

This lesson is a general introduction to the subject of Bible Prophecy, the basis and rationale for it along with key features.

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[0 : 00] Father, once again, we appeal to you for that which we know we lack, the wisdom and expertise that is really necessary to do justice to this word. And we recognize that as finite human beings, we cannot begin to plumb the depths of Scripture that you revealed, but we know that we can get enough to provide the comfort, the information, the insight that is necessary in order to be obedient to what you've revealed.

And we thank you for that. We ask that as we engage this great subject this morning, you will stir our minds and hearts and cause us to be more in love with Jesus Christ and more enthused about the word that you've provided.

We commit this time to you with thanksgiving, as well as the food that we'll be enjoying shortly in Christ's name. Amen. Well, welcome to the world and the subject of eschatology.

Eschatology is nothing more than a fancy name that theologians use to try to impress lay people like you. It is a word from the Greek that simply means a study of last things.

It comes from the Greek word eschatos. And eschatology, you note the O-L-O-G-Y on the end, same thing you'll find on geology and zoology and microbiology and all of those words that end in O-G-Y simply means the study of or a concentration effort toward.

[1 : 25] And in this particular case, it is a study or a concentrated effort toward events of the last days. History is not cyclical in one sense.

I realize that with every generation there's a certain amount of repeat from the previous generation. But we need to appreciate the fact that history, more than being cyclical, is linear.

That means it has a point of beginning and it has a point of culmination or ending. History is going somewhere.

There will be a finality to what has been and is transpiring. Contrary to popular opinion, things are not always going to go on as they are.

Seems that way sometimes. But there is a stopping point. And what I would like to do this morning is simply give you definitions, some introduction to prophetic themes, and a little idea of where we will be going, and then we will map this out throughout the rest of the year.

[2 : 33] My guess is it will probably take us just about every monthly session that we meet to get through this subject, through the end of the year. And by then, we certainly will not have covered the waterfront.

We will not have exhausted the subject. But we will have scratched the surface. And provided enough, I think, that if anybody wants to pursue more on their own, they will be able to do so.

So what I would like to do now is give you some propositions that I've jotted down. Then we'll go to some scriptural references. And I apologize for not having the scriptural sheet that I usually do.

Darrell showed me how to do that on the computer, you know, outline the verses that you get and everything. And I tried to do that. But I got all discombobulated. And I am technologically challenged.

And every time I tried to highlight something, what I just highlighted disappeared. And I couldn't hold it. And it got very frustrating after a while. So I just thought, well, if worse comes to worse, you can just use your Bible.

[3 : 34] But I do have some references that I want to share with you later on. And I'll be distributing a handout that I think you'll find very helpful. Biblical prophecy relates to the predicting of certain events future to the time that they were given or prophesied.

Virtually everyone would like to know what's coming. And one reason is because just in our humanity, we are naturally curious.

We want to know what's going to happen next. So to satisfy an insatiable appetite for curiosity and to be prepared in advance so as to benefit from that knowledge.

We would like to have a leg up as to what's going to happen so that we can position ourselves for that eventuality. And you know, that is really one of the reasons that God has given us biblical prophecy.

I think probably one of the best definitions of it that can be given is that offered. Boy, I've got a morning frog that won't quit. Excuse me.

[4 : 51] In Isaiah chapter 46 and verses 8 through 11, the prophet under inspiration as a spokesperson for God says this.

Jehovah speaking. Remember this and be assured. Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past.

For I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is no one like me. Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done.

Saying, my purpose will be established and I will accomplish all my good pleasure. Calling a bird of prey from the east.

The man of my purpose from a far country. Who might that be? Likely Abraham. Calling a man of my purpose from a far country.

[5 : 57] Truly, I have spoken. Truly, I will bring it to pass. I have planned it. Surely, I will do it.

Prophecy is the sole prerogative of one who is omniscient, knows everything, and is omnipotent, is able to deal with what he knows in order to bring his own will to pass.

That is, he possesses all power. God is wise in that he knows the best course of action to take. He is omnipotent or possesses all power, which means he has the ability to bring to pass what he deems to be wise.

What he has already predetermined. Prophecy infers a plan or a blueprint for the ages that is coherent and certain.

We are moving toward closure. And we ought to note also that prophecy is very subject to abuse and confusion.

