

Monthly Study

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[0 : 00] Well, our numbers are somewhat depleted this morning, but we are glad that you braved the spring rain and came out, and we need to be really grateful for the spring rain because, as one wise bard put it many years ago, if it were not for the April showers, we wouldn't have any May flowers.

If you don't get any May flowers, there aren't any pilgrims. So we are grateful, aren't we? Now that we got that bit of corniness out of the way, I do want to thank you for your presence this morning. We're going to look at a subject that I really originally had not planned to undertake, but given what's going on in our world today, I think we are going to at least devote one session to this subject, and you've already received a sheet that talks about the distinctions between the second coming and the rapture.

So let's look to the Lord, and we'll have a time of open discussion about some of this content. So you'll be ready with your questions, if you will. We're grateful, Father, for the time that you've allotted us to be together.

We're mindful of those who are not with us for whatever reason. We pray you'll undertake for them in the same way that you do for us. Thank you for the truth that is before us, and we look to you for an understanding and appreciation of it and the implications thereof as to how it impacts each of us.

[1 : 32] We give this time to you with the intent that you will take the word and make it plain to us, and we pray in Christ's name. Amen. First, I want to precede this with a little bit of a history lesson, and that goes back to about the second or third century, well, maybe the fourth, with St. Augustine, when a number of conclusions were being reached as regards the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, plus the long history of destruction that the Jews had undergone, both from the Assyrians who had invaded the northern ten tribes, carried many people away into captivity, and then years later in the southern two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the same thing.

And in both cases, the Lord had warned them through his prophets that enemies would be coming and that he would deliver them to their neighbors for their spiritual chastisement if they did not forsake their idols and return to him.

They didn't, and he did. And he brought those who were far more pagan in their worship than what the Jews were to spank his spiritual children, the nation of Israel.

And they recovered from that, and the Lord blessed. They returned to the land of Israel. Of course, in the north, they never did actually return. But in the south, where the temple was, they returned and set up shop again.

And the Lord was blessing, and it wasn't long until they fell into the same old idolatrous routine again. And when our Lord was here, somewhere in the vicinity of 30 A.D., he had predicted right before his death that the time would come when an enemy would throw a siege around Jerusalem and not one stone that they were so impressed with there, and those massive, massive stones that were put together to build the temple area, that not one of them would be left upon another that would not be cast down.

[4 : 01] And in 40 years, that prophecy became fulfilled in a very dramatic and literal way. And as a result, Israel was once again reduced to rebel, and the temple was burned and sacked, and the city was destroyed, and the walls were broken down.

And the Romans even renamed the city of Jerusalem and called it Capalatina. And they forbade any Jew to enter there under penalty of death.

Well, emperors came and emperors went, and eventually Jews did start returning there, and they started rebuilding once again, and they started a semblance of some kind of worship that I'm sure was very inadequate.

And in approximately the year 130, about 60 years after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., about the year of 130, there was the Bar Kokhba rebellion.

and Bar Kokhba was a Jew who professed to be the Messiah. And many of the Jews followed him, and they raised an insurrection, and they routed the Romans in a number of ways, until finally Rome said, enough, we are really this time going to finish the Jew in a way that we should have done first time in 70 A.D.

[5 : 34] They sent their armies in again, and as a result of the Bar Kokhba revolt, they were completely decimated and scattered everywhere, and they did not return for 2,000 years.

So Israel to this date remains the only nation, remains the only nation that has been reborn as a national entity after a long period of non-existence such as they've enjoyed, if you want to use the word enjoy.

And as a result, of course, we are convinced as believers that this is nothing more than proof positive of the hand of God never having been fully removed from the Jew.

Because God originally established that covenant relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his seed, and even though they have played the harlot in a spiritual kind of relationship to their husband, who was designated as God the Father, they are remaining under divine discipline, and that's spelled out in Romans 11, 12, and 13.

And if you haven't read it lately, I would suggest that you do that. So what we've got now is that as a result of this second destruction under the Bar Kokhba revolt, which was about 135 A.D., about 18, 1900 years ago, an idea was born that still dominates the Christian community all over the globe.

[7 : 27] And I use the term Christian community loosely to incorporate all of those who are Roman Catholic and all of those who are Protestant.

