The Final Judgements (17-19:6)

- i) Doom of Babylon
- ii) Babylon Destroyed
- iii) Harlot overthrown
- iv) Battle of Armageddon

We have seen how God, in the Scriptures, delivers His wrath with the seals being opened of the scroll, with trumpets sounding and delivering wrath, and with the bowls of His judgment to complete the destruction of the world. The end result is that at the end of the tribulation as we enter into the millennial kingdom, there is a final judgment of the few unbelievers who are still alive and they are destroyed and we enter into the millennial kingdom with only God's people. In the last moment of the tribulation, Israel turns to Christ as their Messiah as He comes and destroys the armies. And then we enter into the 1000-year reign of Christ.

Prof. Question: What is your impression as you look at these judgements?

Student Response: They are terrifying to think about

Prof. Response: There are many who read Revelation and say 'this is an allegory because a loving God would never do this'. But we know that God is a holy God and although He has paid the penalty for man's sin, He will bring His judgment on all that has rebelled against Him. And all creation has rebelled against Him, not just humanity. "Whereas by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

Adam's sin not only condemned humanity, but also condemned nature. Adam was given the role of being the authority in nature and he forfeited that to Satan. And we see Satan using a serpent to pervert the purpose of the serpent. And that helps us understand that he didn't stop there- he perverted all of nature. So that animals no longer were content to just eat grass, they began eating one another and then eating people.

It was a judgment of God on Adam's sin to turn the forest and the fields that are good for growing crops to have weeds and have other plants that are in competition to the plants that provide food. So all of creation as I understand Scripture, all that God created in creation, was order, have order. And now under, after sin and after Satan taking control, everything is characterized by chaos. All that God created and said 'it is very good' was life. Under Satan as a result of sin, all is defined as 'death'. So the wrath of God fell upon the planet. And even extended to the stars and to the sun. we need to help our people understand that God cannot just forget about His holiness.

Any questions regarding the seals and the trumpets and the bowls?

Student Question: My problem is with Israel being saved at the end of the tribulation. If Israel had known that, they know they will be saved at the end of the tribulation. Would they live their lives knowing they would be saved in advance?

Prof. Response: We are talking about Israel as a nation. We don't know what individuals there will be. Each individual has to make the decision for themselves.

Student Response: Yes, but my problem is that as a nation they will be saved.

Prof. Response: But it is the nation of the people that are alive then. How does Israel know they will be even alive at the end of the tribulation. They don't know- not one person knows they are going to survive the tribulation period. As we don't know whether I will die tomorrow or not.

Student Response: OK, now I understand.

Prof. Response: Only the people of Israel that are alive at the end of the tribulation will acknowledge Christ, but how many died before this all the way through history, we do not know. But they are gone, it's over for them, they are in hell.

Student Response: Oh, I see it is not all good news. I never thought about that.

Prof. Response: We need to qualify that – the Israel that is saved, is not all the Israelites in history it is the Israelites that are alive when the tribulation comes.

That is why I interpret the words of Christ toward Israel regarding the unpardonable sin as a national sin of that day. In Jesus' day, as Israel under its leadership rejected Christ and said He performed His miracles by the power of Satan, I believe what He was saying was 'because of that sin, the people that were Israel of that time would not as a nation acknowledge

Him'. They would never find forgiveness as a nation at that time. If it was an unpardonable sin for every individual Israelite, then none of the apostles would have been saved because they were Jewish. And many of the people that were a part of the early church were alive when Jesus was on the earth. And we know that the first people of the church were the Jewish people, individual believers.

I want to give a little bit of an explanation regarding the book of Revelation. Revelation, the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ is the unfolding of events that bring about the millennial kingdom and then the eternal state. We've seen from chapter 4-18 or 19, it's all about the tribulation. For our purposes, we have followed through with the pouring of God's wrath regarding the seals, the trumpets and the bowls. But these chapters have more information than just these ways of pouring God's wrath out. The way to help understand these chapters is to view them as different windows. Some windows are showing the judgment of God, some show world government. Another window looks at world religion where we are dealing with a particular world religion and what's going on with the False Prophet. Another window views the world economy. Some windows deal with unique individuals such as His servants and people suffering. Others deal with nature. Even the the pictures of judgements are divided up, sometimes about the people- sickness and sores, sometimes natural catastrophe. and sometimes war. When you're going through the book of Revelation, you have to understand that God is giving us different views of the events that are taking place. I compare these windows as Television monitors in a TV network newsroom. It's very difficult to try and put all the information together as a chronological line. There are times when what God is talking about in terms of religion is overlapping the same time frame as the governments monitor.

E. The Personalities of the Tribulation and End Time

Though the seventh trumpet was recorded in [Revelation]11:15 as sounding, the details of what will come out of the seventh trumpet are not revealed until chapter 16. Accordingly chapters 12–15 view the prophecies of the end time from another perspective and introduce the great personages who are involved in the second half of the seven-year period.

Many have pointed out that seven personages appear in chapters 12–13: (1) a woman clothed with the sun, representing Israel (12:1–2); (2) the red dragon with seven heads and 10 horns, representing Satan

(12:3–4); (3) the male Child, representing Christ (12:5–6); (4) the archangel Michael, casting Satan out of heaven (12:7–12); (5) the offspring of the woman, persecuted by the dragon (12:13–17); (6) the beast out of the sea, the future world dictator (13:2–10); (7) the beast out of the earth, the false prophet (13:11–18). These chapters do not advance the narrative chronologically, but present events and situations that are concurrent with the soundings of the trumpets. Chronological progress of events resumes in chapter 16.³⁶

Although I will not deal with all of these personages, for the purposes of this church Eschatology study I want to now take a look at what I consider to be the main personalities of the tribulation period.

1. The Holy Spirit

2 Thessalonians concerns the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together with Him. Paul here is answering the questions that rose in the church because of a misunderstanding of the rapture and His Second comings. Due to the false teaching, some of the people of Thessalonica thought that Christ had already come. Paul is clarifying by telling the church ‘you have not missed Christ’s coming. Didn’t you understand what I said in my first letter?’

Paul tells them that before the Lord comes there is going to be a time of trouble, and a time of wickedness where the Anti-Christ will rule. The church has not seen this yet because this has not happened yet. Then he says the church is going to be delivered from this time. So, in the context of reminding them that they did not miss the Lord’s coming because neither the tribulation nor the man of sin (Anti-Christ) has arrived, Paul says the following:

2 Thess. 2:7: *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

There are those that look at this verse and say ‘this of course means that the one that restrains now is the Holy Spirit. He will have no ministry in the tribulation period.’ But that is not what the words ‘taken out of the way’ mean in the original language. The key is the statement “taken out of the way”. How can the Spirit be taken completely out of the world when

³⁶ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 12–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

He is OMNIPRESENT? This statement means that He will Cease one aspect of His work of RESTRAINING OF SIN in the world.

The Spirit of God works in the world today convincing the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. We are told this in John 16:

Joh. 16:8: *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

So the Spirit of God works in the world today convincing men of sin and righteousness and judgment and that has 2 affects. It restrains man in their pursuit of sin, so that he is a force of restrain in the world so that man does not go as far as he could go with sin. We know that as He convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment He brings regeneration to the elect of God. It appears as though this ministry of holding the world back from its extent of sin is removed during the tribulation period. And in this way we can see that the words of Christ fit very well for the tribulation period in that” man did that which was right in their own eyes just as they did in the days of Noah”. The tribulation period is one of the ways that God brings justice by letting man pursue the full end of their imagination toward sin.

Prof. Question: *Will people be saved during the tribulation?*

Student Response: *-Yes.*

Rev. 7:9-10: *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

In his passage we see a great number of people before the throne of God in heaven and we are told that they have come from every nation out of the tribulation. These people have been saved as a result of the ministry of the 144,000 that are mentioned in chapter 7, the early part. And because they are now at this window, before the throne, they have died during the tribulation period; probably they were martyred. But also some would have died as a result of the judgments that fell upon the earth. A great multitude from every nation are saved during the tribulation. They have been regenerated.

No one gets saved without the Spirit of God working in their life. So we see the ministry of salvation continues by the Spirit of God.

Student Response: *Who are saved during the tribulation, chapter 7:3 where it says 'until we have marked with a seal on the forehead the servants of God.' Are those the same believers that will be before the throne, that will be killed?*

Prof. Response: *I would have to go back and look. It could be the 144,000 that are coming. I don't know. It says 'do not harm them until we have sealed them', then the number of those who were sealed were 144,000. So the answer is right there.*

Student Response: *Are these 144,000 going to be people who are saved during the tribulation.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, and the seal protects them so they can continue to share the gospel without being martyred.*

So the Spirit of God has a ministry in the world in the tribulation period bringing people to the knowledge of Christ. Probably, the Spirit will perform a ministry similar to His work in the O.T. Here in Joel we have a reference to the ministry of the Spirit of God during the tribulation period: **Joel 2:28, 30-31:** *"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions... The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance.*

In the context of Joel (2:1-11) the Day of the Lord is typified as Joel blows the trumpet of alarm to warn the people that the destroying army of locusts is coming... Here (2:28) Joel moves ahead and talks about another "day of the Lord," a time of future judgment that will end in blessing for the Jews.³⁷

Peter quoted this text when he was talking about the Spirit of God falling on the church in Acts 2. We saw that happen in the book of Acts when the church was born. Grammatically Joel 2:30 has to be joined with the activity of verses 28 and 29, therefore the Spirit of God that was poured out at Acts also will be involved in the wonders in heaven and

³⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Joe 2:28–3:21). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

earth in Joel 2:30 which is the tribulation period. Peter quoted this passage to show the church that the phenomenon they were witnessing-- the tongues, the speaking languages, the Spirit descending from heaven as fire, the miracles and wonders and signs, was the ministry of the Spirit of God as promised in Joel. In Peter's sermon, that is as far as he quoted, just to verse 29. When we go back and look at the Joel passage we see the Spirit of God being poured out continues into the tribulation period.

So, the ministry of the Spirit of God continues to bring people to Christ but the restraining on sin is removed so the world becomes as wicked as it possibly can be. When I look at our world now, I cannot imagine it being more wicked. I grieve at the wickedness of our world when I pick up a newspaper and see what people are doing to one another. But during the tribulation period it's going to be worse. I don't know how it could be, but it's going to be worse. I believe this is another reason that we are delivered from the tribulation because part of the tribulation is the terrible wickedness of man.

Student Question: Earlier we have said that during the tribulation this period work of restraining sin will be removed. Then how are those who are going to be saved? Are they also going to continue in sin?

Prof. Response: No, obviously the Spirit of God is going to bring them to repentance and salvation. How far they go before that, we don't know but part of understanding what sanctification is, is to understand what pre-sanctification is: the Spirit of God works in our life even before we are saved. So, the answer is- I don't know how far believers in the tribulation will go in sin, but they will be saved.

It is always good to continue to ask questions, but you understand that I cannot answer more than what God tells us in His Word. There are 2 reasons—I have not discovered the answer in Scripture yet, or God just doesn't give us the answer.

2. The Dragon Satan

Rev. 12:3-4: *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*

Rev 12:12: ... *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.*

Satan is going to be very active during the tribulation period. And our purpose for this course is not to outline all the activity of Satan or the dragon in this period. We could have another Revelation window with Satan dealing with religion and government and economy. Please remember, although Satan seems to rule in the Tribulation, it is God's purpose that Satan actually serves.