We will see the seedbed of some of this confusion, probably not today, but in our next one, as we engage the subject of the interpretation of prophecy.

[7 : 19] Because therein is where the confusion lies. People have a different approach which provides them with different conclusions as to prophetic themes.

And the problem that we have to face is this. Everybody can't be right when people hold two contradicting opinions. They may both be wrong, but they can't both be right.

So, which one is right? Well, the answer is obvious. I am, of course. The other guy is wrong. The only problem is, the other guy is saying, no, Marv is wrong.

I'm right. And the argument goes on back and forth. We all tend to have a bias toward our own point of view. And you need to recognize that. We all have a built-in bias in that we want the Bible to say what we want it to say.

We want it to say what already favors our position. That is a natural inclination that we have in our humanity. And we need to recognize that we have that tendency.

[8 : 30] The person who doesn't recognize that is in bigger trouble than anybody else. So, prophecy is subject to abuse and confusion. It can be used to sensationalize and to blow up something in order to get a crowd.

You can make certain claims. You can get a crowd. I remember years ago, this was an embarrassing situation, a gentleman that I knew way out in the state of Washington, in the little town where Barbara and I were married, he was pastoring a church there.

And he was teaching on the subject of prophecy. And there were probably more people from his own church there because prophecy does tend to draw more of a crowd.

People are more interested in it. But he wasn't satisfied with his own congregation. He wanted to reach out. And there was nothing wrong with that, trying to reach out in the community. So, he came up with this brilliant idea.

And in the local newspaper, there was this big ad that was presented. Come to such and such a church, Sunday night, such and such a date, and see the real, live angel.

[9 : 48] What? What? Well, needless to say, that got people's attention. The whole town was buzzing. Oh, I don't believe that.

There isn't going to be an angel. But he's a preacher. He wouldn't lie, would he? So, as you could expect, there was a huge crowd there that night.

And they were all expecting this pastor to parade an angel out there, probably complete with wings and everything else, you know. But that angel didn't show.

And the only angel there was going to be was the one standing before them as he turned to the book of Revelation and showed them in numerous places where John was instructed to write to the seven churches and to the angel of the church of such and such.

And the angel, of course, was the pastor. And the word angel means, in the Greek, the word angel means messenger. Messenger.

[10 : 59] Well, you didn't know that you were looking at a real, live angel here, did you? Now, that's what I mean by you can use prophetic themes to sensationalize and to abuse.

And my gut feeling is he probably did more harm from a public relations standpoint in the community than what he did good.

Because sometimes our heart can be in the right place, but our mind needs to get kicked in gear too. Prophecy can be a subject of abuse. And it can be used to sensationalize, to draw a crowd, to make outlandish claims and so on.

And that is not the purpose for which God gave it. Not at all. Prophecy can become a source of pride and elitism.

You know the playground mentality. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know something you don't know. Well, adults, Christians, can be capable of that kind of thing.

[12 : 04] And it produces a spiritual smugness because they feel like they are elite or someone special. They have the inside scoop.

They have access to information that nobody else has. And it makes them proud and lifted up. And that too is an abuse of biblical prophecy.

Prophecy, like all of God's word, must be handled with respect, care, and humility. The principle is, unto whom much is given, of him much is required.

And if we are given prophetic information and we are in the scriptures, we are responsible for how it influences and affects our lives and how we live in accordance of it.

There is a practicality to biblical prophecy. And many do not see this. I know many take the position that, and I've heard some say this, evangelicals.

[13 : 11] Oh, I never preach on the book of Revelation. I never preach on that prophecy stuff. It's just too confusing. And it's dramatic and so on. And people get all hyper and excited and upset about it.

And I just stay away from all that prophecy stuff. It's divisive. And you don't know where this is stuff going. You don't know what the symbolism means or anything. So, I just ignore it.

Well, the word of God says in Revelation chapter 1, Blessed is he that reads and heeds the things of this book.

There is a special blessing that is reserved for the student of prophecy. It has an intensely practical benefit to it.

And while you may regard it as sensational, because in a sense it is. Matter of fact, everything in the scriptures is kind of sensational, really. It is a revelation that is not ho-hum, but it is gripping.

[14 : 17] And one of the most practical purposes of biblical prophecy is to warn the unrepentant of the certainty of future accountability and retribution.

