

# Monthly Study - The Cosmic Conflict Begins

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[ 0 : 00 ] I've got sheets here that we have distributed in the past and because of that I had not planned to distribute them again, but I know some of you may not have them. They are a couple of different items from Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

He was the tour leader with our group when we went to Israel and we spent six months in... I hope this isn't a harbinger of what's to come. We spent six weeks in Israel and put almost, if you can imagine, Israel is so tiny, it's about the size of New Jersey, and at its widest point, it's only 45 miles wide and about 100 and 110 miles long, but real skinny.

And as small as it is, we put almost 3,000 miles on those vans in six weeks because we went up and down and back and forth and crisscrossed, and we just really covered just... it was amazing. Anyway, he is the author of these that are referred to humorously as Fruit from the Fruyt, and the Fruyt, of course, is Dr. Fruyt and Baum.

[ 1 : 14 ] So he is a considerable scholar, bar none. I have tremendous respect for him and his insights. He was born into an Orthodox Jewish family in Siberia, and family moved from Siberia into Western Europe, and they were there for a while, and I think he was in England a while, and then eventually they came to the United States.

And when he was a young man, 17, 18 years old, something like that, as an Orthodox Jew, he came to faith in Jesus as his Messiah and Savior, and spent a year or two at Cedarville University, and went from there to Dallas Seminary and got his doctorate in theology, and then he went to New York University and got his Ph.D.

So he's very well qualified to address the issues that he does, and what you saw in these printed forms is just a sampling of that. His ministry is called Ariel.

Ariel. You can Google it if you like and find out the materials that are available there at Ariel Ministry, A-R-I-E-L. And the word Ariel in Hebrew means Lion of God, L-I-O-N, Lion of God. And it's quite an organization that he has founded, and he's achieved international recognition for his scholarship, and I think it is well-deserved. Another gentleman that I have great respect for is with the Lord now.

[ 2 : 52 ] Many of you are familiar with the writings and the messages of Dr. Rennie Showers. He was at Word of Life for a number of years, and also was on the staff at Friends of Israel, had authored a number of books, and he's one of my favorite authors.

And this particular volume I have appealed to a number of times. It's called, What on Earth is God Doing? Satan's Conflict with God.

We'll be examining just a little bit of that today. And in light of what is taking place in our world right now, even though we have been studying the subject of prophecy in general, and we've been looking at the different schools of prophecy and methods of interpretation and so on, I really feel a need to emphasize something that I've been emphasizing for a number of years.

So I'm going to reemphasize it. And that is the strategic nature of the Jew in the plan and program of God. So this is one of the greatly misunderstood areas of prophecy that has resulted in what we call replacement theology.

It's a misunderstanding of that. We've talked about that in the past, and we'll reiterate that a little bit this morning. But it simply has to do with the Jewish nation, the Jewish people being indispensable, and that's the word, indispensable to the plan and program of God.

[ 4 : 36 ] And right away, some perhaps would take exception with that because they like to think that no one or nothing is indispensable to God because He does as He will.

But you must understand that God can only will to do that which is consistent with His own nature and being. There are a lot of things God can't do.

He cannot lie, cannot deny Himself, and so on, and there's a list. But out of those things that God has committed Himself to do, it is to bless the seed of Abraham.

And for anyone who wonders, well, why Abraham? Why? What's the big deal about Abraham? I don't know. All I know is the Lord told the nation of Israel through one of the prophets later on, long after Abraham was gone, I did not choose you because you were the greatest among the nations. I chose you because you were the least. And He entered into a covenant that we'll be looking at shortly with Abraham that literally locks God in so that He actually has no choice but to fulfill all that He has promised through Abraham.

[ 6 : 03 ] And virtually everything, and I mean everything regarding prophecy, hinges upon the interpretation of one thing. And that is, whether the promise that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whether it is a conditional promise or an unconditional promise.

And one of the items that confuses the issue is because there are both that are extended from God to Israel.

There are promises that God made to Israel that are unconditional. And by that, we mean God says, this is what I'm going to do for Abraham and his descendants, thus and so, and it doesn't make any difference what they do.

This is what I'm going to do. So it is not dependent upon their deserving it or their obedience to the covenant. I'm going to do it regardless. That makes it an unconditional covenant.

It's an unconditional promise. But, there are occasions where God definitely adds a condition to the fulfillment of it.

[ 7 : 18 ] If you do thus and so, then I'll do thus and so. But if you don't, then I won't. So there are conditional and unconditional promises. And the whole system of eschatology, the doctrine of things to come, the prophecy, hinges upon that particular item.

Whether the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are conditional or unconditional. So for the very first, we want to see something that even precedes that.

So we're going to go back as far as you can go. And that's Genesis 3. And I'm sure it's familiar to most of you, but we're going to use it, get it in the mix, so it'll be there and we can stir it up.

Genesis chapter 3. This is as early as you can get. And this is even pre-flood material. Shortly after creation, this is in connection with the fall, and God had given directions to Adam and Eve, the very tree of the garden you may freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are not to eat of it, because in the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die.

And I won't take time to point out the difference between spiritual death and physical death, but we know it is obvious that they didn't eat of the tree and then fall over dead, as one might think from reading the text.

[ 8 : 46 ] But they did eat of the tree, and upon doing so, upon that disobedience, something took place within the psyche of Adam and Eve that we don't understand.

They somehow, as a result of eating that fruit, which I would liken to some kind of contamination, can't explain it, but it resulted in an inner change of their being, so that, as a result of partaking that, they entered into some kind of a new sphere that God did not create in them.

And the best explanation we can give is that they took unto themselves a different kind of nature. We call it a fallen nature.

Something happened within their very being, and they realized that they had offended the Almighty, they had disobeyed, and that elicited in them a thing that apparently they didn't have before or didn't need before, and that was a conscience.

A conscience is emotional pain derived from understanding you have done something wrong, and it strikes at your psyche, at your conscience, and that produces guilt, and guilt produces fear.

[ 10 : 32 ] Think of the progression. guilt produces fear. Little wonder then they hid from God, and God was walking in the garden as He was accustomed to, fellowshiping with them, and they were hiding from Him, and you know the story about the fig leaves and all the rest, so we're going to go beyond that and jump into verse 11 of Genesis 3, and He said, Who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate, and the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that you've done?

The woman said, The serpent deceived me and I ate. This is a classic example of passing the buck all the way through, and we've never gotten over, we still are very good at this, aren't we? Blaming

somebody else for whatever.

And the Lord said to the serpent, now notice He's addressing the serpent, I don't understand, simply because I don't have the ability to understand how this serpent, or serpent-like being, was able to talk and communicate, etc., but we know that in reality, this wasn't an ordinary snake. This somehow was a serpent, a created being, that some way that we do not understand, was taken over, was possessed by Satan himself.

[ 12 : 14 ] And you've got to understand that the whole animal creation, everything about not just Adam and Eve, but the whole animal creation was all different. and they were all subject to Adam and Eve's dominion.

They exercised complete authority over all of the animals, as is evidenced by the fact that God called Adam to name them. And that's another way of saying that they were under his authority. And all of these animals had a different kind of being than they do today. They too are part of a fallen creation. everything is.

Trees and rose bushes are all part of the fallen creation. Everything is fallen. The whole planet and everything upon it has been delivered into a state different from that which was originally created. And as a result, that is going to set in motion enormous things, consequences that are unbelievable. and we are dealing with them today.