From similar descriptions in Daniel 7:7–8, 24 and Revelation 13:1, this beast represented Satan's control over world empires in the Great Tribulation. Revelation 12:9 identifies the dragon as Satan.³⁸

3. The male-child, Christ

Rev. 12:5: *She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.*

The Child obviously is Jesus Christ (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15). Alford states that "the Man-Child is the Lord Jesus Christ, *and none other*" (*The Greek Testament*, 4: 668). The catching up of the Child referred to the Ascension, not to the later Rapture of the church though the same word for "snatched up" is used of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17; cf. Acts 8:39; 2 Cor. 12:2–4). The Rapture of the church would not constitute a deliverance of the Man-Child from Satan.³⁹

4. The 2 Witnesses

Rev. 11:3: *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.*

There are 2 witnesses that will preach for 1260 days or 3½ years. The passage goes on to say that they are given power to plague man and to destroy man and are given protection while they are doing this. Verse 7 says when they are finished their testimony the Beast will ascend out of the bottomless pit and make war of them and kill them. And it says that

³⁸ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 12:3–4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³⁹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 12:5–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

their bodies will lie there and then 3 ½ days they will come back to life, verse 11. And when they are restored to life and then the world sees them and fears, then they will be taken up into heaven. Some try to speculate who these witnesses may be. And if we have to name them, the best guess is Elijah and Enoch. Now here is the way people reason this, it is taught in many schools. If you recall, Elijah and Enoch are the 2 people in the OT that we know of that were raptured without physical death. Hebrews 9:27 says it is appointed all men once to die. And so therefore, there are those who say that these 2 men who have never died, must come back to die.

My personal problem with this is that many people in the church that will be raptured without physically dying. That does not mean that Hebrews 9 is incorrect because all who have accepted Christ as their Saviour have 'died in Christ.' Nevertheless, we do have in Malachi 4:5- 6, the promise that Elijah will come before the great and dreadful day.

My position is God did not tell us in Revelation who the 2 witnesses are, so it's not important for us to know who they are. I personally don't waste my time trying to speculate. The important thing to know is that they are witnesses who have come to Christ during the tribulation period or 2 people appointed by God. They are given great power to perform miracles and to even destroy people. They are protected for ½ of the tribulation period. And then the Anti-Christ is permitted to kill them. And all of the world celebrates that the Anti-Christ has victory over 2 evil people. And for 3 ½ days the whole world has a party as they look upon the dead bodies. And while they are having this wicked party, they stand up alive and the world stops and is in shock. And then they ascend into heaven even as Christ ascended into heaven in the very sight of people.

CLASS 16

We are looking at the personalities that are involved in the tribulation period. When we conclude looking at these personalities we will actually have completed our study on the tribulation. There is certainly much more to learn in terms of the events and as I have said, this will be covered when we study the book of Revelation in detail. We left off by just looking now at the Holy Spirit ministry and the Satan and the 2 witnesses. now we want to take a brief look at the Anti-Christ.

5. The beast out of the sea: The Antichrist

Rev. 13:1-2: *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten*

crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Chapter 13 presents a most important personage of the end time—a beast coming out of the sea. His 10 horns and 7 heads, with 10 crowns on his horns, depict the revived Roman Empire, which was also represented by the fourth beast of Daniel, which also had 10 horns (Dan. 7:7–8; cf. Rev. 13:3; 17:3, 7). In Revelation 13 and 17 the beast is the world ruler, whereas in Daniel 7 the little horn on the beast was the world ruler.⁴⁰

There are 2 ways of understanding Anti-Christ. One way is to acknowledge the world's opposition to Christ, the other is to substitute Christ. Satan's efforts have always been to oppose and destroy the work of God. He has done this through leaders in governments. He has done this through leaders in church organizations. He's done this through philosophies and false teachings. But the epitome of his efforts will be the person that rises to world leadership in the tribulation.

Dan. 7:24-25: *...out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time.*

This text speaks of the 10 kings in the revived Roman Empire evident in the dream that Daniel had. In verse 25 we see that one of these kings rises to prominence and for 3 ½ years he has the saints in his hand. Here we see that the OT clearly prophesied a person that would be the Anti-Christ. We see in that passage that he is given power for a short time of 3 ½ years. Paul adds to this description in 2 Thessalonians.

2 Thess. 2: 3-4: *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that*

⁴⁰ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). Revelation. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Re 13:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

In consoling the church that thought they had missed the return of Christ, Paul explains that before the return of Christ comes, the Anti-Christ will reign. Paul demonstrates how the reign of Anti-Christ could not be missed in this passage. There is a clear description of the Anti-Christ in these verses. You notice he is called the man of sin. You notice he is called the son of perdition. You notice he is called the lawless one. You notice that his activity is clearly opposing God and His work. It says he opposes and exalts himself above God. Notice it says he sits as God in the temple of God. showing that he is God.

In this text we see so much of what the Anti-Christ is about. He opposes God and he replaces God. We are told that he does all this with the power of Satan, to perform signs and lying wonders. That's an interesting phrase 'lying wonders.' Because it tells us of one of Satan's tactics is to perform wonders to deceive or to lie to people. Do you think it is possible for Satan to be carrying on this activity in the world today even without the Anti-Christ being here? Of all nations, your nations should see this with so many false healers today that are doing this in the name of Christ. Now please understand that I believe God can heal. But I believe that the gift of healings (plural) is not for today.

Rev. 6:1-2: *Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*

Here God's seals of wrath begin to open. The first seal, or the first expression of God's wrath, is to allow the Anti-Christ to come and reign, as the white horse suggests. If we compare this to the visions in Daniel we will see that this crown becomes the king of the 10 countries of the revived Roman Empire. It is good for us to remember that although the Anti-Christ is Satan's greatest and final attempt to overthrow God, he is a tool in the hands of God.

Never think that the tribulation period under Anti-Christ is out of the control of God. Everything that the Anti-Christ completes is actually in the purposes of God.

i) His Identity

Rev. 13:1-2, 6: *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns*

ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

You see in this passage there is the expression of the Anti-Christ coming up as the Beast out of the sea. And of course, he's described like a leopard and the dragon gives him power in his throne with great authority. So with the words of description that are used, we see that this individual is in the hands of the dragon who is Satan and the ultimate purpose is to bring worship to Satan. In verse 7 it explains what we've already seen in other passages where he is granted authority to make war with the saints and to overcome them. So we saw earlier when we were looking at the believers how a great host of them came to Christ in the tribulation, but many were martyred and then in the presence of the saints in heaven crying out to God to shorten the time of the tribulation. We have heard of many saints dying and now in this passage, we see the reason, that this Anti-Christ, this tool of the dragon, destroys and overcomes the saints.

Regarding the identity of the Antichrist, our notes include the following:

Probably a GENTILE since he comes from the sea. This is often a symbol of Gentile nations. (Rev. 13:1)

Perhaps a RESURRECTED individual (Rev. 13:3; 17:8)

Some feel he might be JUDAS.

Student Question: If we look at 13: 16, 17 where it talks about the mark of the Beast either on their forehead or on their hand. If we said this mark is on the forehead as a way of controlling human thinking, and on the hands signifies the way of controlling human action, is it like the 666?

Prof. Response: I can't say. We are not given that information. I think that would only be speculation which may not be true.

ii) His Rise to Power

Regarding the rise to power of the Antichrist, our notes include the following:

It was through the power of SATAN. (2 Thess. 2:3, 9-12)

It was through the permission of the HOLY SPIRIT. (2 Thess. 2:6,7)

It was through the formation of the REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE. (Dan. 2:40-44)

It was through the cooperation of the false religious system.

Student Question: My question is to know if Satan actually has the power to resurrect, to give life.

Prof. Response: Well, when Moses was performing the signs to convince Pharaoh, for a time the priests or whatever were able to perform the same 'tricks' or the same powers. We are told in Scripture that God has the power of life and death. But we see throughout the Bible history that God often allows Satan a certain amount of power for the purposes of God to be completed. That's one of the reasons that most of the time we want to look at this as a false resurrection. Satan is the master of hypocrisy and lies and falsehood. The Revelation text, says the second "deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs... telling those who dwell on the earth ... the beast ...was wounded by the sword and lived." This suggests the implied 'resurrection' was a lie.

iii) His Ability to Imitate

There is a chart in your book that will make comparison between the Antichrist and Christ. Regarding the ability to imitate of the Antichrist, our notes include the following:

<u>Antichrist</u>	<u>Christ</u>
i) Image of <u>SATAN</u> Rev. 13:4; 2 Thess. 2:9	Image of <u>GOD</u> Col. 1:15 Heb. 1:3
ii) Second person of <u>SATANIC</u> trinity Rev. 16:13	Second person of Godhead Matt. 28:19
iii) Comes from <u>ABYSS</u> Rev. 11:7; 17:8	Comes from heaven John 6:33
iv) Savage <u>BEAST</u> Rev. 13:2	Sacrificial lamb Rev. 5:6,9
v) Receives his power from <u>SATAN</u> Rev. 13:2	Receives power from God Matt. 28:18
vi) Experience a <u>RESURRECTION</u> Rev. 13:3,12 (fake?)	Christ was resurrected Rom. 1:4
vii) Receives worship of all <u>UNBELIEVERS</u> Rev. 13:3,4,8	Receives worship of believers Phil. 2:10,11
viii) His main ministry will	Christ's ministry was

last 31/2 years

Rev. 13:5

ix) The antichrist will someday

kill his HARLOT wife

Rev. 17:16,17

3 ½ years (approx.)

John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55

Christ will glorify

His holy Bride

Rev. 21:1,2

You see, imitation is the whole point of Satan. His purpose is to draw people away, but his ultimate purpose is to destroy everything God created. The character of Satan is evident, while Anti-christ destroys his harlot wife, Christ glorifies his holy bride. The information I give you regarding the Anti-Christ is not exhaustive but enough to give you a sense of who he is.

6. The Beast out of the earth: The False Prophet

Rev. 13:11-12: *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

You notice here ‘another beast’ who causes all people to worship the first beast. Some believe he will be a JEW and that he will head up the apostate church.

i) His Mark

Rev. 13:16,18: *And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three-score and six.*

This beast has authority over the first, performs signs, and inaugurates the mark (666) of the beast. The text limits the signs to commerce, the buying and selling in the name of the beast. The first part of chapter 13 is referring to the Anti-Christ as the beast out of the sea

ii) His Activities

Rev. 16:13: *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

Rev. 19:20: *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

In those verses we basically see the beginning, the ministry and the end of the False Prophet. The False Prophet is to Anti-Christ as the priests of Israel are to Christ, in the sense of being the one who draws worship to the Anti-Christ. So in our windows that we were talking about yesterday, we have the political situation in which the Anti-Christ is the political power of the world. He is substituting himself for Christ who will in the millennial kingdom be the world leader. But also in the millennial kingdom because Christ is God, He will be the focal point of worship. And believing Israel will be his priests. So to also reproduce this, Anti-Christ has the False Prophet and false religion that worships him. So what Anti-Christ is really doing is trying to establish the kingdom that Christ promised Israel. He did not have a nation prepared, so he has a false prophet to rally people to worship him. Now because this Beast in verse 11 of chapter 13 Revelation comes from the earth, some would say that he will be a Jew.

It's interesting that both the anti-Christ and the False Prophet are called 'Beast'. So the passage that we examined earlier regarding the mark of the beast, is instituted by the false prophet but it is to represent loyalty to the Anti-Christ. Admittedly, it is confusing which beast we are referring to. But the result is the same: the mark of the beast, is for the loyalty to the Anti-Christ. So everything that he does he does in the power and authority of Anti-Christ. You can see that Anti-Christ is seeking all the attention. Even the work of the False Prophet is seen to be given in his power.