Whether or not, as an individual Protestant or an individual Catholic, they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I'm just using those terms and those concepts in a general way to identify Christendom as a whole.

And we all know that Roman Catholicism is made up of true, believing Christians and those who are not. And Protestantism is made up of true, believing Christians and those who are not.

But they still come under those banners. So what developed as a result of that way back when, probably as early as the second century and then in the third and fourth century, it was really kind of cemented by Augustine, one of the most influential church fathers.

And that is that God is finished permanently with the Jew. He's written him off entirely. And he has selected a new and different people who are called Christians.

[8 : 50] Christians. And the birthday of this Christian church is in Acts chapter 2 on the Jewish day of Pentecost, which by the way does not square with the facts at all, but that's what the claim is.

And as a result, Christendom is in and the Jew is out. Now we have taken the position here that that is not sustained by Scripture at all.

That what has happened is the Jew is out temporarily. The Jew has been dismissed from the stage front and center and has been replaced by the Christian church, which is the body of Christ.

And this is a position that has not been popular at all for probably 1,600 years.

A long time. What I just explained to you is called replacement theology. Sometimes it's called supersessionism. And it conveys the idea that whereas Israel once were the chosen people of God, they no longer are.

[10 : 04] Now the chosen people of God is the church. And that's why it's called replacement theology. And as a result, there were steps taken that were in every way contrary to the Jew and they came under tremendous persecution.

And what you see in the Middle Ages and particularly in the Spanish Inquisition in the 1500s, 1400s, was just a sample of that where so many, if you can imagine this now, I don't know how in the world they squared this with anything the scriptures say, but there was a huge element under the banner of Christianity who really thought it was their God-given responsibility to punish the Jew, to punish the ancestors of the Jews for their ancestors having rejected and crucified the Messiah and they were charged with what is known as deicide, the idea of they killed God and the Jews need to pay and their descendants need to pay and of course the principal one behind this whole thing is none other than the adversary himself who of course hates all whom God loves, not only Christians but Jews as well. In fact, God loves the world and Satan hates everyone and everything that God loves and he is set about to destroy and defeat in any and every

way that he can and this thing called replacement theology has inundated Christendom and has literally taken over and has been the standard formula for the interpretation of the Bible ever since and that interpretation includes this.

In virtually everything the Bible says you take it literally at face value for just what it says except when it comes to the field of prophecy and future things that is not to be taken literally but it is to be taken spiritually.

So when John the Baptist and Jesus and others preached the kingdom of heaven is at hand which is nearby what does that mean? Well the Jews thought it meant a literal earthly physical kingdom established wherein the Messiah of Israel would rule and reign on the earth for a thousand years. [12 : 52] That was and probably is in some quarters the Jewish interpretation of the millennial reign and that is taking it quite literally.

The difficulty with that is the kingdom of heaven as preached by John as preached by the apostles has never happened.

It has never come to earth or has it? Maybe it really has but it isn't a literal earthly kingdom it's a spiritual kingdom and we are in it.

This is it. This is the kingdom of heaven come to earth. We are now living in it and experiencing it. If you take the scriptures as they were intended to be taken which means when it comes to prophecy you don't take that literally you take that spiritually.

So the kingdom of heaven is in you and you are in the kingdom of heaven. Now never mind the fact that descriptions are given by all the prophets in the Old Testament what the kingdom of heaven was going to be like when it was established and it will include things such as this the blind will receive their sight the deaf will receive their hearing the lame the lame person will leap like a deer all of those things are going to be corrected well they are they are corrected spiritually the blind are seeing but that's not literal seeing and literal blind it's spiritual and hearing isn't real hearing literal hearing it's spiritual and that's where we are today whether you know it or not and probably many of you do not this is the majority opinion of christendom right now and the striking thing about it is most of the people who are sitting in the pews of the churches that believe this and propagate this don't even know it or understand it they have no idea doctrinally what their church actually teaches regarding these things and the position that we take that I am comfortable with and have come to and so have many others is that you take everything in the bible you approach it from a literal standpoint unless the text or the context makes it obvious that it is not intended to be taken literally it is intended to be taken figuratively and the illustration