[ 13 : 20 ] They continue and they include things like death and disease and world wars and conflict and everything that goes with it. It's all part of the package. So as a result, what we are engaged in today, even though most people are completely unaware of it, we are engaged in an ongoing international or maybe even universal conflict.

It is between the powers of good and the powers of evil. The struggle is taking place even as we speak.

It never lets up. It is ongoing. It involves angelic beings in ways we don't understand, but they are active and they are involved.

and when all of this came down as a result of the fall, we have in verse 14, the Lord said to the serpent, now remember, in essence, he's speaking to not merely the serpent, but he's speaking to that which incarnates the serpent, that is to Satan himself.

Because you have done this, and the serpent of course, and it's talking about the, I guess we would say the, the, whatever you call the snake family, that's what it is.

[ 14 : 46 ] Because you've done this, cursed are you among all cattle, and more than every beast of the field, on your belly shall you go. Now you wonder, how did he get around before? Wasn't he always on his belly?

Well, I don't know. Someone said that because of all this that happened and all the buck passing and everything, that when it came down to the serpent, he didn't have a leg to stand on. I couldn't resist that.

But I don't know what his makeup was like before. But anyway, he is consigned to crawling on his, it's a lowly kind of an existence. Thus shall you eat all the days of your life, and I will put enmity, that means I will put a state of war, of conflict, of activity that is going to be very negative for everybody. between you and the woman, that is Eve, because she was the one who was originally tempted and deceived, and between your seed and her seed.

And the seed, of course, is talking about offspring, descendants, those who come from them. He, he, and the he refers to the seed of the woman.

[ 16 : 08 ] He shall bruise you on the head. Some translations render this, he will crush your head.

And the impression that is given is that it will be a death blow. It will be a blow of finality. it's very difficult to recover from a crushed head.

So the idea is there will be a permanent resolution regarding the seed of the woman. And if we see the seed of the woman as the counterpart of the seed of the serpent, then we've got evil and good, the good coming from the woman, the evil coming from the serpent.

I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you shall bring forth children. And apparently she'd never had children before and had never experienced pain in childbirth, but she's going to. Yet your desire shall be for your husband. And scholars have wrangled over this for a long time, this passage here. And I think basically what it boils down to, and I know a lot of the women don't like this, and I know that the women's lib especially just discount the whole thing.

[ 17 : 35 ] They reject it all. It says your desire shall be for your husband. And many of the scholars are of the opinion that what this means is that her desire will be for the dominance and control of the husband.

ever hear the word henpepper? Well, that's what we're talking about here. If that is the interpretation, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

Now, what that is saying is the conflict is just beginning and it's even going to be in the home. Think of that.

there is no aspect of humanity that has escaped the contest of the will. In this case, it's the male will and the female will.

And all it means is that each one, male or female, each one is going to want to have it their way.

[ 18 : 48 ] That's human nature. And the upshot of it is he shall rule over you. There, of course, are always exceptions, but by and large, this simply indicates that in every kind of relationship where there are multiple parties involved, somebody is going to be in charge.

Who's it going to be? It's the male. It's the male. Now, women who understand that correctly find great relief and thanksgiving for it.

Men see it as an opportunity to exercise dominance and control, and often, when the flesh gets in the way, it runs rampant, it takes advantage of the position of leadership and headship, and it can end up in abusing the female who is under him.

And we all know multitudes of stories like that. Physical abuse, emotional abuse, and all the rest. and what this is saying and setting the stage for is, even in the most intimate and closest of human relationships, which is husband and wife, male and female, conflict is going to be the order of the day.

Vying for ascendancy, dominance, control. But, the beautiful thing about it is. Also in the plan and program of God, where there are biblical principles involved, the male, if he is imbued in the spiritual truth that he's supposed to be, will not at all be interested in lording it over the female, exercising control, abusing her, taking advantage of her, or anything of the kind.

[ 20 : 54 ] But, if he is involved spiritually as he is supposed to be, he will see his position as one of responsibility, of deep love, and caring, and consideration, and protection, and all of the positives that go with it.

That is the kind of marriage that is designed for those who are walking with God, for those who are in Christ. So, believers in Christ have assets available to them, spiritual assets available to them, that dramatically impact the way the husband and the wife get along.

And it is not an ongoing contest or power struggle. It is one of mutual love, admiration, cooperation, appreciation, enjoyment, all of those things.

are in order for the husband and the wife in Christ. Outside of Christ, you are on your own. And this is where most of the world is.

And this is the basis for divorce, cruelty, mental, physical abuse, and all that goes on with it. So, the only solution is the same as the solution always is.

[ 22 : 17 ] it begins with a personal relationship with Christ. So, the conflict starts way back here in Genesis 3. He shall rule over you. And to Adam he said, because you've listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which you commanded, you shall not eat from it, curse it as the ground because of you, in toil, you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Now, I don't know what he was doing before because apparently Adam was just given the job of, we're told, to dress the garden and keep it. I'm not sure exactly what that meant. But compared to this, it was a pretty easy job.

Now, it's going to involve the sweat of his brow, and even the ground is going to engage in a contest with the man who tills it.

and it's going to bring forth thorns and thistles and weeds and all kinds of things, so that man, contrary to before the fall, now he's going to have to fight the ground to take a living from it because it is not going to just yield it up easily like it did before the fall.

You see, there isn't anything that hasn't been impacted by this fall because Adam and Eve were originally given dominion.

[ 23 : 47 ] The word is related to dominance, dominator, and everything on the planet was under their complete control, and when they blew it, they forfeited that coveted position, and everything has changed.

now it's a whole different world, it's an ugly world in many respects, and one of the principal factors of it is death. That has entered into the picture, and it is just thorns and thistles, it shall grow for you, you shall eat the plants of the field by the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The man called his wife named Eve because she was the mother of all the living, and the Lord made garments of skin, and all of this is picturing the death of something innocent to provide for the nakedness of someone guilty, death.

And that is going to set in motion a principle that will culminate in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, because all of the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, thousands and thousands of animals that were sacrificed were all innocent animals, and they were all sacrificed because of the guilt of humans, and when Christ is offered, he is the ultimate, final sacrifice, and that's the end of the sacrifices, because you see, all the way back from Genesis, God is laying a picture for humanity that there is going to be an ultimate price to be paid for man's disobedience, and God himself is going to be the one to pay it.

How do you like that? That is really something, and it begins with the incarnation, where Christ ended up on the cross. So, let's jump down to chapter 4, if we may.

[ 26 : 08 ] Man had relations with his wife Eve, she conceived, gave birth to Cain, and she said, I've gotten a man-child with the help of the Lord. I don't know exactly what that means, if God was the obstetrician or what, but again, she gave birth to his brother, Abel, the younger, and we don't know how much younger, could have been just as much as, maybe as little as one year, maybe, my guess is, and this is just a guess, if they had conjugal relations, like most, I guess you could call them newlyweds, couldn't you, then it probably wouldn't be unusual for there to be an annual pregnancy.

We're pretty close to that. So, there may have only been a year or two years difference between these boys, Cain and Abel, and Abel on his part, I'm sorry, verse 3, came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of ground.

Abel, in verse 2, was a keeper of flocks, Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel, on his part, also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions, and the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering, but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard.

So, as a result, in other words, we get the impression that God just turned a cold shoulder to what Cain had offered and God found it unacceptable, and Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not well, sin, you better watch it, Cain.

[ 28 : 04 ] Sin is crouching at the door, because now Cain's got the same nature that his mother and father had. It is a sinful nature.