6. 144,000 Israelite Preachers

Rev. 7:4: *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed;*

The last group are the 144,000 Israelite preachers that we talked about earlier. The information for them is in Rev. 7.

The Bible teaches that the 144,000 will consist of 12000 saved and called preachers from each of the 12 tribes of ISRAEL. When it says that they are sealed, that means they are protected from the power of the Anti-Christ so they cannot be killed. And at the end of chapter 7 this is where we see the picture of the martyred tribulation saints in heaven and therefore, we see the effect of these preachers.

In Rev. 7 two tribes (DAN and EPHRAIM) are omitted and are replaced by JOSEPH (Ephraim's father) and LEVI (Dan's priestly brother). Why are these two omitted? Perhaps the antichrist will come from this tribe (Gen. 49:17; Jer. 8:16). Ephraim, perhaps, because of their tendency to apostasy (Hosea 6:4,10)

However, it is significant that both are again mentioned relative to the MILLENIUM. (Ezek. 48:2,5)

CLASS 17

We are coming to the final sections of our study of Eschatology. Up until now we have been trying to trace Adam's Eschatology and the development of the promise of the seed. We saw the development of the promise of the millennial kingdom and the prophecy of the 70th week, the tribulation in preparation for Israel's acceptance of the Messiah. Eschatology is the study of future things. Because our school here has an entire semester study on the kingdom of God, we are going to step back and look now at the future of the church, and think very simply about our future. In terms of Eschatology, one of 2 things can happen to you and me.

Prof. Question: We can be raptured, or what's the second?

Student Response: We can die.

Prof. Question: What happens when the Christian dies?

Student Response: Absent from the body is present with the Lord

Prof. Response: Present where?

Student Response: With God in heaven.

Prof. Response: Let's qualify what we mean by heaven.

X. HEAVEN

Introduction:

A reporter for a Chicago radio station took a survey at the Chicago O'Hare International Airport. He stopped about thirty people at the airport and asked them: "Do you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you leave this world?"

The response was unanimous: "No." One or two even became indignant, and several others said, "Why of course nobody could know such a thing as that."

There is so much error and confusion taught regarding heaven. Yet the Bible declares the reality of heaven.

A. The Nature of Heaven

The Bible uses the word 'heaven' in 3 different ways, or 3 different nuances. The first way is the ATMOSPHERIC heaven. This is the lower reaches of the sky, the cloudy atmosphere, the space we have noticed in the last week or 2, the place where the storms come from.

Gen. 7:11: *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.*

Acts 1:10-11: *And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*

When Christ ascended, He ascended up in the visible sky and He disappeared. That was called 'heaven', the atmosphere. Jesus Christ had the privilege of being the first astronaut.

The second way this is used is the region of the SUN, the MOON and the STARS. We would use the word 'universe'. But this is also described with the word 'heaven' in the Scriptures. The Bible sometimes calls this 'the firmament.'

Gen 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heaven [singular]and the earth.*

Here 'heaven' includes all that is above the earth, and any given passage may include all or merely a part of the whole. Heaven and earth together constitute the universe (Gen 1:1).⁴¹

Gen 1:14-15: *Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.*

God created special light sources, all of which serve three purposes: "signs" reminding people of God's creative work (Ps. 8:3; Rom. 1:19–20); "seasons" defining time periods so that people can plan their activities; and "lights."⁴²

⁴¹ Austel, H. J. (1999). 2407 שָׁמַיִם. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (935). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴² Willmington, H. L. (1997). *Willmington's Bible handbook* (6). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Student Question: Going back to Genesis 7 when we were talking the flood, there are commentators who say that before the flood it never rained and it was just vapor that came up from the ground.

If that's the case it's normal that when Noah said it was going to rain the people said 'you are a liar'.

Prof. Response: Henry Morris, a scientist and a believer in the USA, has carefully studied the Hebrew text in Genesis 1 and concludes that when God created the earth, He had a vapor barrier around it so it was protected from the intense rays of the sun. This was a thick vapor barrier. This agrees with our text in Genesis 1:1 where it says 'heavens' (plural), which means the atmosphere 'heaven' is distinguished from the earth. Dr. Morris proved that if a number of volcanoes in the world erupted at the same time, it would change the temperature of the atmosphere enough that all this vapor barrier were condensed and fall to the ground and that's what caused the flood. He suggests that this air here would only have to change 3-5 degrees to condense because it would be colder out here. This book is called 'the Genesis Flood' by Henry Morris. It's a very good. I'm a science man so I enjoyed this book very much.

Psalm 19:1: *The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*

The heavens, i.e., the super terrestrial spheres, which, so far as human vision is concerned, are lost in infinite space, declare how glorious is God, ...and what His hands have made, i.e., what He has produced with a superior power to which everything is possible, the firmament, i.e., vault of heaven stretched out far and wide and as a transparency above the earth⁴³

There is an interesting study on the history of the horoscope signs. There is evidence that these signs originally were used to declare the hope of the Messiah. They have been perverted to supposedly give man guidance but that was not the original use of the signs. I have a book in my library about 200 years old and it traces how the original signs gave the story of creation and the necessity for a Saviour and the promise of the Kings' coming. I have no proof of this, and of course, this was not written revelation so I don't know how accurate this is. But I thought it was very

⁴³ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Ps 19:2-4). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

interesting in light of this verse-‘the heavens declare the glory of God.’
The Scriptures do mention the signs in the heavens.

Student Question: *Can give an example.*

Prof. Response: *I think one example is Orion’s Belt or the Belt of Orion, also known as the Three Kings or Three Sisters, is an asterism in the constellation Orion. It consists of the three bright stars. The passage “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” is found in the book of Job 9:9 and 38:31 and book of Amos 5:8.*

The third use of the word ‘heaven’ is where GOD permanently dwells. God is the centre, He is the pre-eminence, He is the focal point of this heaven. It is the place of the presence of God, the place in which we will spend eternity with Him.

2 Cor. 12:2,4: *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven... was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.*

Paul says he was caught up ‘in the third heaven’. The atmosphere is #1, the universe is #2, and #3 is the abode of God, where it appears that Paul heard “inexpressible things.”

Psalm 11:4: *The LORD is in His holy temple, The LORD’S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.*

The Lords’ throne is in heaven. Heaven is a real place. It is a dimension that we do not have a concept of. But remember when Moses was given instruction about building the tabernacle and later when Israel built the temple? The tabernacle and the temple were built on earth as the model of heaven, so the reality of the temple is in heaven, the model was made on earth. In heaven, there is a central focus in which there is a temple where God has His throne.

Matthew 6:9-10: *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

We repeat this prayer, all the time acknowledging God’s abode in heaven.

Prof. Question: *If God lives in heaven, how can He be omnipresent?*

Student Response: *-He is a spirit. -It is one of His attributes*

Prof. Response: It is the truth. God is great enough to have His presence everywhere but still abide in heaven. The Scriptures not only tell us about this heaven where God abides, but gives us a description of this.

B. Description of Heaven

This is adapted from Lockyer's "All the Doctrines of the Bible." According to Scripture Heaven is:

1. A PLACE (John 14: 2, 3)

It is obviously a place, a real place.

2. A PREPARED place. (John 14:2,3)

This verse always interests me. Our salvation has been determined from before the foundation of the world. But Jesus has left preparation for His people until after His death, burial and resurrection. That tells me that Jesus in His love for us has reserved the privilege of preparing a special place for each one of His children who have come to know Him. I just think that is a marvellous text of Scripture for us.

Student Question: I'm confused about this because it's always been taught that, you know, our hope as the church or believers is a heavenly hope, but when Jesus said 'I am going to prepare a place for you?' Is this some sort of physical place He prepares for us in heaven, or is this something that He is preparing and then will come down to earth, or he said, "I'm kind of confused."

Prof. Response: How this place in John 14 relates to the new heaven and the new Jerusalem, I don't know. Perhaps it is the exact preparation of the New Jerusalem. Perhaps the New Jerusalem is actually heaven coming down to encircle the earth like the moon. Perhaps the New Jerusalem that is created in the book of Revelation, the new Jerusalem is described as a city that is cubed.

Even the dimensions are given in Scripture, the point is: it is a cube of immense size in which the people live within. That is such a big space that all of the people in all of history could live there comfortably. You do the math, a square this and then squared again for the cube space and you will find out how much space each one will have. It could be that this is what God is preparing for us because this in the book of Revelation, this city will be a moon circling around the earth.

3. A PEOPLED Place

Matthew 6:9—we read, ‘*our Father which art in heaven*’. It is a populated place.

Hebrews 9:24—so the Father is there and Christ is there.

Matthew 18:10—the angels beheld the face of God there, so the angels are there.

So, the Father is there, Christ is there, the angels are there. We read in John 14:3, we will be there. So we see it is a populated or inhabited place.

4. A PATERNAL Place (Matt. 6:9, John 14:2)

Christ said this is His Father’s house. So this is a paternal place, it is a place where the Father, God, rules and reigns. Jesus said ‘in my Father’s house’. So it’s a place where there are relationships in terms of father and children.

5. A PALACIAL Place (Rev. 21:21, 22:5)

With all the wealth there, where the gates are pearls and the streets are gold, it is described as a palace.

6. A PLEASURABLE Place (Rev. 21:23, 22:5)

The ‘glory of God’ lights heaven. It is a glorious place and therefore, a pleasurable place filled with God’s Glory

7. A PEACEFUL Place (Rev. 21:4, 27, 22:3)

Here we see that there is no sickness, there’s no death, there’s no sin, so it’s a peaceful place. These text show why heaven is altogether peaceful: *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away... But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life... And there shall be no more curse,*

8. A PERFECT Place (1 John 3:2)

This text says ‘*we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*’ That verse is a promise of our perfection, so it is a perfect place. And we could see that from the other verses too where there is no sin dwelling there.

9. A PERMANENT Place (1 Thess. 4:13ff., Heb. 11:10, 16)

Heaven is a prepared place with a city prepared for the faithful (Hebrews 11) that did not see the promise. And they did not see the promise because they looked for a “permanent” city. That is the whole context of Hebrews 11: they forfeited pleasure, convenience, and some, their lives,

because all they had on the earth was temporal. They were looking for a permanent city, a promise of God. In John 14:2, Jesus says ‘I go to prepare a place for you’ we know our existence with Him will be forever, after the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4) we will be together forever.

10. A PRESCRIBED Place (Gal. 5:21, Rev. 22:14, 15)

These verses tell us the things God has determined that will not be in heaven (Galatians 5) and the things that will be in heaven (Revelation 22), ‘*blessed are they who have come to the tree of life*’

And so the believers are there, the blessed believers and the wicked are not there. And so this tells us that it is what I call a prescribed place- it is prescribed ahead of time that only the righteous will be there, and not the wicked.

When we go again and study the book of Daniel and Revelation we will be looking more at the details of the new heaven and new earth and the satellite city, new Jerusalem- that’s all a part of the future. For our purposes, we are just evidencing that heaven is a real place because we already concluded that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

XI. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Now we have to look at what the state of individuals when they are absent from the body and present with the Lord. We are talking about what we call ‘the intermediate state’. We know that our final state is to be in our resurrected body and soul with the Lord forever. Yet, there is a difference between this perfect state and the intermediate state when our body is still in the ground. We have to think through what the Bible teaches about this intermediate state.

Student Question: Concerning the Rev. 22:14, 15. I am looking at this description especially verse 15, the people who will be excluded, who have the right to enter into paradise. Even today we see some Christians that practise these kind of sin, so what’s their position. What do we say about them?

