

The Minor Profits - Malachi Chapter 04

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, and thank you all a bunch for being here. I want to start with a very timely, notable quote. This is from our dictionary man, Noah Webster.

When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God.

The preservation of our government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty. If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted.

Laws will be made not for the public good so much as for selfish or local purposes. Corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws.

The public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men. And the rights of the citizen will be violated or disregarded. If our government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the divine commands and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.

[1 : 3 1] So said Noah Webster. And I would add an amen to that. Well, I do appreciate your presence this morning, and we're going to conclude by hook or crook the prophecy of Malachi.

I had no idea it would take us this long to get through the minor prophets, but there is just so much really good content in all of them. And I'm amazed at how much content in these ancient books has direct application to what we are dealing with today.

And the reason for that is quite simple. People don't change. We change our technology. We change our standard of living. We change this and we change that.

But we have never found a way to change the basic heart makeup of the human being. We are still a fallen society, and when the flesh takes over, that is manifest in an undeniable way.

So let us pray, shall we? For this morning, our Father, we give thanks, and we are grateful for the presence of each one here and for those who will be listening via media. Thank you for the opportunity to be together and share once again in the Word of God.

[2 : 4 5] We pray that as we delve into these ancient writings that you provided for us, particularly today through Malachi, you will use it to inspire and instruct each and every one of us and give us encouragement and boldness in the faith.

We thank you for men who have gone on. We think of Dr. James Montgomery Boyce, enormous contribution that he made to the cause of Christianity while ministering there at 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

We are so grateful for him and for men like him. We ask that as we engage the text, you will provide us with an enlightenment that we know we lack, and we thank you for it in Christ's name.

Amen. We are going to deal with the issue of what we're going to take up next, and that's something I've asked you to consider for the next couple of weeks, but if you don't mind, I will defer until our study concludes before we talk about that, because to make a long story short, I want to do that on your time, not mine.

So we're going to get right into the text and the content, and we are concluding the prophecy of Malachi, and you will note that, well, let me, let's just, I'm going to read an opening paragraph or two from the pen of Dr. Boyce, upon whom we have called before, and he's written, I think, one of the more insightful commentaries on the minor prophets, including that of Malachi, and he is very cognizant of the fact that when the prophets began writing, and we've shared this with you before, but I say it again to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, the Bible was never written in chapters and verses.

[4 : 37] It was just written as a singular, ongoing, consecutive document, not broken up into chapters and verses. In fact, a scant 500 years ago, which isn't very long at all in the history of humanity, 500 years ago, if you could find a Bible, it would not have chapters and verses in it.

They were not added until about 500 years ago, and of course we're grateful for their addition because it really makes it easy to find things. It gives all the passages of Scripture an address so you know where to go.

But at the same time, you've got to keep in mind there is nothing inspired of God in the way the Bible is divided in chapters and verses. And I'm not convinced at all that there is anything inspired about the location of the books in the Bible, and more elaboration on that will be coming.

So keep that in mind, and we will defer to the outline that Dr. Boyce has given because he has broken this down in a way that does not agree with the chapters and verses as they are divided.

So we're going to go back just a little bit into chapter 3 because he makes his concluding chapter, Malachi 3.13 through chapter 4 and verse 6.

[6 : 05] So I'd ask you in your Bible to go back, if you would, to Malachi 3 and verse 16. We will not be staying there very long, but this is the, I'm sorry, verse 13.

And here is the text upon which he comments. You have said harsh words against me, says the Lord. Yet you ask, what have we said against you?

You have said, it is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty?

But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape. Then those who fear the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard.

A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. They will be mine, says the Lord Almighty. In the day when I make up my treasured possession, I will spare them.

[7 : 10] Just as in compassion, a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Surely the day is coming. It will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble. And that day is coming that will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty.

Not a root or branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. You will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

Then you will trample down the wicked. They will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things, says the Lord Almighty. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

[8 : 20] Or else I will come and strike the land with a curse. The books of the Hebrew prophet The books of the Hebrew prophet do not have the same order as the books in our Bible.

Our Bibles end with the minor prophets. The Hebrew Bible has the prophets in the middle, its order being, first, the law, secondly, the prophets, and third, the writings.

Now that's the way the Hebrew Bible is laid out in those three categories, and the books are put in that arrangement. First is the law. That's the law of Moses.

That's the first five books of the Old Testament. It's also called the Pentateuch, meaning five writings. And then, following that, is what the Jewish people refer to as the writings, or the prophets, and that consists of the four major prophets and the twelve minor prophets.

And then they have a category that they simply call the writings. So everything is made up of the law, the prophets, and the writings. The writings is everything else.