Didn't have that before, but now they passed that on, and no one has ever escaped that except Jesus Christ, and even for him it was necessary that there be a virgin birth in order for him to avoid the curse that came with that.

So what we've got here is a situation between Cain and Abel, and I mentioned earlier Dr. Reynolds Showers, and I want to give you a little bit of his comments regarding this.

This is taken from the book What on Earth is God doing? Satan was present in Eden to hear God's first promise of the coming Redeemer. He realized that it would be fatal for him and his cause if the Redeemer were to come.

Thus, Satan's primary goal throughout Old Testament history became the prevention of the Redeemer's coming. Because the Redeemer can't redeem if he never gets here.

[ 29 : 18 ] or if he gets here and is somehow destroyed before he can redeem, then I have succeeded in throwing a log jam into the plan and program of God and I've kept God from fulfilling his purpose.

Which is pretty heavy stuff. That Satan was involved in Cain's slaying of his brother was made evident in 1 John chapter 3 verses 10 and 12.

I'm going to take a look at that. You can go there too if you want. Way back in the last part of the Bible. If you can find the Revelation, find the book of Revelation and just come forward again.

You won't have far to go. You'll get the 1 John. And 1 John chapter 3 and verse 10.

We're told by this, the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

[ 30 : 25 ] For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the evil one.

Now, that's very interesting. He just doesn't say that Cain was evil, but he said, Cain was of the evil one. And we can only assume that to be Satan, the seed from Satan.

Cain was of the evil one and slew his brother, and for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous.

So, humanity didn't have long to wait and didn't have far to go before it started manifesting the fruit of that new dynamic that was within them.

And Dr. Showers continues saying, thus, the first murder in history was committed because of Satan's goal to prevent the Redeemer's coming.

[ 31 : 27 ] Now, there isn't any place, there isn't any chapter and verse where you read those exact words. So, he is making an assumption here, which I personally feel is a rather valid assumption when you just look at what happened.

It isn't too hard to connect the dots. And there was animosity between these brothers, and we know that Satan and his influence entered into it.

He continues saying, in his war against Satan, God counteracted the murder of Abel by giving Adam and Eve another godly son named Seth.

That's in Genesis 4.25. And this name Seth means, in Hebrew, means substitute. Good name for Seth.

He's the substitute. It is apparent that God meant Seth to be a substitute for Abel. The genealogies found in Genesis 5 verses 11.10.

[ 32 : 33 ] And Luke chapter 3 reveal that God also intended the Redeemer to come through Seth's line of descent.

And you can read this in Matthew and also in Luke where the genealogies are given and sure enough, there's Seth, just where he's supposed to be. it was also apparent to Satan that for every godly son he could destroy, God could raise up another to take his place.

Thus, Satan changed his tactic. He determined that he would pervert the whole human race, including Seth's line of descent with apostasy.

apostasy comes, it's a compound word from the Greek that means to depart from or to fall away from.

It means to have been at a certain place or station and you abandon it, you leave it. You have apostatized from whatever it might be.

[ 33 : 49 ] He determined that he would pervert the whole human race, including Seth's line of descent with apostasy. He began his attack by developing an ungodly line through Cain.

Cain and his descendants started to build an advanced civilization that was godless in outlook and was characterized by polygamy and violence.

This is evidenced in Genesis 4, verses 16 through 24. Through time, as Seth's godly line had contact with Cain's ungodly line, it too became infected with apostasy.

In addition, evil fallen angels referred to in Scripture as the sons of God, because we tend to think of sons of God as being people, being humans, because when a man comes to faith in Jesus Christ, he does become a son of God in a sense.

But when the Scriptures refer to sons of God, repeatedly in the Old Testament and New, it is always in reference to angelic beings. Sons of God began to introduce an evil angelic strain into mankind by marrying human women and fathering unique children.

[ 35 : 07 ] And these are referred to in Scripture as the giants or the Nephilim, and it means the large ones. I've always had difficulty with that interpretation, and I had for a long time adopted the position that these were actually humans who were of the ungodly line, and that they were joined together with humans from the godly line, which produced ungodly children.

But they were humans all the way around. And I had great difficulty in accepting the view which I now do accept. And that is there was interaction between angels and humans that produced the Nephilim, the giants.

And I never could square that with the reality that so far as we know, angels are sexless, although any time they are ever mentioned, they are always mentioned as masculine.

Always masculine pronouns used in connection with angels, never feminine. But then again, I assumed that that was due to the fact that they had to be something.

So they were just referred to. Because I had a problem with the genetics here. We have no reason to believe that angels have sexual capacity and that angels can cohabit and produce little angels. [ 36 : 55 ] There's nothing in scripture to indicate that at all. angels could cohabit with female humans and have offspring.

I still can't process that. All I can suggest is that may very well be the way it was because things were radically different then than they are now.

And all of this may be exactly as and by the way this is the standard Jewish interpretation of Genesis and of the angelic beings going all the way back.

So that has been their interpretation for a long time. And I must confess that it is only with difficulty that I have come to it and come to the conclusion that's probably the way it was because I just cannot see the production of the Nephilim through ordinary male and female cohabitation.

It just does not compute. So there has to be and I suspect that there was what we would call abnormalities sexual abnormalities involved that produce the Nephilim.

[ 38 : 20 ] So let us continue on with this if we may. and obviously Dr. Showers takes that same position.

As a result of both of these trends the human race became so perverted that it filled the earth with violence and corruption. We know that from Genesis 6 11.

As God looked at the situation he saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6 5 God was so grieved that he announced his determination to destroy man from the face of the earth in Genesis 6 and he told Noah Noah build a boat and I'm going to bring down the rain and I'm going to bring up the regions of water underneath and I'm going to flood the whole planet and eliminate everybody and I want you to get the animals and the ark and extend an invitation to anyone who will come with you.

And of course we know there were no takers. Everybody was probably convinced that Noah was just a crazy old coot and well you know the rest of the story. In spite of tremendous pressures Noah stood his ground refused to be influenced by the apostate attitude and conduct of his contemporaries.

[ 39 : 58 ] God had his man. He was only one man to be sure but he was all that was necessary together with his family to carry on the godly line of Seth through which the Redeemer was to come.

And as someone said God plus one is always a majority. God was determined to destroy the perverted human race not just for the purpose of judgment but also for the purpose of ending the perversion before it could affect even Noah's descendants.

Destruction was to be his instrument for preserving the line of the Redeemer so that Satan could not win the war against his kingdom. God instructed Noah to build a huge ark in which he, his family, representatives of every kind of birds, land animals could escape the coming destruction. Once the occupants of the ark were safely inside God caused the entire earth to be inundated by a cataclysmic flood. The result was that every human being and every land animal outside the ark were destroyed.

Thus God counteracted Satan's move to pervert the whole human race so thoroughly that the Redeemer could not come through it. There is perhaps no greater instrument that demonstrates and would effectively prove the reality of what we've just been reading than the discovery of Noah's ark.

[ 41 : 26 ] And I don't mean the one in Kentucky. I mean the original. And it is somewhere. It has been reported to have been found or cited or people have made claims but nothing really authoritative has come from it.

And can you imagine though, can you imagine the impact, the potential impact that something like that would have if the ark were actually, literally, really discovered and you could walk into it, at least what would be left of it after being there for thousands of years and see the divisions that were built in there for the animals and all the rest of it.