[16 : 09] I've given so many times is one of the quotes of the psalmist and there are hundreds of these it says the eyes of the Lord run to and fro on the earth that's a poetic expression not intended to be taken literally it's just it's just a more picturesque way of saying God sees everything and knows everything so the poet says the eyes of the Lord run to and fro upon the earth just as if there were two gigantic eyeballs popped out and they run all over the earth well that would be a literal approach and what's what's the purpose of figurative language anyway it is for color and for emphasis and by the way if you want to see an example of a total absence of any figurative language read a real estate contract read a buyer seller's contract about anything you won't find any figurative language there everything is spelled out very literally and very much to the point there's no room for figurative language there but the

Bible is a book of color and of emphasis and variety and it includes all of these things that we have mentioned so that there's tons and tons of figurative language in the Bible and if anybody's interested in pursuing that you can pick up Christianity Clarified volume 26 through about volume 40 and several segments are devoted to an explanation of the different kinds of figurative language and how they are used so when Jesus was confronting some who opposed him in the gospels he made the statement the kingdom of God is within you and that gave fuel to the fire of those who believe in a spiritual kingdom the only kingdom there is going to be is a spiritual kingdom and Christ is ruling and reigning within you and that is the meaning of that text when

Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you but if you look at the context it becomes very apparent to whom Jesus was speaking he was speaking to his detractors and his opponents who were ridiculing and criticizing him and denying his messiahship it was the legitimate crowd that existed at that time under the scribes and Pharisees the legitimate government of Israel do you mean to tell me that Jesus was saying the kingdom of God was in them of course not so what we need is a more accurate and all it means is Jesus was saying the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven

is among you and it was among them in his own person because where Jesus was he brought with him kingdom conditions that was the basis for his giving sight to the blind opening the ears of the deaf raising the dead causing the lame to walk those are the conditions that are going to exist when that kingdom of heaven is established and

Jesus was giving them a taste of it and when he said the kingdom of heaven is among you he was speaking of himself as the king and he brought kingdom conditions everywhere he went never lose sight of the fact that the principal reason for the miracles that Jesus performed was to authenticate his claim of being the messiah of Israel and they had every right to ask him if you're the messiah do something messianic do something miraculous well he did time and time again and we have 33 miracles that are recorded in the gospels alone to say nothing of those that aren't recorded because Jesus performed many other miracles that are not recorded so everywhere he went he authenticated his claim to be the messiah of Israel and it was quite literal so what happened when this twist took place and I call it a faulty assumption because and I don't want to be unkind to these people who reached this conclusion because

I'll tell you why they reached a conclusion that seemed very logical to them history had shown Israel as a nation from the time they came out of Egypt to be a disobedient and gainsaying people all day long the Lord said I have stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people they had a reputation for rejecting divine authority even while he was miraculously caring for them in the desert having just come out of Egypt they established themselves as being a disobedient people way back then and as you move on through the history of Israel it is one prophet after another sent to them by God warning them judgment is coming you need to get your act together sometimes they did but usually they didn't and the acts would fall and history would prove that Israel was disobedient had fallen out of the favor of God once again so look try to project yourself back there as a bystander in the first or second century after these things happened you've got the destruction of

[21 : 53] Jerusalem hey God's chosen people remember where was the protective hand of God that he allowed that to happen to his beloved city and those people is that any way to treat your chosen people and then the Bar Kokhba revolt in the 19th in the first century like 135 when there was another decimation of the Jew and they were scattered all throughout the world and this is by the way the group to whom Peter is writing his epistles and James is writing his the twelve tribes scattered abroad and they were scattered abroad as a result of their persecution and their defeat militarily scattered everywhere so when you look at the destruction of Jerusalem 70 AD and then a couple of years later Masada and when Rome when the Roman garrison broke through at the top of Masada they found one thousand almost one thousand dead

Jews who had committed suicide rather than give the victory to the Romans whom they knew would imprison them and make slaves of them so they had a pact and every man was responsible for putting to death his own family and then the men after were responsible for taking the lives of their comrades each other and when Rome broke through at Masada all they found was almost a thousand corpses of Jews now you put all that together and doesn't it really look like God is finished with the Jew can you not see how they reached that conclusion and at the same time remember this at the same time great numbers of