Prof. Response: What did God say? ‘by the fruit you shall know them’. God distinguishes a believer by the fact that their life is changed. God cannot be present without affecting change. So, as we discussed in our Corinthians class, there really is no such thing as a carnal Christian. Today we say that a person can be saved but still act just like the world and therefore he is ‘carnal.’ That is not how Paul used the word ‘carnal.’ He said that a Christian manifests the work of the Spirit in their life, but in

some small areas still has the attitudes of the world. He says this is the carnal Christian. But in that same passage, Paul did say that there would be those who would have the 'appearance' of being a part of the body of Christ but they are not saved. Therefore they are defiling the body of Christ. In Acts 20 Paul talked about wolves among us in sheep's clothing. As well, the entire epistle of 1 John demonstrates the tests of true faith. And with all of the things that are mentioned in 1 John, the evidence has to be a transformed life. This truth is repeated over and over in the NT: the Christian has a life changed. When they sin, they are convicted by the Spirit of God. If they resist the ministry of the Spirit of God, and refuse to confess their sin, they are disciplined to bring them back to God. They are not judged but disciplined, for Jesus has taken their judgement. If they refuse the discipline and continue with a hardened heart, Paul tells us 1 Corinthians 11, some become sick, and some die (sleep), God takes them. It amazes me how many times this comes up in Africa. I am not very familiar with your churches, although I have preached in many churches, but I've never been in any church for any length of time. I want to emphasize this, because you will be the leaders in churches. I encourage you: Do not make excuses for sin. Deal with it. That is what God calls His leadership to do. People that are disobedient believers, or pretending to be Christians, and are living in sin, are out of the will of God. If they are believers, they will be disciplined God and they will know it by the Spirit within. And church leadership has to affirm that discipline by the Spirit of God with church discipline. If they are not believers, they will not be under conviction. They will probably not respond to your plea for them to repent. Then you treat them as a non-Christian and dismiss them from the fellowship of your church. You do not allow them to participate in communion or any leadership. And you do not fellowship with them as a believer. So don't be surprised when we come to texts of Scripture which are black and white/right and wrong. I don't know a way of saying this other than "There's no such thing as a carnal Christian the way we understand carnality today. There's no such thing as a Christian who is void of the work of the Spirit of God changing their life." Today we face the popularity of the Emerging Church ministry. One of the things that the emerging church does is not judge people, and does not condemn sin. That is why it is so popular.

A. What Happens at Death?

When death comes to an individual, it is not the end of existence. No human being will have his existence end. All of humanity is created in the image of God and is everlasting. We are not eternal, because we have a beginning. But we are everlasting, there is no end to humanity, there is no end to man. God planned from the beginning that man should be perfect in body, soul and spirit before Him as His children. When Adam sinned, he brought death. What is death? Let me fist go through your notes so you can fill in the blanks, then explain and summarize:

Physical death is the separation of the BODY from the SOUL and SPIRITT. The spirit is that part of man allows man to commune with God. The soul is the INTELLECT, and EMMOTION, AND WILL of man.

For the unbeliever physical death is part of the original penalty of sin, to the believer it loses its aspect of penalty and becomes the means of entrance into a large life.

Physical death is never a cessation of being for either SAINT or SINNER.

Spiritual death is the separation of the immaterial (soul and spirit) from the GOD. Thus, there is no fellowship between God and the individual.

Second death is the banishment from God and final misery of the reunited SOUL and BODY of the wicked.

To summarize, separation is man's spirit separated from God. The spirit of man that which God breathed into man and made man distinct from animal. The spirit of man is the immaterial part of man that in Adam had fellowship and communion with God. The spirit of Adam, as God created him, gave Adam the capacity to come before God, to commune with God, to walk with God, to be led by God.

When Adam sinned, he died spiritually, instantly. He had no capacity to come before God, he hid from God. He was spiritually dead. And therefore, God had to initiate the contact and draw Adam back to Himself. God had to renew the spirit of Adam again.

Prof. Question: When we are born, what is the state of our spirit?

Student Response: Separated from God

Prof. Response: Yes, when we are born our spirit is an immaterial part of us, but separated from God because of our sin. We are 'born in sin', we are 'sharpened in iniquity.' That beautiful little baby that Carol will be holding today is a sinner. All humans are born spiritually dead.

But there is another part of man that is immaterial. This is called the 'soul' of man. God makes distinction between the spirit and the soul when He uses these 2 words, soul and spirit in the same sentence. Actually, we see in Scripture that the 3 words are used: body, soul, spirit, are used occasionally together in the same verse.

Isa. 26:9: *With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;*

1Th. 5:23: *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If the spirit is immaterial and the soul is immaterial, these two must also be distinct. There are aspects of every human being where we have intellect and emotion far superior to any animal. When God created animals, He made them a living soul.

Gen. 1:21: *And God created great whales, and every living creature (soul) that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly,*

Gen. 1:24: *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature (soul) after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

Animals have intellect, emotion and will. My dog knows when it steals the food and should not do it. My dog has emotions when I notice the food is gone say 'What have you done?' His tail goes between the legs and he begins to whimper. Animals have Intellect, emotion and will, but ours is far superior. So when death comes, the body, the physical part of us, is separated from the soul and the spirit.

Theologians have argued whether man is a dichotomy or a trichotomy. It is true that man is material and immaterial, you cannot deny this. But his immaterial has 2 distinct functions; spirit and soul. So is man a dichotomy? Yes, he's immaterial and he's material. Man is also a trichotomy with body, soul, and spirit. We could say soul/spirit and body because the soul/spirit can never be separated. 1:27:20

There would be some that would say that the spirit part of man does not exist until they come to know Christ as Saviour. They would say that actually the spirit part of man is God's spirit in man. And they would use texts like this 'he that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son hath not life'. I do not accept this because so often we are told to surrender our lives to Christ, body, soul and spirit. I believe man always has a spirit/soul, but because of sin the spirit has been separated from the Spirit of

God. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Spirit of God enters into our spirit and that is the new life we receive called salvation. So the difference between an unbeliever and a believer is this: an unbeliever has everlasting death, a believer has everlasting life.

Student Question: *What happens after death? Can the dead contact the living?*

Prof. Response: *I know in Africa there is a common belief that when death comes, the spirit/soul of man has the privilege to wander around and even to speak to people in dreams and these kinds of things. There are only 2 instances in Scripture in which we see the dead making contact with the living in a visible way. Saul went to the witch of Endor. The witch was a woman who had always had dealings with demons. That's what a witch is in the Bible. In the nation Israel they were commanded to destroy such people. But Saul found out about this woman and went to her. Saul asked the witch to bring back Samuel so he could talk to Samuel.*

What happened?

Student Response: *Samuel came.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, Samuel presented himself. Who was the most surprised and the most frightened?*

Student Response: *The woman, the witch.*

Prof. Response: *Yes, not Saul, the woman. She was terrified because Samuel actually presented himself. Why would a woman who's always calling up the dead be surprised when they come? The only answer is that it never happened before. In all the other situations, just like here in Africa, the person that was supposed to come back was really a demon pretending to be this person.*

In the 8 years that I spent in Ghana and Togo I dealt with many of God's people who had an experience of supposedly talking to someone, an uncle, or a famous person, who was dead. Every time that this happened, a fetish priest was involved in conditioning a child or adult to receive this dead person. After study the Scriptures, looking at the doctrine of angels, demons, Satan, every one of these individuals recognized it was not an uncle or a famous person, it was a demon.

The only other place this is found is in the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah are talking to Christ. They were clearly sent by God to bring comfort to Christ, the same as the angels were sent to comfort Christ when He was tempted in the wilderness. It was a unique situation because Christ presented Himself glorified in the eyes of the 3 disciples who were

with Him. And in His glorified state, Moses and Elijah were able to come because they were presenting themselves in their glorified state to the God-man. You could say God brought a little piece of heaven down for the three disciples to experience.

Peter, seeing this phenomenon, wanted to set up tents and stay on the mount forever. This was an absolutely unique situation. Nevertheless, for the believer the norm is “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” There are no ghosts of believers wandering around the earth. What about the unsaved? For them the norm is “it is appointed unto man to once to die and after that” to roam around the world as a spirit? No. For the unbeliever it is “and after that the judgment.”

When the Lord was talking about Lazarus and the rich man, it was not a parable because He used a proper name; Lazarus. Lazarus was in Abraham’s Bosom, a place of glory, a place of peace, a place of comfort. Jesus knew his name, he was a believer. There was a great gulf and the rich man was in the place opposite which was torment and pain and suffering. And the rich man wanted to warn his family to repent and turn to God so they wouldn’t be where he is. If he was a free soul, why didn’t he just go back himself? That is what Africans might say. He would come to them and talk to them in a dream.

Prof. Question: Have you been told this in Africa?

Student Response: -Many times. -I have even seen it myself.

Prof. Response: It is a deception of Satan and his demons because the rich man could not go back. He could not even influence the spirits to send the message, as you are taught in your traditional religions.

The rich man says ‘please, send Lazarus back so he can warn them’. And the answer is ‘no, Lazarus will not go back. He is where he belongs.’ And then what did the Lord say? ‘Your relatives have everything that they need. They have Moses and the prophets, (meaning the Scriptures.) If they will not listen to my Word, they will not listen at all.’

Although we go into more detail of this in our study of Angels, Demons and Satan, let me tell you clearly now: “The Scriptures teach that dead people do not wander around on the earth as ghosts.” Even though it has been a deception of Satan for thousands of years. God is the Alpha and the Omega, God is the beginning and the end, God is the author and the controller of death. He appoints death. Death is the state, the state of death in humanity is in the control of God.

CLASS 18

We have been discussing the intermediate state. We have examined the Bible teaching regarding the body, the soul, the spirit. Now we want to examine the nature of the intermediate state. Let me again go through your note fill-in blanks, the explain and summarize:

B. The Nature of the Intermediate State

i) The Bible teaches the existence of both the saved and unsaved after death and before the resurrection. In the intermediate state the soul/spirit are without the body. For the believer this state is one of conscious JOY; for the unbeliever this state is one of conscious SUFFERING.

ii) The believer does not receive his permanent glorified body at DEATH. (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:52)

We know that there is a state for the saved and the unsaved after death and we know that all men righteous and unrighteous will be raised. And we know that that resurrection is in order, the righteous first and then the unrighteous last in terms of the resurrection. For the believer who is absent from the body and present with the Lord, there is a state of conscious joy. And for the unbeliever this is a state of conscious suffering. We know from 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15 that the believer does not receive the permanent glorified body at death. In the rapture text of 1 Thess. 4 those that are alive and remain are caught up together with those that are in heaven and their souls and spirits join the body that is resurrected in the air.

iii) The soul of the believer, at its separation from the body, enters the PRESENCE of Christ. (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Luke 23:43)

These passages clearly teaches that, for the believer who is separated from the body, he/she is present with Christ. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, verse. We see this also when Christ was crucified and He gave the promise to the thief who was being crucified beside Him. When this thief believed who Christ was he said 'will you remember me?' Christ's response was 'this day you will be with me in paradise.'

iv) The state of the believer at death is to be PREFERRED to life in the body. (Phil. 1:23, 24)

Jesus said the criminal crucified with Himself would be in paradise with Him. 'Paradise' indicates that the state of the believer at death is to be preferred to life in the body. Paul here says to depart from the body and to be present with the Lord is far better, knowing that it means separated from sin and all the effects.

Prof. Question: Does this justify believer's suicide?

Student Response: -No.

Prof. Response: But it is the good promise that death is our deliverance. Paul was stoned and left for dead but revived to continue his ministry. Stephen was stoned and did die and went into the presence of God. Both were delivered. But we know who had the greatest delivery. According to this verse, Stephen had the better opportunity because he was in the presence of God. I say this because in our trials and in our troubles death is deliverance.