I have no doubt that it continues to exist, of course, in a very decayed form somewhere and we are told that it landed on Mount Ararat but the difficulty there is, there is no specific mountain that is called Mount Ararat.

It is a whole range of mountains involving a huge number of miles so we have no idea where on Ararat that thing may have landed and it may never be discovered.

But by the way, think of this. God's coin of the realm has always been faith.

[ 43 : 05 ] And faith is not believing something contrary to the evidence. That is not faith. That's stupidity. Faith is believing something on the basis of ample logical evidence.

faith. Faith is not believing when there is absolutely no reason to. That's not wrong. That's wrong. That's not what it is at all. Faith means that there is good and sufficient reason for taking the position that you do even though conclusive undeniable evidence is not available.

Faith only requires sufficient evidence, not overwhelming evidence. Now the time is coming when overwhelming evidence will be available because you know we have a we've developed a saying called believing seeing is believing and remember when Jesus confronted Thomas and he said Thomas the only reason you have believed is because you saw me with your own eyes.

blessed are they who have not seen will believe and of course that includes us and everyone else since that time because there is ample evidence for believing who Jesus Christ is and why he came and what he did and why it matters and we take it by faith because we do not have conclusive evidence.

Conclusive evidence means evidence that is so compelling that there are no detractors. nobody disagrees. Well we don't have anything like that today do we?

[ 44 : 53 ] In fact we have most people disagree. Most people are not convinced. But we look at the evidence and we evaluate it and we make a decision on the basis of that.

So what we're talking about is this huge cosmic conflict that has gotten underway that in my humble opinion is picking up speed right now.

I think there are forces involved that are contributing to what we would call the final cataclysm and we're getting closer and closer all the time.

so I want you to go to Genesis well oh my goodness that's okay keep going well we'll just have to do it for just a few minutes anyway.

Let's go to Genesis chapter 12 and let me just say right up front before we do run out of time I want to make this as clear as I can and I'm doing it as much for the listening audience because I know you probably already believe it and you know that we've already made that position very clear but we are going to examine and continue to examine for the next few sessions the strategic nature of the Jew and I can't get over this because I'm convinced it's not intended to be gotten over.

[ 46 : 35 ] This is so critical as we've already pointed out at the beginning the Jew and the nation of Israel are strategic are essential and are indispensable to the plan and program of God because God has made them indispensable.

He could have chosen anybody else but he chose Abraham and his offspring and in chapter 12 verse 1 the Lord said to Abraham go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to a land which I will show you now what we've got here is a picture of God isolating Abram from other human detractions almost as if God wants Abraham to himself alone because he's got some very important special things that he's going to communicate to and through Abraham and he's taking precautions to make sure nobody else gets in the way and there are going to be all kinds of obstacles that are going to be thrown in here by Satan that's going to cause Abraham to vacillate and to doubt perhaps it needs to be addressed just a little bit but let me just let me just say this we're talking about such a tremendously different time we're talking about a time when

God made God made his appearance and presence available to people like mine is available to you right now in person as a person as a human and I'm convinced this started way back in Genesis I don't think God was some kind of a mysterious cloud hovering over Adam and Eve so that all they could do was hear a voice this one was incarnated and we refer to this as a Christophany it is a pre-incarnate revelation of Christ way before Bethlehem when he appeared as a human and conversed with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob face to face and that he was one of the three beings that came to

Abraham in Genesis in I think it's well chapters move around on me now but somewhere around 18 19 something like that and he communicated with them personally eye to eye as I am to you and this was a Christophany a pre-incarnate experience and we know even though Abraham didn't know because the text says that Abraham looked up and he saw three men coming and they looked like men and they were dressed like men and they talked like men and they ate like men but one of them was deity one of the three was God himself who gave to Abraham that promise and to Sarah that I'm going to return again about this time next year and Sarah you're going to have your

baby and Sarah hears over this and she's in the tent and she starts snickering and laughing because she knows how long she and Abraham have been trying to conceive unsuccessfully and now this stranger is saying what does he know who is he what is this all about and he calls her out for the giggling remember and he told well anyway that's another story cute story and here he is the very God of heaven in the flesh accompanied with two angels who were also in the flesh looked like just ordinary people and Abraham and Sarah Abraham told Sarah honey cook up cook up some food we're going to entertain these guests and he didn't have a clue who they were there were three strangers and two of them were angels and when they leave there they're going to Sodom and Gomorrah and finish off that place so that's the kind of relationships that they were dealing with back then you and I don't know anything about this we just read the accounts and God doesn't operate that way today and he tells

[ 51 : 31 ] Abraham face to face I believe I will make you a great nation I will bless you make your name great you shall be a blessing I will bless those who bless you curse those who curse you and in you all families of the earth shall be blessed that is in you and in your seed and your descendants and that involves of course what we refer to as the Jewish race or the Jewish nation and the conflict and the opposition from Satan has never let up and it still isn't letting up and it is right now moving to I think intensification so that the ultimate goal of course is to eliminate the Jewish people as a race and thus foil the plan and program of God and that will be his design in the great tribulation period and I'm already out of time and I haven't once again I haven't taken any Q&A; I'm sorry could we do this next time we meet it'll be the fourth Thursday in March it'll be after spring how about that be after spring be the fourth the fourth Thursday in March actually it'll be March 31st yeah there's five oh March 31 it'll be

March 31st okay March 31 and we'll continue this and I'll tell you what I'll do if you have questions now if you can trust yourself to remember them for a whole month good for you but I know I couldn't do that so you might want to write them down and maybe we can begin that's the only way that's the only way we're going to get it in is if we begin with Q&A; and that way I'm sure that you will have an opportunity to have something to contribute so I apologize for taking every single minute of your time and I do want to cut you loose because some of you may have other engagements or appointments so well I just have some questions so if you don't have something to do well if you jot them down if you would and we'll deal with them next time put them on hold yes what about the March 316 the 316 well we've we've met about it and talked about it and I all I can say is there are things up in the air but nothing has been finalized

I'd just give anything if we had more time but we don't and we're still open to any suggestions that anybody may have and we would think maybe maybe the very least we could do is kind of try to inundate our own neighborhood or something with there's a meeting with flyers or something what there's a meeting Sunday after church we're having another meeting so if you're interested you should plan to send that that's that's getting closer and closer so if you can hang around after the morning service this Sunday we will have another meeting kind of like a jam session right here in this area and if you can get back here as quickly as you can the problem is everybody gets involved with conversations and visiting and everything and it's hard to get people together but let's try to do it again this Sunday and yeah John what John Ankerberg is doing a series on Revelation it's pre-mill pre-trib the kingdom and he's got three guests that talk on things and all three of them are from Dallas or or Liberty and so that and it's on