[9 : 43] That includes the Psalms and the Proverbs and the Book of Ruth and 1 and 2 Samuel and Kings and so on. They are considered the writings. And all of it together, by the way, in the Jewish mindset and in Hebrew, is called the Tanakh.

That's the T-A-N-A-C-H. The Tanakh. And the Tanakh is the entirety of the Jewish Bible. It's what we call the Old Testament.

But to them, it's the Tanakh. So, continuing on, Dr. Boyce says, on the other hand, let's see, where am I here?

He says, on the other hand, the Greek Septuagint, and the Greek Septuagint is simply the Old Testament Hebrew translated into the Greek language, which was the lingua franca of the first century.

I mean, just about everybody in the Mediterranean world spoke Greek. And that's why there were so many Jews who could not read Hebrew because they didn't speak the language.

[10 : 54] They had been adjusted in other areas where they had been scattered throughout the world. But most of them knew Greek. Even though they were religiously speaking, they were still Hebrews. They could not read their scriptures in the Hebrew language.

So, a team of scholars got together. And I believe there were 70 in name. And that's why it's called the Septuagint because of the word sept has the meaning of seven in it.

And they translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language. so that Greek-speaking Jews could read it and understand it.

And it's a very good translation, by the way. It's called the Septuagint. And then years later, one of the bishops or cardinals, I don't know what his rank was, but St. Jerome in the Roman Catholic Church, translated the Hebrew into what was considered, what was called the Latin Vulgate.

He translated the Hebrew into the Latin language because that was the language or the lingua franca of that particular time. So, let us go on. The majority of the Bibles, whether measured by the number of languages into which the Bible has been translated or merely the number of Bibles in existence, end with Malachi.

[12 : 14] And ours, of course, ends with Malachi as well. But that presents a problem. The problem is that Malachi, and therefore also the Old Testament, does not end the way we wish it did.

First, the final words of Malachi are, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse. That's a great way to end the book, isn't it?

Says, they do not seem appropriate. We like upbeat endings. We think novels should end, and they lived happily ever after. Isn't that the kind of ending we expect to God's great plan of creation and redemption?

God's people will be saved. Well, you get that. But you have to read the rest of the book. And the rest of the book ends with the Revelation. And by the way, I just want to put out something here for your consideration, and you can do with it what you will.

But I am satisfied that what we have in what we call the Bible is one book. It isn't two.

[13 : 25] But most of us think of it as being a combination of two books, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Personally, I am satisfied that that designation does not exist.

What we have is simply the Bible, and it begins with Genesis, and it ends with Revelation, but there is no such distinction as the Old Testament and the New Testament.

There is, however, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and we'll maybe explain that later if we have time. So let's go into this if we may. He says, the Masoretes, well, that's another technical term of group of people who have given us most of the copies of the Hebrew Old Testament we have and who added the bow points to the Hebrew text were so bothered by this, that is, with Malachi ending, else I will come and curse the world, they were so bothered by that that they repeated the next to the last verse of Malachi after the first verse.

They just reversed them and their thinking was that couldn't be right and this is just a case where human arrogance is willing to impose its will over what had been written and we find that a lot of times.

The Septuagint reverses the last two verses so the Old Testament ends not with a curse but with a blessing. So, as we read Malachi and conclude this particular study dealing with the minor prophets, we're going to just begin with chapter 4 and verse 1 for the simple reason that we've at least superficially dealt with the previous verses.

[15 : 08] So, in chapter 4 and verse 1 we have Behold, the day is coming burning like a furnace and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaffed and the day that is coming will set them ablaze says the Lord of hosts so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

Now, this is talking about a very thorough kind of destruction and it is it is a doom and gloom message no question about it. He says the day is coming and he describes it.

But, for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall and you will tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing says the Lord of hosts.

Now, it ought to be intuitively obvious that the description that is given here has never yet been fulfilled. But, the prophet is saying that this is what is coming.

The only question is when? And we all want to know the answer to that and the same pat answer that I always give is one that you've heard me give many times before. We do not know when that will be but we know that we are closer than anybody else has ever been.

[16 : 43] That's the only safe answer you can give as to what's going to happen when. Remember the law of Moses my servant even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord and he, Elijah, will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

A couple of things that I'd just like to point out in passing here and that has to do with the relationship between generations, fathers and sons and so on and he is saying that Elijah is going to have a very peculiar ministry and what he is going to succeed in doing is binding together the hearts, the minds, and the thoughts of fathers to their children.

This is a generational thing that he's talking about and the implication I think is that there has to be a need to that which suggests that there is disparity or disharmony between the generations that need to be brought together into a kind of commonality that they did not have before.