I met a man from Romania who served Christ behind the iron curtain in the Communist regime. His name is Dr. Tson. He was beaten and threatened because of his faith many times. And they were amazed that he was confident in his beatings when they threatened his death. And he said to them 'the worst you can do is kill me and that delivers me into my Lord's presence.' This is how we should hold onto this truth.

v) The departed saints are truly ALIVE and CONSCIOUS. (Matt. 22:32; Luke 16:22; 23:43)

Matthew 22:32 tells us that God is the God of the living, and therefore, the departed saints are truly alive and conscious. We see that in the story of the rich man and Lazarus where Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom. This is clearly seen in Revelation when the martyred saints during the tribulation are robed in white in the presence of God.

vi) Departed believers are in a state of REST and blessedness (Rev. 6:9-11; 14:13)

Hebrews' teaches the true Sabbath rest is the eternal state, as our place in the presence of God. You see in Rev. 6 those that are in the presence of God are clothed in white and chapter 14 those that are in the presence of God are clothed in white. Therefore, although there is a separation of the body from the soul and the spirit in the intermediate state, there is identity that can be clothed in righteousness, clothed in white robes. This state is a dimension that we do not understand. When Moses and Elijah were present to comfort Christ on the Mt. of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw them and desired to set up camp with them. We accept this by faith.

C. Erroneous Views of the Intermediate State

Now there are erroneous incorrect views of the intermediate state.

i) The main erroneous view is that of "SOUL sleep."

This is based on the assumption that the possession of a physical body is indispensable to activity and consciousness. The reason for this is because of the term used in Scripture when it speaks of believers sleeping. The idea is for this view is that the soul and the spirit and the body can never be severed or separated.

Those who claim soul-sleep say that the immaterial part of man the material part of man cannot be separated. Their belief would be that when the body ceases to function, the soul and the spirit sleep, in other words, they cannot be separated from the dead body. This comes actually from a Greek philosophy that magnified creation, saying the only reality is the physical reality. Therefore, soul-spirit are a part of physical and can never be separated.

We know from John 4: "God is Spirit." As Spirit God is fully a person. We know that He has said we must "worship in spirit and in truth." So in some sense, we could say that our body is a hindrance to true worship because our body has the evidence of sin and death within it. Our body gives us trouble. Have you ever gone to church with a back ache or a tooth ache? It's hard to concentrate on worship when you are in pain.

And then we have those passages in the OT where Samuel was present in soul-spirit, and in the NT where Elijah and Moses were present on the Mt. of Transfiguration. This is where we are told about Abraham's bosom and the place of Lazarus and the place of the rich man. Therefore, to say there is no consciousness when the soul and the spirit are separated from the body is just not Biblical.

So we have to ask- what does it mean in the Bible when the Bible refers to people sleeping even though they are dead? We see this in Daniel 12 and John 11 and 1 Cor. 11. Our answer is that this is the simple language of appearance in which the body is not functioning and therefore is called 'sleeping.' It is a way of saying that death is not the end. It is a synonym for death, but it implies this is not the end. When a dog dies, it's the end. When people die, it is not the end. So sleeping is a good term because even though it means death, it implies it is not the end.

When Jesus came upon the girl who was in this state, He used the term 'sleep' not to, only to express the fact that this is not the end. So, what did he do, he proved it by calling her back to life. So the contrast was not 'is she dead or is she just in a deep sleep?' the contrast was 'is she dead and without hope or is she asleep in God?' the same I believe was said of Lazarus. And he was definitely dead because they wrapped him and put him in the cave and they said he will stink if we open the door.

But Christ said to His disciples ‘Lazarus sleeps.’ It was not the end. He was raised picturing what will happen to all humanity.

The second error in terms of intermediate state is the RC teaching on the doctrine of purgatory:

ii) The Roman Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of PURGATORY: “all who die at peace with the church, but are not perfect, pass into purgatory.” They make satisfaction for the sins committed after baptism by suffering a longer or shorter time, according to the degree of their GUILT.

They also teach that the church has power by PRAYER and the sacrifice of the MASS to shorten the time of those suffering or to remit them altogether. There is no scripture to indicate this to be true. The Roman Catholic view is inconsistent with the completeness of Christ’s satisfaction (Gal. 2:21; Heb. 9:28), and of justification by faith alone (Rom. 3:28).

What they believe is that after baptism and all the other sacraments, there can still be unconfessed sin in a RC’s life. So purgatory is the place where they are not with God, they are in a place where they can suffer a little bit to redeem those sins that didn’t get a chance to be confessed, and then they are okay and can go to be with God. They would say that purgatory is a place of short suffering according to the degree of their guilt. And so they also teach that the church, the people that are still alive, can by prayer and sacrifice and mass also shorten the suffering of people in purgatory on their behalf. There is absolutely no Biblical evidence for this. It is inconsistent with God’s teaching of justification and God’s teaching of sins being satisfied in Christ. It denies the very words of Christ ‘it is finished.’ It denies the words of Paul- ‘there is now therefore no condemnation’.

For the believer death is victory! Teach your people this. Why should God’s people fear death? There is no reason for it. There is sorrow because for a short time there is separation. My father died in 1995. I still miss him. But I would never wish him back. And we will be together forever someday.

Student Question: I want to talk about the case of suicide as a Christian.

We see the case of Samson in the Bible. He committed suicide.

Prof. Response: Can we lose our salvation? That’s your answer.

Student Response: Even if we take our life?

Prof. Response: Doing so is a sin. Samson committed suicide. But in Samson’s case I don’t know if that really was a sin or not because he used his

death to kill many Philistines. I don't really see that as suicide. I see that as having a final victory for God. But the question has been raised- if a believer commits suicide, does he lose his salvation? And the simple answer is: There is no sin of a believer causing lost salvation.

Student Response: If someone commits suicide, to me, it is evidence they are not believers because the Holy Spirit comforts us in our suffering.

Prof. Response: I hear what you are saying, but as a pastor being at the bedside of God's people who are suffering with great pain of cancer, I have heard them cry out to God 'God, take my life please!' because the pain is so great. And I am convinced if they had pills in their hand to take their life, they would do it.

I pray God will never bring that much pain in your life. I have had pain so severe that I wished I was dead. It only lasted about 2 days, but it was the most terrible pain I ever experienced. And I know that was not as severe as what I have seen people deal with. All that I'm saying is that God teaches that sin can be a moment of weakness in all of our lives. And if the Bible says 'if we say we have no sin, we are liars.'

There was a man in my church who took his own life. He was a man who from Germany. When he was young, he was in Hitler's Youth. And as a young boy in Hitler's Youth, he approved of the atrocities that Hitler did. When he was an adult he came to Canada. He married a German girl. All the time of his marriage, he had this great guilt of being of approving Hitler. He would go out of his way to make up for this guilt by giving people money, by helping them, he was a very generous man. However it never removed his guilt. So he started to drinking and became an alcoholic. He just wanted to drown his guilt in alcohol and drunkenness. His wife came to Christ in the church that I pastored. And he saw the tremendous change in his wife. He came and accepted Christ as his Saviour. Nevertheless, as much as he knew that God forgave him, he could not forgive himself. One day he took a gun, put it in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

Was he saved or was he not saved? Only God knows. All I'm saying be careful how you judge people That is not our job.

XII. THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

We go to examine the doctrine of hell. There is a little letter called Left Behind in your notes you can share with your church. Read on your own time there. I want to begin in the second paragraph:

Introduction

There are two facts about hell that should immediately sober our thinking about it. First, the term hell occurs more often in the teaching of CHRIST than elsewhere in Scripture. Second, Christ had more to say about hell than He did about HEAVEN.

Let us notice some of the truths concerning this endless punishment as expressed by Christ:

Matt. 5:22: *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.*

talks about being in the danger of hell-fire

Hell is the coming danger for all.

Matt 7:22, 23: *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? ... And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Hell is to be departed from God.

Matt 10:28: *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

With this verse, people have taught that there is the destruction of the soul and body so that hell is not eternal. Because the word is 'destroy.' The NT Greek word is 'ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi) and it can mean 'destroy, or annihilate'. That is a legitimate translation for the word. Does this verse teach the annihilation of the soul and body? No. If a man lose his own life, the word 'lose' there is the same word 'ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi)'. Here the word can mean losing or separating or dismissing something. It doesn't necessarily teach the annihilation of the soul, that is not consistent with other verses. The idea is basically for God to disregard them and to lose them and let them be separated from him which is itself, suffering.

Matt. 11:23: *And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

This verse talks about being brought down into hades; Ἅδης (hades). In Biblical Greek it is associated with Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place in the very depths of the earth, the common receptacle of disembodied spirits. Usually Hades is just the abode of the wicked,.

Matt. 13:40, (42, 49, 50): *Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.*

These verses speak of the furnaces of hell and the wailing and the gnashing of teeth in hell. Obviously that speaks of great pain and suffering. I don't know exactly what gnashing of teeth is because I've never seen it, somehow when people are in great pain they must go grind or gnashing: 'βρυγμός', (brugmos) meaning snarling, growling: in the sense of biting to denote extreme anguish and utter despair.

Matt. 23:32-33: *Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

Here hell is described as a 'condemnation' (κρίσις, krisis): sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment. Hell is truly a sentence of justified punishment from God.

Matt. 25:41, (46): *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*

These verses speak of everlasting fire and everlasting punishment. This tells us that the destroying of Matthew 10 is not annihilation.

Mark 9:43: *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched, "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.*

Hell is the place where the worm does not die and fire is not quenched. What does it mean 'the worm does not die'? When someone dies and their body is in the ground, part of the decaying process is worms eating the flesh. These worms when they eat the flesh do not live forever. In criminology when a body is found, one of the ways of determining the time is to examine the bugs that are in the body and they will determine how long the body has been dead. This seems to suggest that everlasting, the place of eternal punishment, is everlasting death where decay never ends. So maybe part of the punishment or judgment is that the worms are always in the body, always bringing pain, always destroying but it never ends.

It could also just be an idiom that basically says that death never ends. In which case, the idea of fire never ending could also be an idiom meaning pain never ends.

Student Question: Is this real fire or just a fire in a symbolic sense? Prof. Response: I think we are going to find out that the term 'hell' can refer

specifically to the intermediate state that the rich man was in where there was suffering. Or it can refer to the final state which is the lake of fire, and it will be a lake of fire. There are times when the text does not really distinguish which situation the Lord is talking about. It seems that more often it is talking about the eternal state of the lake of fire. But we see the rich man and Lazarus and the rich man was in great suffering. I do not plan on going to hell to find out whether this is literal or an idiom.

Luke 9:24: *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.*

This verse reminds us that there is no advantage in the world if we end up in hell, if we are cast into hell. So that means all the advancements and all the wealth and all we could gain in the world means nothing if we end up in hell.

Luke 16:22-23: *So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

Here we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. And it says that the rich man is in torment, great torment. It also says he lifted up his eyes in torment, so this intermediate state was with pain with vision unique vision. I suggested earlier this place called by 'Abraham's Bosom' was the abode with God for believers prior to the Lord's resurrection. My point is that unbelievers (the rich man) were in the intermediate state of suffering. Since Adam's fall there has always been a sentence of justified punishment from God for the unsaved.

John 5:28-29: *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice "and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

Here it says 'they that do evil are in hell awaiting the resurrection of condemnation. As in Matt. 23 above, the resurrection of condemnation is the eternal sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment.