Gentiles were putting their faith and trust in Jesus the Jewish Messiah and experiencing what is now called Christianity and there were fewer and fewer Jews believed you got to remember for the first ten years after the resurrection of Christ for the first ten years there were no non Jews who were Christians Christianity did not exist all the believers all the believers were Jewish believers exclusively and the first exception was a Roman army officer by the name of Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 and it caused a big stir simply because he was not a Jew he was a God fearer but he was not a Jew so really can you not understand how reasonable people could have seen this as the end of

Judaism well it was the end of Judaism as a religion but it was also the end of the contract the end of the deal that God had struck with Abraham Isaac and Jacob it's all off and God says I'm done with you period and I've got myself a new people and they have embraced Israel's Messiah as Savior and they are known as the Christian church that has been the singular position for probably 1700 years and when Martin Luther broke with Rome he brought his replacement theology that was part and parcel of the theology of Rome with him and adopted it and it was Luther who thought having broken with Rome as he did he was going to reach out to the Jewish population and see

about winning them to the cause of

Christ and what happened the Jew did not respond and Luther almost overnight developed a very antagonistic view to the Jew and began his own way of persecuting which was primarily through the pen and his writings but in the 1980s I believe it was 1980s not all that long ago even though it was 40 years ago the Lutheran Worldwide Federation that is a combination of all the Lutheran churches in the world got together and they issued a formal apology to the Jewish people for the invectives and the terrible things that Martin

[27 : 11] Luther had said regarding the Jew and it is available online if you want to read it it's not very edifying it's pretty nasty stuff and you think Martin Luther said that well he did and he had developed a visceral hatred of the Jewish people for their ongoing refusal even after all those years because we're talking the 16th century now even after all those years they were still in a rejection mode regarding Jesus of Nazareth and Jews are to this day that has not changed so all of this has taken place for hundreds and hundreds of years and it remains today the official position of probably 90% of Christendom both Roman Catholic and Protestants now fast forward to the 1800s a man by the name of

John Nelson Darby I'm not sure but I think he was an Irishman either Irish or Welch but I think he was an Irishman he did not come up with this but he did succeed in popularizing it and that is the prophetic portions of scripture those things that deal with the predictions of the future ought to be approached and interpreted just like the rest of the Bible that God has not expected or provided two different methodologies for interpreting the Bible one for most of the Bible and then a completely different way of interpreting it for the prophetic portions of scripture and to do so is changing hermeneutical horses in the middle of the stream and it was God's intent to provide the word for it to be taken at face value unless figurative language was employed in which case the context would almost always make it clear that it is not intended to be taken literally otherwise you do take it literally and you take the kingdom of heaven coming to earth literally and you take Christ as ruling and reigning on the earth literally for a thousand years so it hasn't happened but that doesn't mean it isn't going to happen and literally so all of these things are yet future and John

Nelson Darby is generally accused of having originated this idea well he didn't originate it at all I'll tell you where it originated it originated even before even before Augustine had his influence in the fourth century because there are too many written records that are available today for anybody's examination where the early the early Christian church took the position of a literal kingdom and that Christ was going to return literally and this is what the book of Acts requires and this is what the prophetic portions require and this is what the book of Revelation requires and this is what all of the Old Testament prophets require and they embraced that early on but it soon fell out of favor because of the attitude of the Jew and his continued rejection and the increasing militant attitude against the Jew so Christianity became more and more solidified and they began what would be known as the Roman

Catholic Church in these early stages so what we've got is a kind of situation that that abandoned the early original point of view regarding the literality of all of this and it was Rome and Augustine that had tremendous influence and Augustine was probably one of the most brilliant people who ever lived but he still was limited to interpreting what was going on in his world at the time and he came to this position and it was he was greatly he was influencing huge numbers of people and he developed a reputation and he's today regarded as one of the most important maybe the most revered church fathers they even named an order after him in fact Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk and the Augustinian order came from and originated with Augustine so the influence has been enormous and when