Now we've always had some struggle with what we call the generation gap because those individuals with the gray hairs and years on their life tend to have a perspective and a value system that the younger do not have and that's just the way it is because that's what the years of maturity are intended to do for us.

[18 : 49] They are intended to teach us and enable us to grow and learn some things that we didn't know or understand when we were younger. So that's the kind of ministry apparently that Elijah is going to have and I wish I had more good definitive answers to give you but I'll give you what I have and you can try to piece together from that and we'll open it for discussion.

The first place I would like you to turn to is what is commonly referred to as the opening book of the New Testament. I dispute that. I don't think it is the opening book of the New Testament at all.

I think it is simply a continuation of the revelation that God has given and is not appropriately named the New Testament even though that's the way it is labeled in all of our Bibles in plain black English and print that you can see there.

So let's go first if we may. We'll talk about that later if you want to to Matthew's Gospel chapter 17 just the next book over. Matthew chapter 17 and this is the transfiguration.

it is a stunning account that is given and probably the best way that it can be described as to what Peter, James, and John are going to witness is simply the reality that Jesus is going to take these three not all twelve apostles just these three Peter, James, and John up into this mountain of transfiguration in fulfillment of a statement that he made in the earlier chapter when he said to the disciples who were with him or the apostles who were with him probably all twelve Jesus said to them verily I say unto you there are some of you standing here meaning some of you twelve standing here who shall not pass away until you have seen the kingdom of heaven and we wonder what in the we don't have the kingdom of heaven today the kingdom of heaven has never come is he suggesting that some of those apostles standing there are still alive two thousand years no that's not what he was saying at all in fact if you will notice and here's an excellent opportunity to point out to you the fallacy of the chapter divisions here in verse 28 of chapter 16 we read

[21 : 25] Jesus saying truly I say to you there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the son of man coming in his kingdom forget the chapter division keep reading don't stop and the next says and six days later what could that possibly mean that's the fulfillment of what he's talking about six days later he's going to make good on the promise he gave that some of you standing here he took Peter James and John his brother and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves and he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun and his garments became as white as light cannot imagine what that must have been one translation

I think it is I think it's Mark's gospel said something to the effect that that his garment was as white whiter than any fuller's soap could make it and that's common laundry expression for a woman who takes her laundry and uses what was then known as fuller soap anybody here remember fell's naphtha soap yeah my mama used to use that she took a knife and shaved it off in the washing machine with the old ringers on it you know I can still the smell of fell's naphtha soap is embedded in my brain and I can still smell it you probably can too and that's exactly what he's talking about here he's saying the garments of Jesus were as white as any fuller soap on earth could make it and any woman at least a housewife could identify with that and his garments became white as light and what we've got here you see it is Jesus is described as the word of God which literally means he's the communication of God he's the logic of God he's the logos and the logos is the word from which we get the word logic

Jesus Christ is the logic of God and that makes a lot of sense and the word the logic became flesh and dwelt among us this is the most glorious transaction that is ever taken place when deity enshrouded himself with humanity the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and John says in his gospel and we beheld his glory really when did you behold his glory John on the mount of transfiguration when I was there with Peter and James and guess who showed up Moses and Elijah where did they come from what is this all about so what we've got here is a picture of the word made flesh come to earth in a body lived those 30 plus years began his ministry and all the while all the while this is

Emmanuel God in the flesh dwelt among us and when he takes these men up to the mount of transfiguration and he says you're going to see the kingdom of heaven come before you die and six days later and what Jesus is going to do and I don't understand what is involved here at all but he for lack of a better term he pulls back the humanity with which he is clothed and he allows just a little bit of that magnificent deified glory to shine through and it was overwhelming this is what John's talking about in the first chapter of his book when he says we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth oh my this is something

Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him and by the way it doesn't say here what they were talking about but I think it's Luke's gospel that does that Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus about his coming death now these men Moses and Elijah still very much alive obviously in the presence of the Lord sent down here for this special mission and they're going to be sent down again later on and we'll be looking at that if I'm correct in my understanding of it which I may or may not be so let's let's just read on Peter answered and said to Jesus and you can always count on Peter Peter is the original foot in mouth guy he's always saying something doing something he's a lovable irascible character but his his mouth always runs ahead of his brain and that happens a number of times in

[27 : 07] Peter's life and he says it's good for us to be here if you wish I will make three tabernacles that's three tents three three little huts three little lean twos one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah he wanted to camp there make this an extended thing and the text goes on to say while he was still speaking behold a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud saying this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased hear him this is the same announcement and the same confession that was at the baptism of Jesus and when John heard this voice and the dove descended etc so here we've got the voice the the actual voice of the father from heaven speaking in regard to the son and all that is doing is solidifying in the minds of Peter James and John what is actually taking place and when the disciples heard this they fell on their faces and were much afraid well I guess what else could you do that's got to be the only proper response and fellas when the time comes when the time comes that you are face to face with the creator the only appropriate response for you is you get on your face you bow as low as you can bow we are in the presence of the almighty cannot imagine what that would be like