Student Question: *From what I've seen from this passage of Lazarus, it seems that those who are in hell still have the capacity to pray and plead for those who are still alive on the earth.*

Prof. Response: I don't know. We will see as we continue our class that there is a distinction between Abraham's Bosom, where Lazarus was, and Hell, places of the intermediate state, and the final abode of all history's unsaved—the Lake of Fire. However, in the Lazarus and Rich man text, God's answer was essentially "Stop pleading, they have My Word, that is sufficient to warn them!"

Therefore, we could say that God will not listen to those prayers. Christ said much about hell as you can see. He gave us more information about hell than He did about heaven. Now when we look at the actual terms that are used in the OT and the NT I think it will give us some better understanding. I think when Jesus is talking about hell most of the time it is probably referring to the final state of the lake of fire. But clearly when He's talking about Lazarus it's not that situation. It is important to realize that both the OT and the NT spoke of this place for the wicked to be in an intermediate state.

A. Sheol

1. This is the Hebrew word found in the O.T. It is the place to which both GODLY and UNGODLY go after death. It is depicted as an abode of shadowy, limited existence.

Sheol is not always translated by the English term "hell". In the majority of cases it is translated "GRAVE" (54% of the time). It is rendered "HELL" 41% of the time and "PIT" in all the rest. Whenever 'pit' is used it obviously means 'the grave'.

2. Sheol had two divisions

It is used in a general sense for the world of all human spirits, but in a specific sense for the abode of the WICKED dead. The abode of the righteous dead had 2 names: PARADISE(Luke 23:43) and ABRAHAM'S BOSOM (Luke 16:22).

3. Sheol and the Wicked Dead

The Hebrews never conceived of death a cessation of existence, annihilation, or total extinction. Death was simply a change of kingdoms with a new form of existence. The repeated phrase "Shadow of death," conveys the idea that Sheol is a place of gloom and retreat from the Light (Ps. 23)

So you have to understand we have with the idea of 'sheol' also the idea of progressive revelation. In the OT 'sheol' was just a place of the spirits, of the human dead. Sometime it spoke of the place of the wicked; but also sometimes it spoke of the righteous in the grave. When Jesus gave

the story of the rich man and Lazarus, He introduced new revelation. It's true that some people say 'that was just a parable, it's not doctrine'. But the Lord never used proper names in parables, it's just not something that you did in a parable.

I believe that He was giving us revelation regarding what the OT called 'sheol'. And what He indicated was what we see in the OT- it included the place of the wicked and the place of the righteous. And He described the rich man as in torment and the described Lazarus as in Abraham's bosom. And He said that was a complete separation of the two with a great gulf in between. This teaching fits the occasions that the word 'sheol' is used in the OT, whether it is 'hell' or 'grave' or 'pit'. When Christ was on the cross, the thief said 'remember me in *paradise*'.

You can see that in the OT, there was an understanding of continuation of existence after death. And when we look at Adam's Eschatology we can see that Adam expected to see Eden restored. And the original creation by John Milton was called "Paradise". Israel was promised the millennial reign with Christ. That would continue forever. And the description that the prophets gave us of this kingdom was a return practically to paradise with the peace and no death and harmony in the world.

It is understandable to see why Christ, when He came, gave so much more information about hell. He was the One to deliver man from hell. He was the One to offer salvation and forgiveness. And so to appreciate His work for us, He gives us great information about the suffering of the intermediate state and the final state.

B. Hades

Whenever the translators of the Septuagint wanted to bring the Hebrew word SHEOL into Greek they used the word HADES. In Greek literature the underworld, or realm of the dead was known as Hades. Hades appears in the N.T. Note some of the following examples:

Luke 16: 23: And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw *Abraham*

Matt. 16:18: *I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

Rev. 20: 13,14: *Death and Hades delivered up the dead*

Rev. 20 strongly suggests that Hades is an INTERMEDIATE state of punishment for disembodied spirits, a place to eventuate, after the last judgment in "the lake of fire".

In summary we could say that Sheol and Hades are

1. IDENTICAL

Psm. 16:10: *You will not leave my soul in Sheol,*

Acts 2:27: *For You will not leave my soul in Hades,*

2. A place beneath the earth where Pharaoh and all other wicked men of ancient times are confined (Ezek. 31:16-18; 32:17-32; Luke 16:23-28)

3. A place with GATES.

Isa. 38: 10: *I said, "In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol;*

Matt. 16:18: *I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

4. A place where Christ has the KEYS

Rev. 1:18: *And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*

CLASS 19

We have been looking at what the scriptures say regarding what happens after death. We have discussed the intermediate state for the believer. We have discussed the intermediate state and the location or the description of this for the unbeliever. We have looked at the term ‘sheol’ in the OT which is translated in English as ‘grave’, ‘pit’, or ‘hell’. We have discussed that when we come to the NT there seems to be 2 divisions of Sheol. One is called ‘Abraham’s Bosom’ or ‘Paradise’ and opposite to this location is the place for the wicked. In the story that the Lord gave, the rich man was in the place of torment in Sheol and in the same story Lazarus was in the place of Abraham’s Bosom which was a place of peace and joy. But we saw that in the OT the same word was also used, or rather in the NT the word ‘Hades’ is the translation in the Septuagint of the word ‘Sheol’.

We discussed that when the Septuagint was made, the word ‘Hades’ is the Greek word translated for the Hebrew word ‘Sheol’. This here Hades in Sheol could be in the same line up here. So in the Septuagint Sheol and Hades are identical- one is a translation of the other. Because Sheol is the word ‘grave’ or ‘pit’ or ‘hell’, it’s the place in the OT where all the dead go, the wicked as well as the saved, as this diagram shows. NT writers continued to use the word “Hades.”

C. Tartarus

2 Pet. 2:4: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;*

This word TARTARUS is only found in 2 Peter 2:4. It refers to a pit of darkness which serves as a prison house for certain ANGELS who “left their first estate.” Tartarus is strictly for evil angelic spirits.

D. Gehenna

1. The term ‘Gehenna’ occurs 12 times in the N.T.; all but one of them in the teaching of Christ. It is never used in connection with the torment of the present INTERMEDIATE state.

Christ speaks of ‘Gehenna’ as equivalent to eternal FIRE (Matt. 18:8,9)

Notice His use of the word in the following:

Matt. 23:33: *"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"*

Luke 12:5: *Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!*

Matt. 5:29,(20): *... for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*

2. The term Gehenna comes from 2 Hebrew words which mean “Valley of Hinnom”.

Originally the valley was where human sacrifices were offered by fire to the pagan god “Molech”. The sacrifices were bound and placed on the huge hands of the idol, whose arms formed a slide down into its interior which was a roaring furnace.

When the Jewish reformers destroyed the groves and high places of idolatry, the valley of Hinnom was turned into a city garbage and rubbish heap. It was a place that was constantly belching smoke and flame. It became the ideal illustration of the terrible place of torment and burning which was to be the eternal lot of those who rejected God.

3. The Holy Angels as Reapers

At the end of the age the holy angels of God shall come forth “and separate the wicked from the righteous, and shall cast them (the wicked) into the furnace of fire; and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,” according to Jesus (Matt. 13:49-50).

4. Hell Fire is Eternal

Furthermore, once the wicked are cast into the fire of Gehenna, they will never be extricated but will be in the torment of the flame forever and forever. (cf. Matt. 18:8) This punitive place was not designed for mankind, but for SATAN and his ANGELS (Matt. 25:41).

Since the fire does not depend upon the bodies of the inhabitants for fuel, and since the bodies of the wicked will be such that they cannot be

consumed, it is natural for the Scripture to make use of the recurring phrase, “the fire is not quenched.” (cf. Mark 9:43-46, 48 with Luke 3:17).

5. The Man of Sin, “The First One In”

There is no one in Gehenna now. The wicked dead are in HADES awaiting the – GREAT WHITE THRONE judgment, and the righteous dead are in Paradise awaiting the Rapture and the Bema seat of Christ. The first to be cast into Gehenna will be the MAN OF SIN along with the false PROPHET - (Rev. 19:20). Then, 1,000 years later, when Satan is cast into the flame, it will be observed that the Man of Sin and his prophet “are” (present tense) in that terrible place.

6. Christ’s ascension and deception

Eph. 4:8-10: *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended." What does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

Ps 68:18: *You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there*

There was definitely a transition in the NT that I want us to examine. There is the passage here which is describing the resurrection of Christ and then His ascension. Ephesians 4:8 is a quote from Psalm 68. Psalm 68 is about the triumph of God and His kingdom. When I was in school I was taught as many of you were, that this passage refers to the Lord delivering the people in Abraham’s Bosom into the presence of heaven. In my personal study I have a bit of a problem with this because that is not what was meant in Psalm 68.

In Psalm 68 the psalmist is singing about Israel’s deliverance when God is on his mountain and reigning. And clearly the, in Psalm 68, those that are captive are the Jewish nation who are those who are delivered into God’s presence. That fits clearly the book of Revelation when the final battle comes at the end of the tribulation and God delivers believing Israel into His kingdom. There are those that say that prophecy can have a double meaning and a double interpretation. We can see that when it comes to the passage regarding the birth of the virgin in Isaiah 9:6. The interpretation was that the prophet’s wife would have a child before the nation would be awakened unto the reality of God’s promises. And yet that passage is quoted regarding Christ as the coming Messiah born of a virgin.

Therefore, I would say that although I can't dispute the idea of this being a passage relating to the Lord taking the saved from Abraham's Bosom into the presence of God, I think the first interpretation must be 'Israel'. We are not given a specific passage that other than the story of the, Christ gave of the rich man and Lazarus regarding what happens to Abraham's Bosom. But if we think theologically about our salvation, it does make sense, that there was a place, before Christ died on the cross, for the saved to be that is a place of blessing but not the full presence of God.

We have already talked in this class about the salvation in the OT. It always had the same elements: the provision of God for sin which was a blood sacrifice, and the faith of the individual toward God regarding that provision. The significant difference is the effect of that salvation. Before the cross and after the cross, 2 different terms are used. Before the cross is always 'atonement'. But now I have another problem. The Hebrew word for atonement means 'covering'. Unfortunately in English, 'expiation' does not mean covering. 'Expiation' means removal. That word is only used after Christ's Cross in the NT. Hebrews tells us that the blood of bulls and goats in the sacrifice never removes sin. Was there salvation in the OT? Yes. There was forgiveness, there was the promise that at death there would be continued bliss and happiness rather than eternal death.

Nevertheless, until Christ actually was the true and only sacrifice, all the OT people had was a covering to assure them of eternal salvation. Theologically, it is appropriate that before Christ actually died on the cross, believers, after death, were in a place of bliss and comfort, just like Abraham's Bosom is described. But until these people have been 'expiated' (sins removed), there was still the inability for them to stand in the very presence of God in heaven. It makes logically sense and sometimes we are in trouble when we try to use logic, but it makes logical sense that after Christ died, He closed Abraham's Bosom and brought all these people into His presence in glory.

The proof of this may be the use of this word "Expiate" in the NT. The question has to be asked: "Does the term 'Hades' in the NT ever include the righteous who have died?" If the answer is 'no, it never does', then the way the NT uses this word is different than the way the OT or the Septuagint uses this word. In my thinking of what our salvation involves, I accept the fact that Abraham's Bosom was closed after the resurrection. I have never done a study to see if Hades is only used in the NT for the wicked dead, but I think that it is. This is one of those areas of Eschatolo-

gy that I am not going to give you the answers. This is something you will personally have to work out in your own understanding.

Student Response: In 1 Peter 3 it says Jesus went to preach to the spirits in prison, he talked about captives, so what are we talking about?