Sunday up it's on Sunday tonight it's only like at 530 and again at nine o'clock and it's on TBN TBN and it's on tonight yes there is a difference John okay okay Sunday night it's on at 530 I think is the time we always watch the one at night nine o'clock okay nine o'clock at night John Ankerberg has been doing this for years and he does have a rather outstanding program and I think you will find it to be very helpful so try to make a mental note of it or maybe better a written note and tune in to TBN and by the way and I don't I just I don't want to be overly critical but they got some lousy programs on that but they've got some good ones too so exercise a little spiritual discernment and John Ankerberg is is it's one of the top programs so you'll appreciate that okay well cut you loose thank you for being here today loving father we're grateful for this time to share and enjoy together we pray that it will be a time of practicality and of encouragement to each of us and of illumination from your word we look to you for that which we know we do not possess and that is a more complete understanding of the text involved so we ask that as we engage the material you will use

it to stimulate stir our minds to further obedience and to trust in you thank you for the meal that we'll be enjoying shortly and for each one here today to partake of it we commit our time to you and the thing and the thanksgiving in the name of our Lord Jesus this is not going to be terribly new material to grace believers because most of us are fairly well familiar with the subject called the rapture of the church and there are two passages in particular that deal with it more thoroughly than any other passages in scripture these are not the only places where the translation of the body of [ 57 : 23 ] Christ is referred to sometimes just in passing but these two passages give us more in-depth information regarding the event and what is going to take place than any other portion of scripture so I would direct your attention please to page one first Corinthians chapter 15 and the page you are holding which by the way we provided just as just as a convenience because I know you have limited space on the table with dishes and glasses and cups and all of that so you're more than welcome to operate right out of your own Bible if you want but this kind of simplifies it and the sheet that you have before you is a photocopy from the 26th translation New Testament which I regret to tell you has been out of print for a long time and it is not now available so I've taken the liberty of photocopying some of these pages and when it says it is from the 26 translations it means that 26 different translations of the New

Testament are incorporated in this particular book it doesn't mean that it contains all 26 all it means is and each of these 26 translations where there is any appreciable difference at all in the way the text is rendered they include it but very often there may be 15 or 20 of the 26 texts that translate it exactly the same way so there's no point in repeating all of those so they just include those that have a significant difference and that gives us a much broader understanding I think of the context because where one of these translations may not connect with you another may speak volumes and that's the beauty of having multiple translations at hand and then of course you will note that each verse begins with bold print bold type that's the King James translation of 1611 and then the others and their abbreviation that follows may or may not be familiar to you but it is to me and I can tell you what it is if anybody wants to know so let's drop down if we may near the bottom of the left-hand column on first Corinthians 15 page 1 where the Apostle begins with the comment behold and the word behold of course is utilized because he is making an effort to garner some additional attention he is using this expression as we would say now look here or listen up he is introducing a new theme and he wants to grab the attentions reader so that their focus will be will be magnified and they will really latch on to what he is saying so he says behold I show you a mystery and it is important to note here when Paul says I well not to take this personally this isn't Paul's mystery he is the chosen one of God to reveal this mystery but it doesn't originate with him he is the vehicle for the intermediary and he is going to relate to these people in Corinth information that they did not have prior to his revealing it some translations render this in fact the very first one Berkeley says take notice I am telling you a secret that's probably the best definition of the word mystery musterion in the Greek means it doesn't mean something that can't be known that's what we tend to think of a mystery as being a conundrum or a puzzle something that can't be known a biblical mystery means something that was not known previously and would never be known if it were not for the fact that someone who had the information on the mystery divulged it otherwise you wouldn't even know it existed to be a mystery it is a completely new disclosure hitherto not known understood appreciated revealed at all everybody was completely in the dark about this and what that means of course is this is not a subject that is found in the scriptures prior to this time this is new truth hitherto unrevealed you will not find the rapture or anything about it in the old testament it is not prophesied that's what

makes it a mystery this is new information and it's really important to pick up on this and folks I've got a bone to pick here with with a lot of a lot of men of the cloth when Paul says I show you a mystery I hope you will forever divorce from your mind the thinking well this is just Paul that's nonsense Paul is the vehicle Paul is the go-between he is the communicator but he is not the originator he is the one whom God has chosen to disclose this information but it is information that Paul would not have had had not God revealed it to him and we don't know exactly when that took place but we know there was a lengthy period of time that Paul spent in Arabia in the backside of the desert receiving an abundance of revelations that were communicated to him that were not given to anyone else and Paul is the revealer of it so don't let anyone sell you on the nonsense well yeah Paul talks about this rapture but after all Jesus didn't talk about it well the reason our Lord Jesus didn't talk about it was because it was not timely for him to talk about it but that doesn't mean

that he did not reveal it to Paul because he did and you see

Christ is the source of all this information in the same way that he was the source of what Moses communicated to the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt it wasn't Moses ideas wasn't something Moses thought up all he did was relate to the people what God related to him so I want you to think in terms of Paul and the New Testament in the New Covenant being in a comparable position to the church which is the body of Christ as Moses was to Israel as a nation both of them were primary communicators or go-betweens so Paul said I am showing you or telling you a secret 20th century says listen I will tell you God's hidden purpose we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed and immediately this word sleep needs to be understood this is a euphemism for dying remember when

Lazarus passed away and our Lord said to the disciples our friend Lazarus sleepeth and they said well if he sleeps that's good and they thought Jesus was talking about literal sleep which would be reparative and restorative to the body for whatever illness he had if he's sleeping that's good and then Jesus came back and said no that's Lazarus is dead and he used the word sleep as a common euphemism as is found many times in the New Testament so when he is saying here we shall not all sleep we shall all be changed Moffat renders it not all of us are to die we're not all going to experience a physical death Taylor says we shall all be given new bodies and TCNT is the abbreviation for the 20th century New Testament renders it but we shall all be transformed and the all here has to be kept in its context Paul is not talking about every living human being he's talking about believers this all is confined to those who are in the body of

[ 66 : 24 ] Christ and when he says I show you a mystery he is talking to believers and that's made I think very clear at the outset of his introduction to this Corinthian epistle we shall all be transformed we're not all going to experience physical death but we all including those who have died as well as those who have not died one thing they have in common some have died some haven't died but they're all going to be changed and there will not be any exceptions to that in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound and the dead and the dead here the same ones he is referring to in the previous verse when he says sleep the dead shall be raised incorruptible we do not know what kind of time frame this is but when the scriptures say in a moment in the twinkling of an eye someone asked me how long is the twinkle of an eye I don't know that it's ever been timed but I have reason to believe it is shorter than a blink a twinkle I'm not sure what a twinkle is of the eye but I've heard the expression that I knew your mother and father when you were just a twinkle in their eye it's a pretty nice way to put it isn't it yeah and romance and love took over well the twinkling of an eye is someone said probably the equivalent of a nanosecond which is pretty hard to register now we've got things down if you ever watch the Olympic competition you them and you see that clock running they're not satisfied with tenths of a second they've got hundreds of a second and some races and contests have been won or lost on a hundredth of a second like a downhill ski or something like that it's incredible so we're talking about a pretty short period of time in fact when this happens it is going to be so quick so sudden you won't even realize it you are just going to like that be transformed be changed I don't know if you're going to stand there and look at yourself up and down and say what what what what happened what what's going on but it's going to be instantaneous in a moment in the twinkling of an eye the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible this I shared with a group not long ago let's be honest folks this really sounds pretty fanciful doesn't it the graves being opened the dead being raised incorruptible and we shall be changed

Philip says we who are still alive shall suddenly be utterly changed how so well for starters this corruptible must put on in corruption our bodies our physical bodies are subject to corruption they begin corrupting when the spirit leaves the body James said the body without the spirit is dead you are now alive but when your spirit leaves instantaneously the process of decay and corruption sets in and you are beyond help all we can do is embalm you get the mortician and his cosmetic kit out and put some makeup on you so that everybody is able to look at you and say my doesn't he look nice you know but the life is gone and corruption is and you are beyond help all we can do is cremate you or put you in the ground because you can no longer dwell among us you are corrupted we are all like that these bodies subject to corruption are going to put on in corruption that means you and I are going to get an extreme makeover that you won't believe I don't know how that's going to affect things like baldness hair loss loss of teeth I don't I suspect that we are going to be and it's going to be quite a transformation