John Nelson Darby began popularizing this it started to catch on and people began to see the fallacy in the replacement theology and that Israel does have a future and that the book of Revelation is not history it's prophecy now how do the replacement theologian people regard the book of the Revelation it's history that's already been fulfilled now you have to do some pretty slick maneuvering to come to those conclusions but that's the position that's taken and what happened with Darby is this he began teaching and preaching this and it started to expand and it started making a lot of sense to a lot of people and there were numbers who were adopting it and it made its way to the United States of America and people of course were adopting this picking up on it and remarking about how much sense it made and how consistent it made the interpretation of the

[32 : 55] Bible rather than completely overthrowing the principles that you use for interpreting most of it and bring in a whole new game of interpretation for prophecy that didn't make sense and you know to this day to this day there are huge numbers of people who do not understand that God gave us his word with the intent that it be understood good think of that think of how many people consider this just a book of mystery oh too deep for me I can't and the divine purpose all along was that people would read and understand because listen if you can't understand what you're reading there is no way possible that you can provide the right response to it you've got to understand it and when the plain sense makes good sense we seek no other sense that's the rule for interpreting the scriptures as Miles Coverdale put it it shall greatly help you to understand scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken or written but of whom and to whom of what time under what circumstances considering what goes before and what follows and he gave us those rules and they have served us well ever since now from the mid 1800s let's go to the later 1800s to

New York State and Niagara New York and in Niagara there began a series of summer Bible conferences that were drawing thousands and thousands of people because what was being taught was an explanation of the Bible that people could understand right here in the good old USA and it caught on and we're talking about 1800s when travel was still horse and buggy and by train and under all kinds of handicaps thousands of people made it to Niagara to attend these Bible conferences and they were conducted by some of the most enlightened teachers and preachers of the scriptures and people turned out in the thousands just to hear the word and out of those conferences

Moody Bible Institute came into being and a whole bunch of other Bible institutes they were not seminaries they were Bible institutes designed to take young people in particular and train them and teach them in the interpretation and understanding of the Bible so they could go out and found churches and reproduce themselves in their congregations and as a result this is partly where we are today and Grace Bible Church is a long time coming extension of that actual movement at the forefront of this whole thing became the subject that we're going to look at for the few minutes that we have and that is the rapture of the church we've got two passages of scripture if you'll turn to 1 Corinthians 15 this is going to be obviously just the first part of this but in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 we find the most detailed precise explanations that are given regarding this thing called the rapture of the church and where did it get that name someone said the name rapture isn't even in the

Bible well that's true it isn't and the word comes from actually comes from a Latin translation of the Bible and the word in the Latin is raptō r-a-p-t-o raptō from which the English word rapture comes and that's where it got its name so you will not find it in the English Bible per se but the concept is there and if we begin with verse 50 of 1 Corinthians 15 Paul says now I say this brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God well and the basic reason for that is there's an incompatibility there nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable for the same reason there's basic incompatibility they are loggerheads with each other and then it goes on to say now I say this brethren behold verse 51 I tell you a mystery and some have translated this with the word secret and it's a good word it's a good translation a secret the idea is a biblical mystery is something that cannot be understood unless the recipient is initiated and to be initiated you have to receive the key that unlocks the mystery otherwise you'd never get it in a thousand years and what Paul is doing is using his key and unlocking it for everybody so the mystery is open it is to be understood and appreciated and he goes on to say we shall not all sleep and that of course is a euphemism for the word death he's talking about we shall not all die physically and the reason we're not all going to die is because something is going to happen to some of us while we are still alive that's the whole point we shall not all sleep and the all there is all I think inclusive when he uses the word we keep it in the context he's not talking about humanity in general he's talking about those who are believers and he is including we as all of the brethren who are in Christ we shall not all sleep but we the same we shall all be changed this incorporates every single believer in [39 : 37] Christ in a moment how's this going to happen when is it going to come to pass in a moment in the twinkling of an eye and I've never been able to define how long a twinkling of an eye lasts but some wag has put it this way I don't know how long a twinkle in the eye is but it's longer it's not as long as a blink well that's pretty quick whichever it is this is he's saying this is the rapidity with which this change is going to come about when it happens it's going to be just like that we happening until it has happened and it's going to be whoa what what what it what it's going to be

dramatic in a split second it isn't something that you will get prepared for it isn't ladies it isn't something you can dress for makeup won't make any difference it's going to be right now in an instant we shall all be changed the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable well that's just the opposite of what they are now when the song came out during the civil war