Prof. Response: You notice that it says in verse 20 that these people he was preaching to were formerly disobedient when once the divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah. So 1 Peter cannot be talking about the people here because these were not the people who were disobedient. The way I understand this passage is that because God destroyed all the population of the world, He purposely descended to preach to them. Perhaps He preached about their justified judgment, we do not know. One thing seems certain, 'It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgement.' This means that after death there is no more opportunity to be saved, even though seeks to deceive otherwise.

There are many that claim such things as after death experiences. I believe it is the influence of demons who play on the mind. I believe this because I know personally I have had dreams that seemed to be reality. I think I told you before that I was on my way to school one day, to Bible College. And my automobile, the engine stopped on the railroad tracks. And the train was coming. I got out of the car and I started to push my automobile away from the train. It was at a place where there were double tracks. I pushed my car from this track over to this track. Then I realized that the train was on this track! I continued to push and then the train came and just before, just before the train hit my car, I woke up from my dream. My muscles were sore for 2 days, my back was sore for 2 days because I pushed that car over the tytracks. It was real to me. It was a dream. I don't think it was a dream by demons. When I was a little boy, I was in my father's car and we almost got hit by a train. When the train passed, our car was from there to here from the train. I was sitting in the car closest to the train watching it come. So as a boy I had many nightmares about trains killing me. But if an experience can do this to my dreams, imagine what demons can do.

CLASS 20

XII. WILL THE CHURCH GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION?

Will the church go through the tribulation? There is more and more confusion in this area today. An increasing number of people are con-

vinced that the church will go through the tribulation. Let us first look at the positive reasons why the church will not go through the tribulation.

These statements are based on Wood's book, The Bible and Future Events.

A. The Purpose of the Tribulation

Keeping the church on the earth during the tribulation is not consistent with the nature and purpose of the tribulation.

1. The purpose of the tribulation is to PUNISH the Gentile world for its sinfulness and to bring the nation of Israel to the place of accepting its MESSIAH.

2. The very character of the tribulation is JEWISH. We have noticed that the 70th week of Daniel is JEWISH in character.

Matt. 24:21: *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Rev. 7:4: *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.*

We saw the 70th week of Daniel is clearly Jewish in nature. The 69 weeks were all about Israel. And there are other texts that show this to be completely Jewish in nature.

Matt. 24 text which is the Olivet Discourse is entirely an explanation of Israel's future. There are many indications of this, but the one I cite is verse 20 which says that 'your flight, shouldn't, pray that your flight isn't in winter or on the Sabbath'. We saw earlier in Rev. 7 that the great gospel messengers are the 144000 from Israel. So our first argument that the church does not go through the tribulation is the purpose of the tribulation.

B. The Statement in Rev. 3:10

Rev. 3:10: *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

You can see in this passage the promise the church was not to go through or from the hour of temptation.

Some reasons favouring the "pretrib" view:

1. The preposition "ἐκ (ek)"

The word "from" (Greek, ek) means "from out of, out from, forth from, from." Its use here calls for the meaning that the church be taken from the hour of temptation.

2. Tribulation saints are not spared from suffering.

Rev. 13:7, (15): *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

There are some like post-tribulationists and mid-tribulation that agree that this text is about the church, but they say the church will only be kept from the greatest suffering that is in the tribulation. Mid-tribulationists and post-tribulationist divide the word ‘wrath of God’ into ‘less wrath’ and ‘more wrath’. The mid-tribulationists say that at the ½ way mark begins the great wrath. So they say that Rev 3:10 is only a promise that the church will be kept out of this much. (at chalkboard). I have difficulty understanding post-millennialism. They seem to imply that the great wrath is at the very end of the tribulation.

I confess I do not understand their reasoning. But they say that the church will be kept from this much of the tribulation. But both of these situations are inconsistent with the book of Revelation. In the tribulation period you do see the tribulation saints having the same problems, the same curses, the same difficulties as everyone else in the tribulation. It doesn’t seem logical that the church should be kept from some of the great tribulation, but the tribulation saints, those saved in the tribulation are not kept from it, it doesn’t make sense. So in Rev 13 the saints, the tribulation saints are involved in war and are martyred.

Our second argument is the statement in Rev 3, a promise to keep from the hour of temptation. And our third argument is passages that are given to the church to suggest the immanency of the Lord’s rapture. We are not talking about immanency of the tribulation. We are talking about the immanency of the rapture that comes before the tribulation when the church is delivered. We have passages that speak of the church watching:

C. Passages which Imply Immanency of the Rapture

‘Immanent’ means. Immanency means that He is coming immediately, there are no signs, there are no indications; He will just appear. So in these passages in John, we see Christ predicting certain things that will happen to His disciples and therefore, to the church.

These passages point out that Christ could come at any time.

1. The watching passages

Rom. 13:1: *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

Paul is writing to the church and saying ‘our salvation could be completed at any time, at any moment’. So watch! Remember now, we are

talking about what Paul is saying to the church. He is not talking about the Lord's second coming. He's talking about the church being delivered.

1 Thess. 5:6: *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

He says 'others will be caught with Christ's coming as a thief in the night, but you will not be'. Now he is talking about the coming of Christ here. Paul is talking now about this event here. And he is saying 'some will be caught like a thief comes in the night', but this has nothing to do with the church here being raptured, so he is saying there will be many that are caught when the Lord comes, He comes like a thief in the night. But we, the church, will not be taken this way, because we are not appointed to the day of wrath.

Luke 12:37: *Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.*

Here we see that the Lord is coming and we must watch for Him like a wedding. All of these 3 passages have the idea of watching. And in the context of watching, it is evident that we don't know when so we must keep watching when for this to happen.

2. The hoping passages

Titus 2:13: *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

James 5:7,8: *You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

Paul is saying to the church 'look for the blessed hope of His coming'. He cannot be talking about the church going through the tribulation with signs because what hope in that? That is destruction. So His appearing here is for the church at the rapture when we are removed from what is going to happen on the earth. This is the hope of deliverance. The same idea of hope is found in James 5.

James is saying 'be patient in your troubles, be patient in your afflictions because the coming of the Lord is near'. It suggests the immanency of the deliverance of the church from their own troubles. Therefore, His coming if it were after the tribulation would not be something you'd want to wait for, it would be something you'd want to escape.

3. The "Post-trib" Answer

The denial of Christ's imminent return is first 'the coming of Christ was not imminent in the early church.'

John 16:1-2: *These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.*

Acts 20:21-23: *And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.*

The post-tribulationist are saying Christ predicted there would be times when the church would be persecuted and killed. And all of those other passages in John are Jesus saying certain things will happen, they will suffer, these things will happen to them.

And then we have Acts 20 where Paul goes to the church at Ephesus and warns them that grievous wolves will come among them and will upset and try to destroy the flock. So the post-tribulationists say these are predictions of what will happen to the church before Christ comes, so it is not immanent, His rapture is not immanent.

Our Answer:

Now there is a simple answer for this. When Jesus spoke of suffering in the church and when Paul spoke of apostasy in the church, he is not giving specific events. The church is now 2000 years, over 2000 years old. Has there ever been a time when there was no suffering in the church? No. Has there ever been a time when there are no apostasy in the church? No. Christ is trying to help the church understand that the character of the church will have suffering throughout all this time.

The apostle Paul is warning the church that there will always be pretenders in the church that will upset and destroy. So these are not events to predict the rapture, these are just the character of the church that have nothing to do with a distinct time.

John 21:18: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."*

The post-millennialists and post-tribulationist and mid-tribulationists also quote John 21. In this passage Jesus tells Peter about his own death. Jesus is predicting the death of Peter and therefore, that indicates that there was something that had to be fulfilled before the Lord could come back. The only problem with that argument is that Jesus described what his death would be like, but didn't say when it would take place. Actually, for Peter, his death was imminent. He didn't know when it would happen. It could be tomorrow, it could be 50 years. So again Christ

is not talking about events to indicate the rapture, but the character of Peter's death.

Our Answer:

1 Peter 4:7: *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*

These are Peter's own words. He says 'the end of all things is at hand, therefore be serious and watchful'. He is saying 'it could happen at any moment'. And so even from Peter's own words, we have the testimony of being watchful because we don't know when these things will take place.

So in thinking about the idea of immanency we have the watching passages and the hoping passages. And we have dismissed the post-tribulation arguments when they try to say there are predictions because all of the predictions are not events, they are just characteristic times of suffering for the church.

D. Passages from 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Now there are some passages in Thessalonians that give people trouble. You must keep in mind both epistles of the Thessalonians and the order they were given. We have not looked at the epistles of 1 and 2 Thess. But of course the history of it is evident in the book of Acts, how the church began and the circumstances of the church at Thessalonica. We need to understand that the church was going through persecution and some in the church even died. The church was concerned that those who died had missed the rapture and missed the return of Christ. They were very confused. So the epistle of 1 Thessalonians focuses on the hope of the rapture.

1 Thess. 4:13-18: *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thess. 5:9: *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

2 Thess. 1:7-8: *and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

From 1 Thessalonians 4 we know this passage, we will not read it, it is the rapture passage. In this passage Paul is saying 'those that have died because of the faith will not miss the rapture' and he explains that their bodies will be raised and unity with their soul/spirits when we rise and meet Christ in the air.

And he concludes by saying ‘this is our comfort’, verse 18. ‘comfort one another with this truth’. The families that have had Christians die: “be comforted, they will not miss the rapture.” Those that are suffering and are persecuted now, be comforted-- we will be raptured and it could happen at any moment. And then in chapter 5 Paul starts to explain the times and the seasons that will come when peace will be removed from the earth and the great day, the 70th week, the great day of darkness will come. And after explaining all of this, the Day of the Lord, he says in verse 9 ‘you are not appointed to wrath’. So Paul reminds them of the promise of the Lord’s coming but tells them that there will be a day of darkness prior to this. Remember when we talked about ‘the Day of the Lord’ and ‘day’ in God’s definition begins with night and then goes to the day. So in 1 Thess. Paul is giving the truth of the rapture and the hope of the church and then he is explaining what will happen during ‘the Day of the Lord’ and in the tribulation which precedes the ‘Day of the Lord’.

2 Thess. 2:1-17:

- i) The Falling Away
- ii) Identity of the “restrainer”
- iii) Salvation of vs. 13
- iv) The concepts “shaken”, “troubled”, and “comfort”

Now 2 Thessalonians confuses many people. It appears as though Paul has put the order of things in reverse because in 2 Thess. he begins to answer their problems by talking about the signs of the Lord’s return. As you go through Thessalonians you realize that Paul is addressing two problems: In 1 Thess. he is answering the question ‘What about the dead in Christ, will they miss the rapture?’ Paul answers that question by giving them the hope of the rapture and then some details of the Lord’s coming. Now, in 2 Thess. the church has gone through more suffering and they somehow think that they have missed the Lord’s coming.

False teachers have come among them and they have greatly confused them. So now they are thinking they completely missed the Lord’s coming. And so Paul in 2 Thess. has to go back and show them that there are conditions for the Lord’s coming and they could not possibly have missed this. In other words, he is giving more information about the idea of the Day of the Lord and the tribulation that he just briefly mentioned in 1 Thessalonians. Their focus is on missing the Lords’ return to the earth. So he doesn’t even begin to talk about the rapture because they are so messed up with this idea. So in chapter 2 of 2 Thess. he begins by saying

‘concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together with Him’. You can see that sounds like it is reversing the order.