Peter James and John got a taste of it and Jesus came to them and touched them and said arise do not be afraid and lifting up their eyes they saw no one except Jesus himself alone and as they were coming down from the mountain Jesus commanded them saying tell the vision to no one until the son of man has risen from the dead and his disciples asked him and remember they've just seen Elijah and Moses and of course they're gone now they're returned to heaven wherever they were and his disciples asked him saying why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first who said that the scribes who else is known as the scribes the prophets the scribe the scribe the scribe is the word that we get the word scribble from somebody who scribbles somebody who writes that's a scribe and of course it was an actual occupation then just much like a legal like an attorney is today as scribes and lawyers and so on and one of the one of the scribes is Malachi and

Malachi talks about Elijah coming first we just read that in chapter 4 and Jesus said answered and said in verse 11 Elijah is coming and will restore all things but I say to you that Elijah already came and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they wished so also the son of man is going to suffer at their hands now of course we know he's talking about John the Baptist John the Baptist was not Elijah in fact people even asked him when he was baptizing and delivering his message repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand some of the people came up to him and said are you Elijah you see they were really getting excited because they knew that Elijah was going to come first and they thought if this is Elijah then things can't be very far away and John said no he's not Elijah well are you that prophet then and he said no who is that prophet that prophet is the one that

Moses refers to in Deuteronomy I'm not sure but I think it's I think it's chapter 29 when a prophet like unto Moses is going to be raised up and the prophet there is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who is the prophet of all the prophets and he says they did to him Elijah came and it wasn't Elijah of course it was John the baptizer but he did come in the power and in the spirit of Elijah even though he was not Elijah and to make it clear he even denied that he was Elijah so also the son of man is going to suffer at their hands and then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them about John the Baptist so I want you to keep that in mind and as you do come back if you would please to Revelation chapter 12 last book in the

Bible Revelation 12 I'm sorry once again I was wrong it's it's Revelation 11 Revelation 11 the two witnesses John and by the way this is the same John who was with Peter and James in the Mount of Transfiguration this is John the Apostle his brother James was martyred early in Acts chapter 12 and he was put to death and this is John the beloved who wrote the gospel of John Revelation and first second and third John and here he is writing in chapter 11 about two mysterious witnesses there was given me a measuring rod like a staff and someone said rise and measure the temple of God the altar and those who worship in it and so on and leave out the court which is outside the temple do not measure well let's skip all that look at verse 3 and I will grant authority to my two witnesses and they will prophesy which is another word for preach or deliver proclamations they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth sackcloth is a garment of mourning it is something that was worn when one was in deep distress it was kind of like kind of kind of like a tradition carried over for for people who are mourning the loss of a loved one like a wife would mourn the loss of her husband and and there was a time and place where she wore black and she wore nothing but black for at least a month and these are the clothes of mourning

[34 : 32] Elijah Job Job was mourning his condition and he was clothed with sackcloth and he sat on a pile of ashes and he used broken pottery shards to scrape the boils on his skin for the pain and the itch we just can't imagine it so this is a this is a negative mournful scene it is a scene that is decrying and depicting the immorality that's taking place and the preaching that goes with it is of course a preaching of repentance and these two witnesses these two witnesses are going to preach and proclaim the kingdom message and the messiahship of Jesus and they are going to do so to a world that will not want to hear it and a world that will want to eliminate them and these two witnesses and we cannot ascribe it to anything else other than divine protection these two witnesses are virtually indestructible until their assignment is finished and you've heard me say before that we are all indestructible until God is finished with us and when he's finished with us you're going and it doesn't make any difference how good the doctors are but in the meanwhile you are indestructible and these two witnesses are two of the most extraordinary characters that have ever appeared on the scene for sure because the most extraordinary thing about them is they're indestructible we're not told what instruments were used in order to try and take their lives but whatever it was it didn't work let's read on I will grant authority to my two witnesses and they will prophesy or preach for 1260 days clothed in sackcloth these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth these were earlier given to John in a vision and this is an explanation of what they represented what they were what they actually were these these two witnesses have the power to shut up the sky now this too is reminiscent of Elijah's task early on remember when he said to the wicked king Ahab there will be neither rain nor dew on this earth until I call for it and it went on for six months no rain no crops famine desperation six months and Elijah had predicted that and was responsible for it and this of course and that incident then with the 450 prophets of Baal that he dispatched in that cave and that was up on up near mount