I know people have questions like what about babies are they always going to be babies what about you know what's the age if we are in our 80s when we die are we going to be in our 80s throughout eternity I haven't a clue the scriptures just we can't help but wonder about those things we're all curious about but we just don't know so all I know is look at it this way your body and my body is going to be as good and as transformed as God can make it is that good enough I think that will suffice this corruptible must put on in corruption that means a body that will be free basic English says the body that will be made free from the power of death Williams Williams says for this decaying part of us must put on the body that can never decay that's the kind of body that Jesus Christ had when he came out of the tomb it's called a glorified body no longer subject to death decay or anything else and this mortal a body which is capable of dying must put on immortality so then when this corruptible shall have put on in corruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then not before not now not today but then when these things happen then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory

I don't think I have ever had a funeral or a graveside service where I have not used this passage or the one from 1st Thessalonians because nothing speaks with such authority and such comforting words to those left behind as these two passages death now is the victor we need to face that reality death is not swallowed up in victory now we are aren't we sure we are we are all subject unto death now it's true for believers we are absent from the body present with the Lord so death does not have that stranglehold on us but it still severely impacts our physical body death is swallowed up in victory but that's not now that's future we have the promise of it

Christ Christ is the first fruits of them that slept and we have the promise that because he lives we too shall live but we also know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now waiting to wit for the redemption of the body manifestation of the sons of God the redemption of the body and we've made a point in the past that our bodies are not redeemed that's why they still die our spirit is redeemed that's why it is free to be joined with the Lord when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord but that's not your body that's your spirit and the body is disposed of but this passage is talking about a time when that spirit that inhabits the body is taken from it the body experiences death and there is going to be a reunion of the spirit that departed this corruptible body back into and be infused again into this new incorruptible body that is immortal just like the body of Christ then will be come to pass the saying death is swallowed up in victory and he is saying here in a in a in a mocking kind of way oh death where is thy sting it's a beautiful poetic way whereby he is addressing death as though it were personified and he is saying so what do you think of that death how do you like them apples you are not going to be the victor in the end now where is your sting now where is your victory you talk big and you took millions to the grave but now you have to give them up and now you death you are swallowed up in victory it's going to be a glorious time when that happens

[ 76 : 52 ] I tell you the sting of death is sin and the strength of the sin of sin is the law but thanks be to God what a big three letter word but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ therefore and the word therefore always means in light of what I have just said taking into consideration what we have just talked about so then therefore ergo my beloved brethren be you steadfast hang in there unmovable don't be shaken always abounding in the work of the Lord Philip says as you busy yourselves good speed says always devote yourselves new English Bible and work for the

Lord always work without limit Berkeley renders it at all times aboundingly active in the Lord's service why why because as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord that's another way of saying folks this life doesn't end at all there are consequences on the other side therefore apply yourselves to what you can for the Lord in this life because what you do is not for nothing it counts for eternity so give it your best shot and don't quit it's always too soon to quit hang in there keep plugging away when you've reached the end of your rope tie a knot and hang on that's what he's saying because there is going to be a time of reckoning after this this is our basis for motivation this life is not what it's all about this is not the end of it there is something on the other side and the something on the other side and

I think the level to which we are going to enjoy it will be linked to our productivity here and it will count for a lot now on the other page I want to get through this if we can we've got a similar passage that deals with the same issue there I probably should have mentioned this at the outset there are really two basic issues that surround the teaching of the rapture of the church or the

translation of the church or the catching away of the body of Christ whatever you want to call it and the two principal issues that surround this matter in Christendom is first of all whether this is ever going to be whether this is what it means whether this catching up is something that is actually put forth here or whether it's something else and if it's something else I have no idea what else it is so even though most believers don't disagree on whether there will be a rapture they do strongly disagree on when it will be the timing of it and they are principally divided into very easy to remember they are referred to as pre-trib mid-trib post-trib pre-trib tribulational rapture simply says that

Christ is coming for the church the passage we just read in 1 Corinthians and that we will undergo here in 1 Thessalonians this content is going to take place prior to the time of the tribulation. That's prior to the time of the 70th week of Daniel. That means it is pre-trib rapture. Mid-trib, folks, and by the way, let me insert this.

[ 81 : 17 ] This has nothing to do with anybody's salvation. Good people who know and love the Lord honestly disagree on these issues, but it's not going to keep anybody out of heaven.

All of us are wrong on some things. We just don't know what all those things are. And when you study, you're supposed to be looking for them so that you can find where you're wrong and change your position.

But this has nothing to do with anybody's love for the Lord or sincerity or anything else. This is just honest Christian people who see the issues differently.

Personally, I think the only plausible argument is for a pre-tribulation rapture, but I have some good friends who don't agree with me, and I tell them that when we get there, they will see that I was right.

I will accept their apology then. In the meanwhile, we just keep plugging away. Those who are of the mid-trib position believe that through the 70th week of Daniel, and we'll be talking about that perhaps in our next session if we get this covered.

[ 82 : 25 ] This is a seven-year period, the 70th week of Daniel, that the Lord will return in the middle of the tribulation period, that is, halfway through, and that the first half of the tribulation period refers to the wrath of man and the wrath of Satan.

The last half of the tribulation period refers to the wrath of God, and they believe that it is that wrath from which believers are delivered, but that the church will be here for the first half of the tribulation period, and it'll be a pretty hairy place to be.

And then, of course, there are those, and I call these the ping-pong, or the yo-yo rapture. They believe that Christ will come at the end of the tribulation period for the church, and then he's going to come back again for the second coming.

So it's going to be just an up-and-down-again thing, which I don't think has a whole lot of merit, but there are those who adhere to this, and these are good people. They are post-rapture. They believe Christ is coming at the end of the tribulation period.

So you're not really, with mid-trib, you're saved from half of the tribulation. With post-trib, you go through the whole thing, but with pre-trib, we are removed before it even begins.

[ 83 : 36 ] And there are those who say that this is a position of escapism for those who are in the body of Christ.

They don't like to think in terms of being subjected to the rapture, so they insist that Christ removes us before the tribulation period starts, so we don't have to go through that.

And their point is, the church needs to go through the tribulation period in order for it to be purified. Well, I can't argue that it needs purification, but at the same time, you've got to understand that in Christ, there is a purification of the body that has already taken place by virtue of the position that we have by being in union with Christ.

You realize you have a perfect standing with God if you are in Christ. That is your position.

[ 84 : 46 ] It cannot be improved upon. It is complete. It's final. It's over and done because it is predicated upon the finished work of Christ, not upon your performance as a Christian.

So, you are positionally perfect in Christ. There is nothing on the record against you.

We all know that our practice, our behavior, our decorum, our attitude, our orneriness and meanness and nastiness that sometimes Christians are capable of, there is nothing perfect about that.

That's why we still have room to grow. You cannot grow in your position. Christ established that. You are complete in Him. But you can grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus. And that's what we are all committed to doing. So, there is room for improvement in that. We do not believe that the body of Christ is going to be removed before the tribulation because we somehow deserve to be protected from that.

[ 86 : 02 ] That's nonsense. If you are in Christ, you already know what you deserve. Don't you? You already know what you deserve.

It's not a pleasant picture. So, we are not going to be removed on the basis that we are so wonderful and deserving that God doesn't want us to go through that.