He's given fair warning. Advanced warning increases the opportunity to repent and also increases the culpability or the guilt of those who refuse to repent.

God sent his prophets among his people repeatedly, every generation, multiple prophets, with all kinds of accurate, definitive, understandable, intelligible messages.

And more often than not, sometimes they were heeded, but more often than not, they were dismissed. Because the word they heard was not to their liking.

It wasn't information they wanted to hear. And repeatedly, the prophets say, All day long I have stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

[15 : 35] In other words, God is saying through the prophets, I reached out to you all day long. I extended my love and my care and my concern and my offer to you all day long.

And all you did was meet it with rejection and denial. And ultimately, the nation of Israel, as a nation, was set aside in their unbelief because of their rejection and so on.

But here is something that I really want to focus on. And to me, this is by far and away the most priceless, precious thing about biblical prophecy.

Prophecy properly interpreted and proclaimed, while it strikes a sense of fear and foreboding in a non-believer who understands his true condition, at the same time, at the same time, the believer will derive a sense of comfort, calmness, and stability.

Because being rightly related to the giver of prophecy guarantees his well-being and eternal destiny, regardless of what he may suffer in this time preceding eternity.

[16:55] And I want to direct your attention to a couple of very familiar passages. In fact, I just don't think that I can preach a funeral without these passages because of the comfort factor.

People who have lost a loved one need one thing more than they need anything else. And that is comfort, consolation, assurance, hope, stability.

Because when you lose someone who is close to you, emotionally you feel like the rug has just been yanked out from under you. And where do you go from here? What do you lean on?

Where do you go for sustenance, for help, for stability? You go to the Scriptures. You go to the God of all comfort. And here we've got a passage in 1 Corinthians 15.

It's that great resurrection passage. And Paul precedes it with this argument. And it's a tremendous argument. He says in chapter 15 as he opens, Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, and by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you.

[18:12] In other words, if you take the word which I preached to you, to yourself. If you appropriate it. If you receive it. If you take it. If you hold it to yourself.

Unless you believed in vain. What does that mean? Unless you believed to no end, or to no account, or unless your belief was empty.

How could one's belief be empty? Well, he goes on to develop the theme. And his conclusion is this. Let me tell you something.

You believers there at Corinth, all you believers here, in this room, your faith is empty, worthless, vain, for nothing, if Christ be not risen.

You have put your faith in a bubble that is going to burst and let you down. There is nothing there. And that's true. If Christ be not risen, your faith is empty.

[19:33] It's worthless. And then he goes on to present this powerful, stirring argument. The evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

And he demonstrates that their faith is not in vain. But he presents that as a hypothetical situation. You believed in vain if Christ isn't raised from the dead.

And I want to share this with you because this is just wonderful. Behold, verse 51, I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep. That's a euphemism for die physically.

We shall not all die physically. But we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

And listen, listen, this is all prophecy. It was prophecy when he wrote it.

It's still prophecy. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable.

[20:36] And we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable. And this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then, not now, but then, when those things happen, then, will come about the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

And this is all future. Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now listen to this conclusion. This is, this grips my heart every time I read it. It is so good to me all over again even though I know what it's going to say.

Therefore, this is why I say, this is my conclusion, my beloved brethren, and by the way, this information is only for the brethren.

Not for unbelievers. Unbelievers cannot tap into this. This is only for those of the household of faith.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing, not thinking, hoping, or suspecting, but knowing that your toil is not in vain in the

Lord.

[22 : 22] And this word, in vain here, is the same as the word used earlier. Your faith is vain if Christ be not risen. Your toil is not empty. It is not worthless. It counts for something.

God is taking note of it. Hang in there. Be steadfast. You see the encouragement that is born out of that resurrection? And this is all prophecy. You can be steadfast and hang in there and keep on keeping on because you have an absolute guarantee that in the final analysis it will have proved to be worth it.

And then the other is equally comforting and it's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, a very familiar passage that speaks of the rapture of the church. And it starts in verse 13, We do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep or those who have died and gone on before, that you may not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

And who are the rest? They are unbelievers. They are not connected to the source of comfort. So, when calamity strikes them, they are devastated.

They have no anchor. They have no stability. They just come apart because there is nothing to hold them together. You may not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

[23 : 48] For if 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 is priceless. Paul isn't saying, well now, in my opinion, Paul, as an inspired apostle, as John and Peter and Andrew and Moses and so on, whoever was writing the word of God, wrote with the authority of God Himself.