John Brown's body lies a molder and in the grave well that's what our bodies do that's what all flesh does whether it's animal or human or whatever it decays and breaks down and it is perishable that's the whole point we will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed and the word here conveys the idea in the original of metamorphosis like a butterfly goes through when it comes out of the cocoon it comes out like a worm or it's like a worm in there and it goes through a scientific process called metamorphosis and that slimy little worm becomes a beautiful butterfly and then just takes wing and flies away that's kind of like what's going to happen to us only it's going to be a lot more wonderful than the butterfly the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed this perishable must put on the imperishable this mortal which simply means capable of dying we are all mortal capable of dying must put on immortality it's not a maybe it's a necessity and that's what's going to happen but when this perishable will have put on the imperishable and this mortal will have put on immortality then will come about the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory boy

I can't wait and the observation that I've made and had the sad occasions a number of times to explain this at funerals and at graveside services and what the text is saying death is swallowed up in victory well death is not swallowed up in victory now death swallows us up doesn't it yeah death swallows us up death is the victor now and will be until this takes place then then will come about the saying death is swallowed up in victory and then we will be able to taunt death that's what this is this is taunting death oh death where is your victory oh death where is your sting now it's going to be robbed of all of its power and death itself will be put to death

John Owen 16th century divine left behind a tremendous legacy he was like most others he was a covenant theologian and end of replacement theology but he left behind a wonderful sermon called the death of death in the death of Christ and that's exactly what the death of Christ is going to accomplish life for us if that kernel of wheat falls into the ground and if it abides alone it brings forth nothing but if it falls into the ground and breaks up and decays out of it comes new life and that's the principle that is given here and thanks be to God who gives us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ therefore as a result of that in light of what I've just said my beloved brethren be steadfast hang tough immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord why knowing not suspecting or thinking or even hoping knowing that your toil your labor is not in vain in the

Lord that means your labor is not for nothing it's for something that really matters so hang in there it's always too soon to quit reach the end of your rope you tie knot and hang on that's what Paul is talking about here I'm sorry I took so much time here in 1st Corinthians didn't mean to do that let's hurry back quickly to 1st is that clock stopped or is that right is it right okay verse 13 Paul says we do not want you to be informed brethren about those who are asleep some translations render this we do not want you to be ignorant some of you may remember years and years back Claire Miller was one of my co-workers at

[46 : 14] WEC in the early 1960s and his father was a brethren pastor of a church in Dayton and Claire of course was of the brethren denomination and we used to tease him all the time and say you know the Bible says that God doesn't want you to be ignorant brethren and he took a lot of razzing over that but you know what he's saying here what he's saying is look I want to provide something that is going to be a basis of genuine comfort for you this is something you can take to the bank this is something that will sad your heartaches about about those who are asleep and there is that word again it's just a euphemism for death he's not talking about sleeping eight hours of variety at night he's talking about people have died and they are referred to as being asleep and remember when Jesus was informed about Lazarus he said our friend

Lazarus is sleeping and the apostle says oh well that's great if Lazarus is sleeping that's wonderful because everybody knows that a sick body needs sleep as much as anything and then Jesus came back and said no fella you don't understand Lazarus is dead but I go that I may wake him out of his sleep out of his death and of course he had in mind all the time that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead I do not want you to be uninformed about those who are asleep or that you may not grieve as do the rest who have no hope and I cannot resist pointing out this distinction because it's

very important Paul is not saying you are going to learn this and know this so that you won't grieve he's not saying that because you're going to grieve grief is legitimate grief is necessary grief is a consequence of a broken relationship and there's every reason for genuine real grief but the distinction that

Paul is making here is that you grieve not as others who have no hope our grief is real but it's different our grief is grief that will have a good outcome a good end of the story as opposed to those who have no hope for if we believe and this could also be rendered in first class conditional clause since we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus for this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not precede or go before those who have fallen asleep this is exactly a reference to what he just said in first