I got my mountains mixed up can't think of it now it's right on the coast right on the right on the coast way up near near oh well no it's in that area of Megiddo it's all but it's right over on the Mount Carmel Mount Carmel where the 450 false prophets were put that's where they had the big contest and they pour the water on the sacrifice and everything and then finally Elijah called on his God and the fire came down and devoured the sacrifice amazing absolutely amazing so we've got a we've got a precedent for that and that was the six months of famine that Elijah when he was here the first time brought upon the earth and it was most remarkable time and of course they they tried to take his life for it and they did not succeed but these have the power verse 6 to shut up the sky in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood I don't know whether this requires some kind of literal blood I have no idea where the abundance of it would come from although there's going to be a lot of carnage at this time or it may simply be a euphemism that describes the way the way the liquid looked it looked like blood but it might not have been what we actually think of as blood I just don't know for sure about that but at any rate it's a pretty nasty thing and it's something that added to the misery to be sure and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they desire can you imagine something like that I can't I can't and this is this is talking about worldwide pandemic now the Bible calls these plagues we call them viruses has the same effect deadly unseen and these are going to permeate throughout the whole area and we are told that they are able to order these things at will and some of these plagues and some of these viruses can have all kinds of deleterious effects on the human body some of them can cause outbreaks of skin of lesions on the skin some of them can cause deafness or blindness some of them can cause different kinds of things some of them can cause some viruses can cause neurological problems hold your question Joe cause neurological problems so that a man loses the ability the capacity to care for himself or to tend for himself or to obtain for himself he is virtually a paralytic and can't do anything for himself and I've often wondered about that passage in Revelation that talks about men seeking death and unable to accomplish it and we would think well if you're really serious about ending your life it's not a problem you can just take some poison you can you can put a gun to your head you can all kinds of ways you can do yourself in but if you are paralyzed if you are motionless if you can't do anything but lie there and writhe in pain and discomfort and you're unable to even take your own life death would be a welcome friend under those circumstances this is a horrendous time this is tribulation stuff and and this is tribulation is it

means it means it means pressure pressure tension that will not let up and it is illustrated is illustrated the Greeks illustrated tribulation by taking a grape put the grape between your fingers and you start to squeeze the grape and you squeeze and squeeze and you keep applying pressure until all at once the grape bursts and the contents flow out that tribulation that's pressure that's stress that's tension the likes of which we have never known and when these kind of situations prevail upon a culture like like the pandemic is prevailing upon us you know one of the most predictable byproducts that comes from that is stress confusion and no answers to our questions and conflicting answers from the experts that do not agree and questions and questions and questions and when people live in an atmosphere like that they don't know what to do don't know where to turn don't know what to plan for don't know what the don't you just you're just at sea it's a terrible place to be very unsettling and this is what's going to be one of the chief characteristics of the tribulation period great confusion stress turmoil will abound verse 7 when they have finished their testimony the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them and overcome them and kill them well what about that that's going to put a real feather in his cap because nobody's been able to do that these guys have been indestructible i can't imagine what kind of weapons were used and again i don't i don't know this but it is mere it is mere conjecture on my part but there may be elements afoot when this time comes that will have a neutralizing effect on common weaponry if this if this uh emp thing should ever be recognized worldwide this electromagnetic pulse that that we are told we are susceptible to right now everybody's susceptible to it and this is something that ought to keep some of the people in the pentagon awake at night because i think it has been asserted on good authority that a submarine lying off the coast of the united states off the east coast without even surfacing could launch a nuclear missile over the united states that would penetrate our atmosphere the atmosphere and explode in the atmosphere and it wouldn't kill anybody but it would neutralize every item of electricity and electronics so that nothing would work your heat in your home won't work your automobile won't work jet planes won't work tanks won't work nothing will work nothing that's got a computer chip in it or an electronic component will work and men may well be reduced to fighting

with some old-fashioned weapons is that what's going to be in play and is that what's going to make these men indestructible i don't know i don't know but it's just something to think about because the thing one of the chief things that's going to characterize the time of tribulation is that nothing is going to be normal we kind of think nothing's normal now but this is this is nothing compared to the way it's going to be then it's it's going to be a time jesus said jesus said it will be a time such as the world has never seen before and we'll never see again and the thing that is going to characterize it in major ways is there will be a return to the miraculous element that we have not had any connection with for thousands of years but it is going to be a time of dynamics the likes of which we have never seen and the miracles that are going to take place it'll be a time of tremendous demonic activity and tremendous evangelism and tremendous martyrdom how can all of these things be put into the same mix they are all so weird and so different evangelism and martyrdom and this is the same time when that mark of the beast is going to be front and center and people are going to be involved with that so all of this is coming and this is