This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord. Well, He hasn't come yet. No, that's why it's prophecy.

We shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

This is all prophecy, prophecy, prophecy. It has not occurred, of course. Then, we who are alive and remain shall be caught up.

[25 : 07] And I pointed out before that this word caught up is in the Latin, the Latin Vulgate, which Jerome translated in the fourth century.

It is the word raptō, R-A-P-T-O. And it's the word from which we get the English word rapture. It means the snatching, the grabbing.

Envision, if you will, a giant hand reaching down from heaven and sweeping up that which it's capturing. And that will be the body of Christ.

All believers. We shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.

Now, what's his conclusion to that? Verse 18. Here it is. Therefore, this is why I say comfort one another with these words.

[26 : 11] That's the basis for comfort, for solace, for stability, for hope, for assurance. It is rooted in God himself who cannot lie.

And it is a precious, precious promise that we have. While we're here in the neighborhood, I'd like you to look at 2 Thessalonians over a page in chapter 2.

These Thessalonian epistles are just reeking with prophetic themes. The apostle says, Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed, upset, uptight, either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

And Paul is giving them prophetic insight here because there is good reason to believe that a spurious letter had been circulated under Paul's signature and that these Thessalonians had received this letter.

It was not from Paul at all that it had Paul's name signed to it. And the letter said, in essence, that the rapture had already occurred, already taken place.

[27 : 44] You didn't go, you missed it. Maybe you don't belong to the body of Christ. Maybe God has something against you, you didn't go.

And Paul said, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by spirit or message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

Let no one in any way deceive you. And then he goes on to give them the earmarks and what they need to know in regard to that. And then one other thing, let's consider Titus if we may, because an appreciation of prophetic information not only provides comfort and security and stability, but in Titus chapter 2 it promotes a personal purity of life.

Having a handle on prophetic themes should affect the way you live today. It should impact your value system.

It should help you in the ordering of your priorities and understanding what really is important. And here in Titus chapter 2 beginning with verse 11 for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires that is today in this present world deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly righteously and godly in the present age that is today looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself a people for his own possession zealous for good works these things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority let no one disregard you this is just this is so critical if what we understand in scripture not only prophecy but the whole of scripture doesn't impact our life if it doesn't make a difference in the way we live in the values we adopt the standards we set then the word of God has no practical value but it is intensely practical and prophecy prophecy provides a dose of practicality that is undeniable and for people who say things like well prophecy is just so much sensational stuff and what's going to come and all the rest that's nonsense understanding having a handle on biblical prophecy will affect your quality of life the way you live the way you see life the way you see the future the way you see everything and it is incredibly important now if you will look please to

[31 : 19] Revelation chapter 19 this is perhaps the most important aspect of prophecy that we can consider and it is just very very powerful Revelation chapter 19 and if you will look at well we'll just have to jump in here with verse 9 and he said to me write blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb and he said to me this is an angel speaking to John who is writing this and the angel said to me these are the true words of God and this just has to be an incredible scene that is being described here in Revelation 19 and I won't take the time to go into it but I want you to see the effect that it had upon John and John says in verse 10 and I fell at his feet to worship him this is the angel

John is so overcome with the awe the mystery the splendor of what he is experiencing he just falls down on his knees to worship this one before him and he said to me do not do that for I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy what does that mean just what it says it means the story the content the information about Jesus Christ is what prophecy is all about he is the heartbeat of it he is the core of it he is the focus of it he is the center of it he is the beginning of it he is the end of it he is everything that prophecy is all about it all centers on the person and work of Jesus

Christ his pre-existence his first coming his second coming everything about him it is Christ Christ Christ if that if that principle and that objective is not the focal point of all the teaching you receive on biblical prophecy they've missed the point he is what it's all about the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy and apart from him nothing else matters I want you to look also if you would please at Luke chapter 24 very familiar passage just happens to be one of my very favorite passages in all of scripture it is the Lord's confrontation of the disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection and he is talking to a couple of disciples they do not know that it is our Lord and it is just one of the most heartwarming stories in all of scripture and I would just like to focus on beginning with verse 25 Jesus said to them oh foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory yes it was they didn't see that they didn't understand that until after the fact wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory great difficulty in Jewish thinking in the time of our Lord is they did not make a distinction between the first coming of Christ to be born as a babe in Bethlehem and the second coming of Christ to come in power and glory scripture clearly foretells both comings and you need to understand this because this is really really important the first coming of Christ being born as a babe in Bethlehem is mentioned numerous times in the Old