Well, that's just not the case. We are going to be removed because this is what the prophetic scheme calls for and simply because I believe this is what the word teaches and it has nothing to do with the church wanting to escape.

Of course we want to escape. You'd be crazy if you didn't want to escape. That's only logical. But that doesn't mean that that's the basis for it. We are going to escape because it is an item of His grace.

And of His timing. God has not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus. And that means rescue or deliverance.

[ 87 : 03 ] So, we are going to be removed. And I'm not going to deal too much with the partial rapture but there is a position called the partial rapture theory and it posits the idea that believers who are worthy and living and walking in the Spirit and living for the Lord they will be taken and the Christian scoundrels who ought to have known better but weren't producing are going to be left behind and boy they're going to be sorry.

So, that's the partial rapture theory and I don't give any credence to that. But let's look at the Thessalonian epistle now if we may because this affords the basis of our consolation. and Paul begins in verse 13 by saying I would not have you to be ignorant brethren and that simply means that he's going to give them a heads up so that they will know something concerning those who are asleep.

What has happened? These people are wondering. What has happened to my loved one that have passed on? Where are they now? Well, we buried them.

Well, I know we buried their body but where is the real person? What happened to them? And this is what Paul is going to address. He says those who are sleeping again that's the death thing.

[ 88 : 29 ] Those who have passed to their rest. Taylor renders it what happens to a Christian when he dies. And the reason I do not want you to be informed that I want you to be informed is so that you will sorrow not even as others which have no hope.

And we've often made the distinction here. Paul isn't saying I'm telling you this so that you won't sorrow. Not saying that at all. He's saying I know you're going to sorrow. And there's nothing wrong with sorrowing.

When a loved one has been torn from you in death and you're powerless to do anything about it and you grieve over their passing is it okay if you are a Christian is it okay to sorrow?

Absolutely. You sorrow with a sorrow that is inexpressible. And some of you know what I'm talking about. You cannot begin to put into words this kind of sorrow.

But it does not compare with the kind of sorrow that people have who have no hope. for those who are not in Christ or loved ones who are in Christ the pain must be excruciating beyond words.

[ 89 : 43 ] It is bad enough when you know where they are. It is painful enough under those circumstances. But for those who have no hope it's incredible.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again and we are in union with him even so then also which sleep in Jesus or those who died and were in Christ when they died God will bring with him. Where are they? They are where he is. they are where he is now. I don't know much about heaven except it is otherworldly.

And I don't know much about eternity except it is the absence of time. It is not time prolonged. It is no time.

I cannot get my feeble brain around that. But wherever the Lord is that is where these loved ones who have died are.

[ 90 : 57 ] They are with him in heaven in eternity and whatever that involves that we do not understand in this life. God will bring them with him.

What is he bringing them with them for? And what is he bringing with them? Two possibilities here and I don't want to muddy the water but and I've got to give you both of them because I don't know which one is right.

There is a possibility that those who have departed this life and are with Christ are with him in spirit only as a disembodied spirit.

We cannot conceive of a spirit without a body. Why? Because a body is all we know. This has been our only place of residence, our only frame of reference.

we cannot begin to comprehend an existence of our person without this physical body. But it does exist and it is that which vacates the body at death to go to be with the Lord.

[ 92 : 10 ] There is a possibility that this disembodied spirit is now with the Lord in that spirit form. What does it look like?

It doesn't look like anything because it isn't physical. How can you see it? You can't see it because it isn't physical. We are talking about the existence of spirituality in eternity.

eternity. And in eternity there is no time. What would millions of disembodied spirits look like?

Wouldn't look like anything because you can't see it. So what are we talking about? I haven't a clue.

We don't know. This is just otherworldly.

I don't know. There is also the possibility because this is interacting with the eternal state there is also a distinct possibility that upon the death of the believer they receive a glorified body immediately.

[ 93 : 29 ] And it is that glorified body that is in the presence of the Lord with his glorified body. Then what about the body that's in the ground? The only thing I can suggest is the body that's in the ground is subject to time and space.

The glorified body is not. And when you try to marry eternity with time and space it won't work. They don't mix. So there is very possibly something else going on there.

A connecting link that we don't understand, cannot appreciate in this life. So I just don't have the answer to that but we'll have time for Q&A; and if you've got the answer I'll be all ears.

Okay? This we say unto you by the word of the Lord. That means Paul is quoting his authority. He's making it clear. Folks, I want you to understand this isn't my idea.

Please don't attribute this to me with the idea. Well, Paul says, and you know, believers do this all the time. They pit Paul against Peter and John and even the Lord and so on.

[ 94 : 34 ] I want to make a case for this again because it is so critical. The writers of Scripture are many. The author is one.

The Spirit of God has communicated the word to various and sundry writers over that period of 1500 years. But the point of origin in authorship is always the same.

Whether Moses wrote it, whether Paul wrote it, John wrote it, Luke wrote it, Ezra wrote it, doesn't make any difference. They are just human instrumentalities. The point of origin is the same.

The authority is in the author. The author is one, the writers are many. God utilized human instrumentality to write his word, to give it a human flavor, to communicate with humans and it is a beautiful thing.

So Paul makes it very clear, this is not our idea, we say this unto you by the word of the Lord. This we tell you on the authority of the Lord, that we which are alive, living at the time, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, and we tend to think that it may be this generation.

[ 95 : 52 ] It may be six or sixteen generations yet future. We don't know. We wonder sometimes how can this world go on as it is without imploding.

We wonder, but it's gone on for a long time. Shall not prevent, this is an unfortunate King James rendering, you see the word prevent really means precede, or go before.

Shall in no wise gain an advantage over those who fell asleep, or those who died. The Amplified says, shall in no way proceed into his presence, or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep in him in death.

For, the Lord himself, personally, Jesus Christ in the flesh, shall descend from heaven with a shout. I have no idea what that's going to sound like. But someone has likened it to, every believer will hear it, every unbeliever will hear nothing.

[ 97 : 01 ] It'll just be like a divine dog whistle. Only the Lord won't be calling dogs, he'll be calling saints, and only those who are attuned to his call, will hear his call.

And others will probably hear nothing. But when that time comes, and the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first.

I just cannot imagine what that's going to be like, but it's going to be something. Do you have any idea how many people are dead in cemeteries all over the world?

How many were buried at sea? The sea will give up the dead which are in it, we are told later in Revelation. It's going to be an incredible thing. I don't know how that's going to work, but I do know this, God has got a fix on every human being's DNA, and it will be no problem for him to put it together.

together. He put it together in the beginning, didn't he? We are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.

[ 98 : 15 ] And you might want to underline the little word caught up because it's the word from which the word rapture comes. It isn't obvious at all in English, actually it isn't even obvious in the Greek. But Jerome in the 4th century, he was a Roman Catholic cleric, St.

Jerome, translated the Greek New Testament into Latin. And the word that he used for caught up in his Latin translation is the word raptō, R-A-P-T-O.

And the English word from raptō is rapture. And that's where that expression came from. It means to be caught up. The series left behind that Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye did was a phenomenal publication undertaking.

I mean, it just broke all existing records. And it stimulated a lot of interest in us because the left behind refers to those who do not hear the sound of the trumpet and who are not in Christ and who are not caught up.

They are those left behind. And in the 1970s, some of you aren't even old enough to remember this. But in the 1970s, a man by the name of Hal Lindsey came on the stage and he wrote a book called The Late Great Planet Earth.