I don't know this a lot of scholars take this position and I guess maybe I would tend to agree with them that I my I guess I'd call it my best guess is that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah and they are the same ones that appeared in the sermon on on the the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah Moses represents the law and Elijah represents the prophets and both of them are representatives of all of the information that man could ever need that has been made available came through Moses and the prophets and what has humanity done with it we virtually turned a deaf ear to it for all practical purposes well they're going to come back and you know what they're going to be doing they're going to give people one more chance and what these men are going to be preaching is going to get results a lot of results and it's also going to create a lot of anxiety and a lot of anger and a lot of opposition so much so that they're going to kill them and when this guy who comes out of the beast this is this is the the antichrist when he he's by the way this is another miracle the one who presents himself as the antichrist is going to be assassinated but he's not going to stay dead he's going to come back to life can you believe that and this is the guy here and we are told that he is going to be the one he's the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them overcome them and kill them that is these two prophets and of course that's going to be such an enormous feather in their cap to have been able to do that because the world has languished under the message of these two men and they have hated hated the men did everything they could to eliminate them and they couldn't and we are told that it's quite interesting that he will kill them he will succeed in killing them and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called

[49 : 53] Sodom and Egypt and it isn't Sodom and Egypt it is Sodom and Egypt mystically or we would say spiritually what it is is Jerusalem it's Jerusalem where also their Lord was crucified and that should clarify and those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days that's kind of neat too kind of significant and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb why not well for one reason they want to gloat over them they want to rejoice over their death they want to put it on display that they have actually prevailed and overcome these two terrible terrible people who delivered this message that the world did not want to hear in fact they are going to be so grateful for it verse 10 says those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and they will send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth and they think well that's the end of them and we can celebrate and they actually you know what we're talking about here

Merry Christmas yeah yeah well what we're talking about is an extremely perverted society and you know you know there is one word that the element who embrace the lifestyle the sodom sodomy lifestyle and everything there's one word that these people absolutely hate to be called and that is pervert but that's exactly what it is it is a perversion is a denial or a turn away from or the opposite of that which was intended it is a perversion homosexuality is a perversion you got to be careful where you say that but it is and the scriptures make it quite clear that it is so it is one more indication of what has happened in the fall and it has affected man in virtually every way they will send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth and after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them see what I mean when I say this is going to be miraculous and hey don't do what some commentators try to do oh that doesn't mean literal that's all spiritual baloney baloney and I would tell you this if it's spiritual what does it mean what does it point to it isn't spiritual it's real but we look at that and we say well that's impossible that can't well pray tell me what else do you think the definition of a miracle is it's impossible that's what makes it a miracle it can't happen it defies the laws of language and the laws of physics miracles do that that's what makes it a miracle oh my oh my and the breath of life from God came in

I don't know if this thing's going to be broadcast worldwide on television screen if CNN and Fox is going to be there covering this or not but people if they are you know if they get the computer chips fixed and things get revved up again people are going to be looking at this and rejoicing over those dead putrefying decaying bodies lying there and they'll send their gifts to everyone and they'll be pointing it to their children on the screen see these are these bad men and and this good man finally killed him and he's our hero and blah blah blah and then these guys start moving and stand on their feet and the world is gone oh no and lo and behold here comes another miracle this is nothing but nothing but miracles all the way through and we are told that they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them come up here guess whose voice it was I think it was the same voice of the one who said this is my beloved son in whom

I'm and come up here and they went up into heaven in the cloud and their enemies beheld them and in that hour there was a great earthquake not just not just a tremor but the word that's used here in the Greek is mega mega a mega earthquake this was a dandy a tenth of the city fell seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake the rest were terrified gave glory to the God of heaven yeah now the second woe is passed but behold the third is coming quickly oh my okay we've got some questions and comments and Joe's first and then Roger what I was just going to say what you eventually said that revelations is God administering the world after the church in other words the things the miracles and all these things that happened then we don't experience now during the age of the church his administration of miracles and so forth that was in the

Old Testament times and he goes back to dealing with people in that time is that right now during the church age we can't really understand that because God doesn't deal with our world and us that way at this time that's right that's right and that's that's one reason that Paul mentioned what he did when he wrote to the Corinthians and said the Jews require a sign and the word for sign there is simeon in the Greek and it literally means it really means it means a sign it means something to look at that that points to something and the Jews had learned to expect and require signs for good reason because they were a nation that was born out of signs beginning with the deliverance from Egypt and the plagues these are all signs they're miracles a sign is that which points to something what do these signs point to what do the miracles point to they point to the miracle worker they point to the one who is behind the signs and the crowd asked Jesus on more than one occasions what signs show us thou well he had already given them all kinds of signs miracles healed the sick raised the dead gave sight to the blind stilled the storm one thing after another he'd given them all kinds of signs and what do they ask for instead of saying okay we're convinced you've got to be who you say you are what do you want us to do no well give us another sign how about a little razzmatazz give us give us something you know entertain us entertain what sign and finally