Corinthians chapter 15 for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up that's the Latin word rapt caught up caught away in the year I guess it was in the 1970s some of you will remember this and some of you are too young maybe to remember but Hal Lindsay wrote a book called The Late Great Planet Earth and it turned out to be the largest greatest selling book of the whole decade of the 1970s sold millions and millions of copies and he had he had one chapter in that book with a unique title to it as you look at the table of contents and of course it related to the rapture and you know what he called it he called it the great snatch that's a pretty good expression the great snatch and it is just as though a giant hand reaches down from heaven and goes just like that and catches away what he grabs in his hand that is similar to what the rapture is going to be this catching away and if you are familiar with the series of books that were done on

Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins did on what was the title that was given left behind series I think they intended to do that cover the whole thing in like two volumes and he ended up with ten volumes and it was all fiction but it was based on it was based literally on the rapture and the idea of left behind it dealt with and pointed to those individuals who were not taken at the rapture but were in fact left behind and they had a picture that they described a picture of it in there of planes crashing and cars crashing and people leaving and here's a little pile of clothes left in an airplane seat where there was a passenger there but the rapture happened and they were gone just like that and their garments were all left behind because nobody went in their clothing they all just they exited their body and their body was changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye and

[52 : 40] I don't know what they were supposed to be wearing then but they were gone absolutely removed and this is what many are looking for even now and we don't have any idea exactly when that's going to be and you know my pat answer is we're closer than anybody has ever been but this is we who are alive and remain shall be caught up raptured together with them that is with those who are coming from the grave in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and this is a distinction between his coming and his second coming his rapture in the rapture he does not come to the earth he comes above the earth and we meet him in the air but in the second coming he comes to the earth physically and he will we know he will be on the Mount of Olives and he will establish his kingdom from that time and then he says in verse 18 therefore in light of all that

I have said comfort one another with these words so while we have every reason and right to grieve we have no right to grieve like others do because we have something they don't have and the difference is incalculable so questions or comments you may have now that the time is all gone I'll ask you if you can and we didn't get into this can you keep this sheet this is what I intended to bring this morning but we didn't get that far so what you can see here is the difference between the rapture passages and the second coming passages and if you've got a sheet that has little marks beside some of I personally do not think those that I have marked there belong to the rapture I think they belong to the second coming and one reason that

I take that position is because the apostle Paul the apostle Paul was the only one that was given information about the rapture none of the other Bible writers were so I really question the legitimacy of these passages and those that are used that I marked with a check they are I think second coming passages not rapture passages and we'll discuss John 14 1 through 3 at the very beginning maybe we can start with that in our next session because Jesus talks about I will go and prepare a place for you I will come again receive you unto myself so that where I am there you may be also so is that for us or was that for them to whom he was speaking that needs to be explored and

I think you'll be surprised at the outcome as we put it together comments or questions yes yeah well that's that's a very good question absent from the body present with the Lord from 2nd Corinthians 5 and my understanding and it certainly is not as thorough as I would like but my understanding of that is that upon the believer's death when Paul when he said when James said in chapter I think it's chapter 4 the body without the spirit is dead and when we die physically we do not die spiritually it is our inner person that is the only part of us that was regenerated when we came to faith in Christ God didn't do anything with or for our body it just remained the same as it was but we were changed on the inside that's regeneration we were made a new creature in Christ on the inside and what Christ provided for when he died he provided redemption for the whole package our body and our spirit which constitutes our soul but that has not all been applied it has been paid for but not applied and it will not be applied until Romans chapter 8 Paul says we earnestly long for for the redemption to wit for the redemption of our body this is Romans 8 and our bodies have not the price has been paid for the redemption of our bodies but it has not been applied it has been applied to our spirit that's what's regenerated and when we die our invisible spirit which is just as real as our physical body but it's immaterial it exits the body and goes to be with the [58 : 29] Lord that's absent from the body present with the Lord and at the time of the rapture as best as I understand this that disembodied spirit which by the way occupies no space and no time which is a pretty weird concept too but that disembodied spirit will be reunited with a glorified body and we will be a whole person in a way that we have never been a whole person before and it will be it will be the same kind of body that Jesus Christ had when he came forth from the grave to be fashioned like unto his glorious body and it is unspeakably glorious other comments or questions yes Kay on the mystery is there many aspects of the mystery oh my yes yes there are many aspects of it in fact we'll be we'll be getting into that on Sunday morning because interestingly enough nobody develops the aspects of the mystery except the one to whom they were given and that was the apostle