Testament Micah 5 2 and Isaiah 9 6 and Isaiah 7 14 and Psalms and all it's just all throughout there but listen the number of times that the second coming of Christ is referred to in prophecy eight

times greater than the first coming which one do you think the Jews focused on you're right the second coming they completely overlooked the first one Messiah our Messiah born in Bethlehem in a stable and he's from Nazareth Galilee of the Gentiles you've got to be kidding could any good thing come out of Nazareth and Jesus said the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner remember that the stones that were being placed in the temple they had to be cut to a precise dimension and size not on the site not on the site but at the quarry they had to be cut in advance and then they would bring the stone up and the foreman would look at the stone and measure it and go over it and make sure that it was the right size right stone to be put in the right place and if it was they would go ahead and put the stone in place if it wasn't they'd reject it this isn't the right stone for the right place send it back to the quarry have them rework it

[37 : 44] Jesus Christ depicted himself as the building stone which the builders rejected they looked at this building stone this reported Messiah and they said he doesn't fit our qualifications and they rejected him and the same has become the head of the corner well we do not now see him enthroned in glory coming in power and splendor and all the rest and every eye shall see him and that eastern sky will split and forth will come that son of man in triumph and great glory that's never happened but that is what the Jews expected that's what they look for a manger a stable a peasant girl Mary

Joseph nah can't be they rejected him but they focused on the regal power authority pomp all the rest you know why they were an oppressed people Rome was there when this glorious messiah comes first thing he's going to do is chase all the romans into the mediterranean sea and establish his throne and it's going to be wonderful well Jesus didn't do that in his first coming but let me tell you something he's going to do it in the next one the point has been made that he is coming again and this time he will not be in a good mood this time it's going to be radically different but that's the one they focused on and here in Luke chapter 24 he qualifies that and he says was it not necessary verse 26 for the messiah to suffer these things and to enter into his glory yes it was but they didn't see that they saw the only thing that's necessary was for the messiah to enter into his glory what's all this about a suffering messiah you know when jesus christ was on that cross the establishment of israel who had rejected him who were instrumental in putting him on that cross and using the romans to do it when they saw jesus of nazareth on that cross they were more convinced than ever that he was not the messiah because the messiah is going to be sent from god you think god would let that happen to his messiah that proves he's not the son of god that proves he's not the messiah of course they had no inclination about the resurrection three days later and some of the same ones denied that so that he should suffer these things and enter into you see the jews wanted the jews wanted the crown for the messiah without the cross and you know we want the same thing we want the benefits the good stuff the glory but we don't want to pay any negative painful price to get there we just want to skip all that stuff and go right to the good stuff don't we that's human nature that's the way we all think and that's the way israel thought too the messiah has to suffer these things and look at verse 27 this is in crow and jesus beginning with moses first five books and with all the prophets he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures wow he he could look at that passage in deuteronomy where the lord will raise up a prophet like unto moses and jesus said that's me he could talk about the root the stem out of jesse that's me could talk about a virgin shall conceive and bear a child that's me you call his name emmanuel which is god with me god with it that's me and his name shall be called wonderful counselor the mighty god the everlasting father the prince of peace that's me but thou bethlehem effort though thou be little among the thousands of duty yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me who is to be ruler in Israel who is going forth of them from ever last that's me and these two disciples on the road are going wow wow wow wow you know what it all fits it all comes together what Jesus Christ did for those disciples was he took them to the scriptures the only scriptures that existed then the Old Testament and he connected all the dots for them and it was a major wow and he disappears from their midst and you know what they say one to another after he's gone did not our hearts burn within us as he opened the scriptures to us along the way wow do these guys ever have something to tell their grandkids oh man this is just incredible and what do you think it did for them why put a spring in their step they were walking on their morale it was so low they were down in the dumps and now he's alive and he's coming again completely revolutionized their life and it's a precious and priceless thing