[57 : 27] Jesus said listen if the signs given in you Capernaum if the miracles that have been done in you a Jewish people of God city the signs done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they're not even Jews they're pagan Gentiles they don't know straight up but if the signs had been done in you had been done in them they would have repented but not you and I'm through giving you people there's no more signs no more signs shall be given except the sign of Jonah and the next sign will be my coming back from the dead and there won't be any more wow I tell you Roger you had a comment or question yes they will and this is why they are constantly referred to as a remnant a remnant means leftovers a remnant is what you have left at the end of the bolt of a cloth or a rug or something it's a remnant and it's a tiny part of the whole and this is what

Paul is speaking of in Romans Romans 11 when he says and so all Israel shall be saved and he's talking about the Israel as it exists at that time which will be the remnant and they will be saved and they will be the ones hold up in Petra who will look upon him whom they pierced and they will mourn and repent and mourn for him the one their forefathers rejected and put on the cross and these people will be thoroughly converted they will be the faithful of the Lord then and among them will be those 144,000 and I know that sounds like a lot of people but when you're talking about the relative comparison to the number of people who are 144,000 is not that many at all but that's another subject with the 144,000

Don will that happen before Christ comes down or the time Christ comes down or you know this is all prior to his coming yeah this is prior to his coming his coming and there are a couple of things that are questionable in Revelation in so far as their order is concerned and the chronology there are a couple of things that I know I among others have questions about but for the most part the Revelation I think is pretty much chronological as you go through and you keep track of what's happening and the seals and the judgments they are pretty consistent and what is taking place here is all preceding the second coming the tribulation the tribulation period is characterized by the complete absence of the Lord and it is well I

I can't go there that's too involved but it's going to be all of these things are going to transpire and the Lord is going to reveal himself in Revelation 19 and when he comes then it will be to put an end to all of this stuff and it will be to finally completely defeat all of the enemies of God all of the antichrist henchmen etc and that will be that will be the battle of Armageddon but it's actually not going to be in Armageddon it's going to be here in the valley of Jehoshaphat yes Dave the scripture up until the end of verse 10 everything was as in prophecy prophecy like it will come to pass sometime in the future whether it's tomorrow or next century at verse 11 when it says but after the three and a half days the breath of

God came into them and they stood on their feet and they fell from there on to the end of that chapter everything is in past tense what happened there how come we're talking as though it is prophecy and then everything becomes past tense well a lot of much of the reason has to do with this under inspiration John is writing this from the viewpoint of the revelation he's writing it from the viewpoint of the source of information and with him it's all past it's all past tense and this is this is how well revelation is going to talk later on is going to talk about the lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world slain before the foundation of the world how could he have been put to death before the world was even formed well it's speaking from

[63 : 28] God's perspective and God doesn't have a past present and future with God everything is now everything is well it's kind of hard to explain but yeah how can you explain infinity in three easy words you know so many things are spoken of in prophecy deliberately using the past tense because so far as God is concerned these are already done it's already a done deal and when you read well there's so much of prophecy is that way it is spoken of and by the way this has led a number to believe and understandably well that's already happened that's spoken of in past tense that's history and some actually think that that which is described as prophecy that we say is going to be in the future is spoken of as if it's already happened so that's not prophecy that's not future that's history that's already happened and it has led some to interpret vast portions of scripture that way and they go through the book of revelation and guess what they go through the book of revelation and they find world war one and world war two and well but in order to do that you have to really use your imagination and that's that's a problem with hermeneutics fellas and we need to always keep this in mind once you depart from the literal straightforward intended obvious meaning of the word that it means what it says when you depart from that you open yourself to the imagination of people and anybody can make it mean anything they want and their conclusion is just as valid as yours because neither of you have any proof or evidence now this is not to say and this is what

I'm accused of sometimes and those who are premillennial and pre-trib are often accused of oh you take everything in the Bible literally well that's baloney you don't take everything literally but you do approach everything literally you begin with the literal and if the literal doesn't make sense the context usually reveals that so you've got a lot of literature in the Bible especially in the Old Testament that is not literal and not intended to be taken literal and you know the illustration I've used to just make it so obvious the eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the earth you going to make that literal well of course not of course not but what it means is the meaning is nothing escapes the notice of God that's the meaning that's the interpretation but it kind of gives a nuance of flavor and what shall