Paul and I am confident that none of the other biblical writers write about the rapture for the simple reason they didn't know about it and the reason they didn't know about it was because they weren't supposed to know about it it was not revealed to them it was revealed to Paul and if you want Paul uses the expression in Christ and in the Lord and he uses it like 164 times and nobody else talks like that because that concept that concept was not even available or a reality until the body of Christ was formed the spiritual body of Christ was formed and believers were added to it and we are in Christ and Christ is in us and that is a concept completely foreign prior to the time that Paul came on the scene and it was revealed to him and when he says behold I show you a mystery it was a mystery because it had never been known before the whole concept of the church and if you want the best commentary on that it is Ephesians chapter 3 and Paul talks about the body of Christ consisting of believing Jews and believing Gentiles who have placed their faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord they are members of that body of Christ and Paul says this concept of Jew and Gentile together is never mentioned by the prophets it's not prophesied it's not predicted it's something that God just sprung on them right at the last minute and Ephesians 3 says this whole concept of Jew and Gentile on an equal level equal plane being members of the body of Christ that he says was not made known before it was never revealed it was hidden away in the heart and mind of God and he did not choose to reveal it until Paul came on the scene and God revealed it to him and Paul began preaching it and you know what got him in a lot of trouble and let me tell you it still does it still does justification by faith and faith alone remains a minority position almost entirely absent from Roman Catholics and almost entirely absent from Protestants it is a very small number of Protestants who have really bought into justification by faith and faith alone apart from works and when

Paul preached this in Acts chapter 13 and they arrived at Antioch of Pisidia and Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue and they recognized him as visitors and said if you got anything to say feel free to say it and Paul stood up and delivered this oration that was absolutely magnificent and he said be it known unto you therefore brethren that by this man Jesus of Nazareth you are justified by all things by which you could not be justified by the law of Moses what away with this man and the Jews rose up and they were ready to do him in in fact some of them tried to and you know what the Gentiles did the Gentiles said that's great that's wonderful you mean we can have a connection with God on the basis of believing that

[63 : 46] Christ died for our sins and paid a penalty for our sins and Paul was as much as said yes that's and they were thrilled to death because what was available for the Gentile before Jesus came on the scene and before the cross of Calvary what was available for the Gentile nothing nothing that's why Paul said in Ephesians 1 that you Gentiles want to remind you Gentiles Paul said of your past you were without God without hope in this present world and then he goes on and says but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us wow and that is the gospel and you know something after 2000 years it's still a hard sell because people just cannot buy the idea that justification is by faith by grace alone without work but to him

Paul said in Romans 4 5 but to him that worketh not could it be any plainer but to him that worketh not but believes on him that justifies the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness are you kidding me hey that's why it's called good news that's what makes it good news that's marvelous it is the best good news the world has ever heard and they're still unwilling to believe it many are John we'll have to dismiss yeah okay this marriage supper of the lamb begins right after the rapture and I got a couple of questions how long does that marriage supper last and are the rewards passed out at the marriage supper like the judgment seat the best answer that I can give you I'm sorry to say is I don't know I don't know I have no idea how long the marriage supper is going to last but I'll tell you what I don't think it's going to be over in an evening I think it's going to be extensive it's going to be a celebration the likes of which we cannot imagine and I don't know if it's going to be angels who will be serving us or what I don't know any of the details all I know is going to be a time of great celebration great thanksgiving I wish I had answers to those questions I just don't it would last like a week well a lot of times it did absolutely a lot of times it was extended yeah that's very true and if there's any reason to believe that it's going to be on a Jewish motif I think that's pretty accurate probably because you've got to remember this is still do you realize do you realize that every line of your Bible was written by a Jew people forget that we have an incredible debt of gratitude to the disobedient

Jew because actually it was through their disobedience that Gentiles came into this thing and that's that's the burden of Romans 9 10 and 11 it's great stuff okay well our time is gone it's more than gone but thank you for your kind patience and I promise you next time we'll get into this and I want you to look at the rapture passages and the second coming passages and we'll