I'm going to conclude this now and I want to open it for we've got a few minutes about ten minutes left and I want to open it for any Q&A; that you may have or any comments that you'd like to offer and I'd appreciate that very much so Darrell verse 27 was nothing new to them they knew all this before okay they just hadn't put it together you and I all of us we all know a lot of things that we're not able to put together at this point in time we have dots that need connected and the more dots that you are able to connect the more dots you are able to connect the more you learn and understand the more you have to learn and understand with and that's why study is so important good point someone else comment or question anyone

John that's right yeah and and and and they this is in part due to blindness happening unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in Romans 9 10 and 11 that we've been studying in the Thursday morning thing and it is a judicial blindness they're being set aside like that and the time is coming the time is coming when Israel they will look upon him whom they pierced Zechariah tells us chapter 12 I think it is and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son Israel is a nation will come to repentance and to faith in

[45 : 54] Jesus as their Messiah and it will result in their deliverance and their salvation from the grips of the Antichrist when they are on the verge of annihilation Kim Jews today well Jews today are very diverse and it has well been said that they don't agree on much wherever you get three Jews together you've got at least four or five opinions and that's typical of Judaism today there there is a branch of Jew referred to as the Orthodox and they observe they observe a kosher kitchen they observe the Sabbath and they have the Sabbath meal and the Passover and everything and the faithful go to temple every Friday night and they participate in those things but they are a tiny minority of the Jew today most Jews today are referred to as reformed

Jews and that's really just another word for liberal most of them are very liberal most of them do not even go to the synagogue because if you go to the synagogue if you participate in the synagogue you have to pay dues there are fees that you have to pay and many of them go only to get their bar mitzvah or if it's a girl bat mitzvah and they're really not into practicing let me put it this way in Israel today the modern state of Israel only about 12% of the population is orthodox the vast majority of them will tell you if they ask you they'll even make it a point to tell you if you're discussing it with them on the street or as a tourist and you strike up a conversation with them the vast majority of them will tell you this I'm not a religious Jew which means I don't practice Judaism I am a Jew because of my ancestry and my biology but I do not subscribe to the Old Testament I don't believe it I don't buy it and so on a great many of them are even atheists really Israel is a very secular state many people think that Israel is a very religious state because it's Jewish it isn't at all it is a very secular state with a very small religious influence someone else with a comment or question yes go ahead where is the confusion a lot of people feel like there's only the two comings and yet there is the rapture some people believe that the rapture is not really the coming because the last coming is when Jesus comes after well there is a very important and valid distinction that needs to be made between the rapture and the second coming some refer to the rapture as being a part of the second coming or the first stage of the second coming but

I personally I tend to think of it in terms of it being a different thing altogether because the scriptures I think make it quite clear that in connection with the rapture he does not come to the earth he comes above the earth and the dead in Christ shall be raised and we who are alive will be caught up together with them in the air and meet the Lord in the air that's the rapture the second coming and by the way that is only for those who are in the body of Christ that's only for believers I don't know what nonbelievers will experience at that time I do not know how we are going to be caught up I don't know if that's going to be a physical thing I do know we're going to be changed in the twinkling of an eye just quicker than you can think anything the change will occur if that means we are going to be transferred into a glorified body which it seems to infer then that will be a different existence from what we now know but the second coming revelation makes it clear and Matthew 24 and 25 makes it clear in the Olivet discourse that when he comes the second time he comes to the earth and his feet touch on the Mount of Olives and every eye will see him it will be very very visible and incredibly dramatic will be accompanied with the Shekinah glory and at this time I do not know this for certain but it seems to be the case at this time the earth will be enveloped in darkness it will be during the time when the sun will not give its light there are numerous reasons why that can happen one might have to do with earthquake activity volcanic activity the ash that will cover the earth at that time and literally blot out everything but the Shekinah glory that will

accompany Christ will be so stunning and so dazzling it will cut through everything and there will be no mistaking who he is or why he is coming it will be utterly dramatic and this of course we will be looking at later on in our subject of prophecy but what I want to do what I want to inform you about next week is we are going to delve into the areas where the greatest controversies surround the subject of

[51 : 52] Bible prophecy and that is how do we go about interpreting prophecy and what makes us think that this is the right way I mean others who disagree with us think they've got the right way too so you'll have to evaluate that for yourself and we'll try to play the devil's advocate and give a fair representation to the other side as well so thank you thank you for your kind attention I appreciate it very much