Yet, he is answering their inquiry. You see exactly the same thing in the epistle of 1 Corinthians, where they have written him a letter about problems that they have. And Paul answers the letter in the order that they have made requests, with the same phrase ‘now concerning this...’ ‘now concerning this...’ And of course in the first section of 2 Thess. 2, he talks about 3 important evidences before Christ comes to the earth. So he is talking about what’s going to happen during the tribulation period. And he says there will be apostatizing, a departure from the truth. He says the man of sin will be revealed. And so as you go through the text, he gives more details about what happens in this tribulation period.

In this passage in 2 Thessalonians 2 we have this phrase ‘the falling away’ or the apostasy. (you repeat)... you see in verse 3 ‘the falling away’ and then ‘the man of sin is revealed’. The falling away is not the church in apostasy during the tribulation period- that’s not what he is saying. We have already talked about the character of the 70th week. And the character of the tribulation period is Jewish. So the falling away is the Jewish nation in the tribulation period falling away from Moses’ teaching. This same thing is mentioned in Acts 21:21. And in Matt 24 when Christ is talking about the tribulation period, He is also talking about a falling away or lawlessness of Matt 24:11, 13.

In 2 Thessalonians Paul is giving Eschatology lesson to the church at Thessalonica. He is explaining that the Lord’s return has signs, has events that lead up to it. And none of these things has happened, so they could not have missed the Lord’s return. I’m trying to find the passage that I want when he conclude that they are not going to suffer in this way. I should have written it down.

In 2 Thess. 2:13 Paul is explaining the tribulation period that precedes the Lords’ coming, Paul now declares verse 13- ‘give thanks...because God from the beginning chose you for salvation’. He says ‘you are called to the gospel’. Verse 14. And then verse 15 he says ‘therefore because of your salvation because of your promised deliverance. Therefore, Paul pleads: “Stand fast by what you have been taught.” And in verse 16 and 17 he reminds them ‘be comforted by our hope’. If you follow Paul’s teaching in chapter 2 Thessalonians, he’s clarifying what will take place before the Lord’s coming because they thought they missed the Lord’s coming. He tells them certain events will have to take place during the tribulation period and these events have not taken place.

He reminds them of all the troubles that are going to be going through this period. Then he concludes by saying ‘I thank God you have salvation and hope in Christ, so remember what I have taught you and what the epistles have said and keep the hope of 1 Thess. 4, the church are delivered from all of this.

We have already discussed this earlier in our notes that the restrainer is the Spirit of God and He is only removed in the sense of restraining the world from its depth of sin. We see obviously that the Spirit of God is working during the tribulation to see people come to Christ. Your notes indicate 2 Thess. 2:13 where Paul is talking about salvation. And you need to see that Paul is using this term ‘salvation’ to remind them of their deliverance from this period of tribulation. And so Paul concludes this section by saying ‘don’t be shaken, don’t be troubled, instead be comforted’. They were shaken because of the false teachers; they were troubled because of the false teachers who gave them misunderstanding. I trust this helps you see the purpose of 1 & 2 Thessalonians and how there really is no problem at all?

E. The Thrust of the Olivet Discourse

Matt. 24, 25 (Luke 21): *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"...*

We do not have time for me to go through the entire Olivet Discourse. But my summary is: Christ was answering the questions of the disciples about the Lord’s coming. And what were the signs of this coming? And so Christ answers this question and therefore, gives us His understanding or His treaty regarding the Jewish nation and the nature of the 70th week. So I have given arguments regarding the reason why the church does not go through the tribulation. The purpose of the tribulation is not consistent with the church going through it. The statement in Rev 3:10 is a promise to be kept from the hour of temptation. Imminent passages from the NT to show that the rapture has no signs, no indications, it would just happen at a moment. The consistent teaching of Paul in 1 & 2 Thessalonians again reaffirms the hope of the rapture where the tribulation period will not be the experience of the church. And then my last argument is my paper on the Olivet Discourse and the nature of the Olivet Discourse.

XIV. THE MILLENNIUM

A. The Purpose of the Millennium

1. To answer the MODEL PRAYER

Matt. 6:9-10: *Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven...*

This is an answer to the Lords' prayers. 'our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thine name.... thy kingdom come....' Matthew 6 and Christ said in His prayer 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'. He was teaching His disciples how to pray and part of the teaching is 'pray for the kingdom to come'.

2. To Redeem CREATION

Gen. 3: *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said...*

Rom. 8:19: *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

We saw death introduced in creation in Genesis 3 and paradise was lost. Romans 8 tells us that the world is waiting for the redemption of its troubles, so it is to redeem creation as well. When we begin to see the nature of the millennial kingdom we will see it is a different world.

3. To Fulfill the Old Testament COVENANTS

Gen. 12: 2ff: *I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing...*

Duet. 30:3ff: *that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you...*

2 Sam. 7:4ff: *But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?..."*

Jer. 31:31ff: Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah...

B. The Nature of the Millennium

I encourage each reader to review these texts and write your own summaries and personal applications in the space provided.

PEACE Isa. 2:4; 11:6-9

JOY Isa. 9:3,4; 12:3-6; 14:7,8

HOLINESS Isa. 1:26,27; 4:3,4

GLORY Isa. 24:23; 4:2; 35:2

COMFORT Isa. 12:1,2; 29:22,23

JUSTICE Isa. 9:7; 11:5; 32:16

FULL KNOWLEDE Isa. 11:1,2,9; 41:19,20

INSTRUCTION Isa. 2:2,3; 12:3-6; 25:9

REMOVAL OF THE CURSE Gen. 3:17-19; Isa. 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25

REMOVAL OF SICKNESS Isa. 33:24; Jer. 30:17

HEALING OF DEFORMED Isa. 29:17-19; 35:3-6

PROTECTION Isa. 41:8-14; 62:8,9

FREEDOM FROM OPPRESION Isa. 14:3-6; 42:6,7

NO IMMATURITY Isa. 65:20

NATURAL REPRODUCTION Jer. 30:20; Jer. 31:29

LABOUR Isa. 62: 8,9; 65:21-23

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY Isa. 4:1; 35:1,2,7; 30:23-25

INCREASED LIGHT Isa. 4:5; 30:26; 60:19,20

UNIFIED LANGUAGE Zeph. 3:9

UNIFIED WORSHIP Isa. 45:23; 52:1, 7-10

FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT Isa. 32:13-15; 41:1; 44:3

Now when you take a look at that list- what a world it will be! We will learn that the church's role during the tribulation period because the

church is glorified, will be to reign with Christ. Redeemed Israel will be the priests with Christ in Jerusalem. The glorified church will be judges with Christ around the world. We will finally be able to serve Christ in absolute perfection. That gets me excited the most. I serve Christ now, but I'm always failing Him. I can't be completely separated from sin. But then, it will be so

This concludes our course on Eschatology.

APPENDIX A

WHAT IT MEANS TO POSSESS PERSONAL SALVATION

The terms saved and salvation occur 268 times in Scripture. The Hebrew word *yaw-shah*' translated "saved" in the Old Testament, and its New Testament Greek synonym '*sode*'-zo' can best be defined by the word deliverance. It cannot be ignored nor cast aside that man stands separated from Holy God because of sin, that sin holds man in bondage in this life, and that all mankind stands condemned as a result. Although it may go against the grain of man's pride and self-sufficiency, Scripture presents a clear and logical answer for our helplessness. God's answer is personal salvation and is foundational upon several truths of Scripture.

The *first* of these truths is that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23 NIV). Adam's fallen state of spiritual death earlier examined is the inheritance of all mankind and results in the bondage of every person to sin - wrong thinking, wrong decisions, wrong actions, and to emotional disorder. Sin is falling short of God's perfection. Every person is on need of deliverance.

The *second* of these truths is that "*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Rom. 6:23 NIV) Whereas every person earns the penalty of sin (spiritual separation from God in the present life and eternal separation from God after this life), *salvation is a gift*. A gift is something unearned, granted out of love, and received out of gratitude.

The *third* of these truths is that "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16 NIV) The gift of salvation was provided out of the unconditional love of God for every person. This gift of love was provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's own Son on the cross of Calvary, proved sufficient to transform man from the state of death to spiritual life in Christ by the resurrection of Jesus.

The *fourth* of these truths is that "*it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by*

works, so that no-one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV) *Salvation is by grace.* Grace is something that is undeserved. When a person is caught wilfully breaking the law that person knows some penalty or punishment is due. If the prosecuting authority in some way states that he or she will be *gracious* in judgment, the guilty person immediately recognizes the hope of escaping the deserved punishment. Nevertheless, no true justice will excuse severe and wilful wrongdoing no matter what efforts are made by the guilty party to compensate. For example; saving a child from drowning can never compensate for premeditatedly taking the life of an adult. However, if the debt (penalty or punishment) has been paid then grace can rule and the undeserved can be acquitted. Salvation is the graciousness of God accepting the paid debt of sin by the sacrifice of God's Son and justly pardoning the guilty.

After hearing the gospel explained, people often say, "You mean there's nothing I can do to deserve it? That's too easy." It seems natural for people to object to the idea that God's unmerited favour can be given so freely to unworthy sinners. Many find it difficult to trust a God who offers salvation as a free gift.

Salvation is free to man but cost God much. His own Son actually became man's substitute. Where man is unable to change his standing before God through any self-effort, Christ died in his place: "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*" (Rom. 5:6) It is man's responsibility to believe and receive the free gift of life. "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Rom. 10:9-10)

The language of Scriptures knows nothing about a 'cross of example,' or a 'cross of martyrdom for the cause.' Although Calvary was a cross of grace, a cross of goodness, a cross of courage, a cross of suffering and a cross of perseverance, it was foremost a cross of substitution. "*For he (God) has made him (Jesus) to be sin for (in the place of) us, who (Jesus) knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Salvation is free but not cheap, and it is anyone's for the asking 'in faith.' "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 10:13) Charles Spurgeon, known as 'the prince of preachers,' once wrote, "It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust him to be my Saviour. I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come, by believing that his atonement is sufficient; but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge and my all."

Believers must be reminded of these Bible verses. "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Rom. 10:9-10) It has been said of this verse that people can miss heaven by eighteen inches, the distance between the mind which hears that safety lies in Christ, and the heart which refuses to reach in faith and accept Him.

The Bible clearly states that faith in Christ alone secures salvation. "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 10:13) This is a faith that turns the heart in sorrow from sin (repentance) to acceptance of Christ's substitutional death (belief). Therefore, the securing of salvation is not dependent upon any works of man such as being baptized or joining a church but upon a point of decision. The epistle of John emphasises this point of decision. "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, [even] to them that believe on his name.*" (John 1:11-12) This decision to 'receive' Christ as personal saviour restores the relationship of each individual (in the fallen state of spiritual death) to spiritual life in Christ. At the moment of this decision by faith the Spirit of God enters into the individual, quickening (or making alive) the spirit of man (Ephesians 2:5). This new state or 'new birth' (John 3:3) allows the believing individual to be spiritually led by God and empowered by God and to be delivered not only from eternal punishment (John 3:16) but also from present bondage (Galatians 5).

For each individual who has heard (or read) of God's free offer of salvation by faith through the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus, there is a window of opportunity. This is not an opportunity to prove oneself before God. Sin prevents this (Romans 3), but this is an opportunity to accept the gift of life from God. God has secured the means of spiritual rescue from present bondage and eternal loss by dealing with the penalty and the power of sin on the Cross of Calvary. It is now up to each individual to reach out by faith and receive that gift. It is this gift of life that is the foundation for deliverance, not only from the eternal penalty of sin but also from the present bondage of sin and weakness. The beauty of that expression of faith is that no one will ever be disappointed; Jesus' promise is always kept. "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 5:6, 10:13).



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