I say exaggeration that is intended it's an exaggerated intended exaggeration and it's more poetic to say the eyes of the Lord run to and fro on the earth and that's got an element to it that that conveys something more than just saying God sees everything well that's exactly what it means but you have to allow the poet to have some poetic liberty and that's what poetry does it uses that so many times it's a beautiful thing yes Gary the two witnesses are they preaching the kingdom or are they preaching grace my guess is they are preaching they are preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand and it will be it'll be a whole lot more at hand then than it is now it will be at hand but the thing that is so dynamic about the kingdom and its coming is the king the king when that king comes then the kingdom comes the king and the kingdom are inseparable and that's what

Jesus was implying I think when he said some of you standing here shall not taste of death until you see the kingdom of heaven coming and what did he show them he showed them himself and his glorification and fellows keep this in mind everywhere Jesus went as the king of Israel the Messiah everywhere he went the kingdom of heaven was with him in him he was the personification of the kingdom of heaven you cannot have a kingdom of heaven without the king and that's why we don't have a kingdom of heaven today the king is not here he he game. The only reason, the only answer that I can give, and I realize that it isn't very satisfying, but it's the only one I have. I've referred to it before. This is the only place in all of the Bible where I have been able to determine why there is anything rather than nothing. What's the point? What's the purpose of anything existing? Why the contest? Why the contestants? It is a conflict. It is a cosmic conflict taking place between the Creator and the creature, between God the Creator and Lucifer who became Satan, the creature, and his minions, and the only rationale that I can give for it is Revelation 4.11, which quotes the four and twenty elders falling down before the throne of God and saying, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, and worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory and majesty and dominion and power and glory for, for, or because, thou hast created all things, and by thy good pleasure they were and are created.

And the word pleasure relates to the word pleased. God was pleased to create as he did, and he didn't ask permission from anyone. He was pleased to do it. Then the question arises, why was he pleased? We don't know. We aren't told. We're just told that he was pleased. And some have charged God in saying, well, he's supposed to know everything, isn't he? Doesn't he know the beginning and the end from the beginning? Yes, he does. Then didn't he know that Adam was going to fall and bring all this misery and heartache and death and disease upon us? Why did he do that? Why did he create them that way? Well, God had a choice. He had a choice. He could create angels and create humans pre-programmed so that they would automatically obey him and never cross him. He could have done that.

[71 : 23] But he didn't. He gave them a volition. He gave them a will. He gave them the power to exercise choice between choosing to obey or choosing not to obey. He gave that to angels. He gave that to humans.

And that set up in motion this great contest that we have, the conflict of the ages. And beyond that, I do not have, I am of, as the old saying goes, I'm of insufficient pay grade to be able to explain that to you. So I just, I don't know. But I know this. I know God does all things well. I know he is impeccable. He is incapable of sinning. And he is unchangeable.

He is perfect in his way, in every way. And I can completely rest and relax in him that he does all things well. And I'll tell you this. And the final analysis, when everything is wrapped up, and everyone is where they're going to be, experiencing whatever it is they are going to experience, it will be absolutely, totally appropriate and right. And no one will have any call to say, it's not fair. No one will be saying, I didn't deserve this. No one will be saying, it's all wrong.

I wasn't treated right. No one will be able to say, every mouth will be closed. It's going to be something. And fellas, if Jesus Christ is who he claimed to be, absolutely nothing in this entire world matters more than you being rightly related to him. Nothing. Nothing. Yes.

I read someplace that man being the only mammal that has self-pity. Yeah. Well, man is the only one that has self-pity. Who was, I think, I don't recall who, I don't recall who, some well-written wag said that man is the only of God's creatures that has the ability to blush or the need to.

[73 : 58] Yeah. Yeah. The ability to blush or the need to. Yeah, absolutely. Wow. Well, hey guys, I tell you what, this is, this is called human rationalization. I rationalized that it would be okay if I went a little over on my time, if I stopped at Shuler's Bakery first, and it got you some Shuler's goodies. And also, we just, if you, if you're under some kind of a schedule and you need to be someplace, feel free to leave. You just get up and leave right now. Thank you for being here.

But for those who can stay, we want to talk just a little bit about where you're going to go from here, because this is our final study in the Minor Prophets. And from here on out, we're looking at different material. And we need to know what your, what your thinking is. Have you given this some thought? We've got, we've talked about the book of James, the general epistles, Ephesians, Galatians, the gospel of John, and the book of Acts. And, and we can do it, but I'm, I'm, I'd really rather not do the book of Acts since we spent about five years in it, about seven or eight years ago. But what's, what's your pleasure? Or do you want to table it for a later talk? I don't know what, anybody got any good ideas?