[ 99 : 43 ] And it became the bestseller of the decade of the 70s. And in it he has a chapter on the rapture.

I thought it was kind of humorous. The title of this chapter was called The Great Snatch. And that's exactly what it is. It's a catching away. A great snatch whereby God is going to remove from the earth instantaneously all those who are in Christ.

And I don't know if this is going to be like it was depicted in Left Behind or you saw the movie or read the book and here is this airliner in the sky and there are believers in these seats and all at once there is nothing there but a pile of clothes and they are gone because they were changed into an incorruptible body and they just vacated the clothing they were in and left it behind.

I don't know how accurate that is but I'm not prepared to challenge it because I don't have a better answer and someone has suggested the possibility that these are only going to appear to have been taken like that but what is actually going to happen is that all of these people are going to die physically and they aren't going to leave a pile of clothes behind at all they're going to leave their bodies behind.

We say well what in the world could possibly account for all of these people all over the world selectively dying? how do you explain all of these corpses left behind?

[ 101 : 23 ] What killed them? I don't know. Maybe that's not the way it is. Maybe there is a pile of clothing left. Maybe there is a driverless vehicle left.

Or a pilotless plane. Maybe that's the way it's going to be. We aren't given those kind of details. We just don't know. But there is a possibility of some kind of nuclear activity.

Some kind of germ warfare where certain people would be susceptible to it. Others would not be susceptible to it. Some phenomenal thing like that may happen.

After all the book of Revelation does make quite clear that the loss of life during the tribulation which is after this is going to number not in the millions but in the billions.

And of late we haven't had as much difficulty dealing with numbers like billions ever since our Congress has gotten in the act and started talking in terms of trillions.

[ 102 : 31 ] So I don't know. These are unanswered questions. But we do know that the dead in Christ are going to rise and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

He is not coming to the earth for the rapture. He is coming above the earth. He comes to the earth in the second coming and his feet will land on the Mount of Olives, the very place from which he

was taken up in Acts 1.

He is coming back to that. But not this time. He comes in the clouds above the earth. We are caught up to meet him in the air. I have always had a little problem with this with my fear of height.

But if you have a glorified body, it is just going to be a major wow. You won't be worried about the height. You won't be worried about falling. You won't be worried about anything. We are going to be with him.

To meet the Lord in the end. So shall we ever be with the Lord. That is what makes heaven heaven. [103:45] with him. Wherever that is, if you are with him, that is heaven. And Paul's conclusion to this is this. Now folks, in light of all of this, doesn't that do something for you?

Don't you find some comfort, consolation in that? The Corinthian passage is motivation. Therefore, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Get with it. Keep hitting the ball. But this is consolation. This is comfort. This is our solace. This we can take to heart.

This provides us with the ability coupled with the Corinthian passage to not give up, to hang in there and keep on keeping on. And we don't know when this is going to take place, but I want to close with this important insistence.

I guess you would call it important insistence, and that is, it is imminent. It could happen before I finish the next sentence.

[104:56] It could take place at any time. There is nothing that yet needs to be fulfilled before this snatching away can take place.

and people who think so, usually confuse the rapture with the second coming. And they say things like, well, the gospel has to be preached in the whole world first before Christ can come.

That's true. And that's made very clear in Matthew 24 and 25. The gospel will be preached in the whole earth before the Lord returns.

But that's the second coming, not the rapture. that will take place during the tribulation period, largely through the influence of the 144,000.

And that will make an enormous impact. So I would urge you to seriously consider the distinction between the rapture and the second advent that is here on this page. And that will be very, very helpful to you, I'm sure, as you try to work your way through this even more than what we have done here this morning.

[106:02] So, comments or questions? Anyone? Feel free. Yes, Marie. Have you come to the conclusion in your studies in 2 Thessalonians 2.3 that the falling away is a rapture and apostasy?

I don't know. I bet on both sides of that issue. I really don't know. I don't know. The falling away, as Marie pointed out, falling away could mean the falling away from the faith.

a departure from the faith. And it could also have reference to the rapture. But there are good people on both sides of the issue.

I'd like to be, I wish I could be more dogmatic. Some people think I'm dogmatic about everything, but I'm not. I mean, there are so many things I don't know for sure.

And you know, the funny thing about it is, when I was younger, I used to know all this. I had all these answers. And I don't know what happened to them, but it's amazing how sometimes someone said, when you get older, you mature in Christ, you tend to believe more and more about less and less.

[107:27] things. I can see that. Fewer things become really important to you, but those things become more important than ever. John?

We shall all be changed. We'll put on incorruptible. We'll put on immortality. With the transfiguration where Moses and Elijah and Christ are on the mount, would that be the same where Moses was transfigured as putting on incorruption?

Well, Moses and Elijah had some form to their being that Peter, James, and John apparently were able to recognize.

Now, I don't know because the text doesn't say. The text tells us that Moses and Elijah were there. This is in the account of the transfiguration when the Lord went into the mount with three of the twelve, Peter, James, and John.

We do not know whether Peter, James, and John looked at these two men and said, well, golly, there's Moses and Elijah. Whether they were able to just recognize them right off or whether our Lord said, Peter, James, and John, I'd like you to meet Moses and Elijah.

[108:54] Longtime friends of mine. And they all shook hands and had a little meeting. We don't know. We aren't given the details about that. But it seems that they had an identifiable or at least some kind of physical presence.

And it may be that that is an indicator. That's probably as good an indicator as we have, John. They're in the transfiguration because whatever they had been transformed into, they already had. And that may very well be a foretaste of what we're going to experience. Good question. Good comment. Thank you. Someone else. The food is here. Anybody else? Yes.

What is your basis for only believers hearing the shout? Well, I would say my basis for only believers hearing the shout is that Paul identifies them in the context there.

Those who believe in Christ at that time. Verse, let's see, what am I talking about here? Verse 15, we which are alive remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not present them.

[110:04] The Lord, no, I'm sorry. Verse 14 establishes the context that he's talking about those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him if we believe that he died, rose again.

The context there makes it quite clear that he's limiting himself to those in the audience who are believers. And therefore, it would seem that they would be the only ones in tune with the shall. But there is a possibility that others could hear it too, just wouldn't know what it is or be able to recognize it or respond to it. That's a possibility. Yeah, possibility. John? The all, you kind of selected and said it was only the all in Christ, not the all world.

Right. But now, doesn't the all world have to have a change in their life to be able to enter the pit and suffer eternity and eternity?

I'm sorry, I'm not understanding your question. Repeat the question. Okay. In Revelations, it talks about all unbelievers entering the pit and suffering eternally.

[111:29] So, don't they have to have some kind of a change? A physical body can't suffer eternally. Right. Okay. Okay. Excellent point.

Excellent point. What kind of physical composition do unbelievers have when they are placed in the lake of fire? God forbid. That's the depiction that is used in Revelation.

It will obviously not be a body like this. Otherwise, it would just be completely consumed. I wouldn't go so far as to say they're going to have a glorified body because I tend to think of that in a very positive supernatural effect.

But it is hard to believe that that kind of body is going to be provided with unbelievers. However, it would seem that they're going to have some kind of a supernatural physical body different from this that will be able to experience that.

And you could tie that in with the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. And I'm not sure how much that comes into play, but there's a good possibility. So, there's something there that we don't understand.

[112:39] God has a lot of prerogatives other than this physical body that we know. And I'm sure that's going to come into play. It's a good question. Food is here and thank you all very much for being here today.

I appreciate your presence.