

Prophecies Regarding The End Times

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, let's have a word of prayer. We're grateful, Father, for this opportunity provided so that we can focus upon what you've been pleased to reveal. We pray for a spirit of understanding and appreciation of the subject matter.

We recognize its great importance because you've placed so much importance upon it, as indicated in the very first chapter of the book of the Revelation. And we're here this morning that we might know of you and what you've provided for us.

Not to satisfy our curiosity, but so that we will know what we are to be and to do in light of it. And we are grateful for the information that you've provided.

Enable us to make the most of it, whatever spirit you have called us in which to operate. We ask it in Christ's name and for his sake. Amen. Safe to say that everybody is interested in the future.

Everybody wants to know what's going to happen next and when is it going to happen. It is just a natural thing that is part of our humanity to have a curiosity regarding the future.

[1 : 1 1] And God does not want to leave us in the dark regarding the future. And that's why approximately 20 to 25 percent of the entire Bible is devoted to events that were yet to transpire at the time they were written.

And this will become apparent for anyone who is a serious student of the Bible because you will encounter things that had not yet transpired at the time they were being written.

And of course, when you come to the revelation, depending on the school of interpretation you embrace, you will see much of that either as future, as we do as futurists, or you will see much of the revelation as past, already having been fulfilled, as is the preterist position.

And we will define those as we go along. First of all, if you will recall from the last time I think we got together and talked about this subject, we related to you the word prophecy.

Prophecy is actually a noun as a person, place, or thing, and it is a thing or a concept.

[2 : 3 5] So prophecy spelled this way is a noun. But prophesy is a verb.

And to prophesy literally means to speak forth or to tell forth, or a pretty adequate equivalent is to preach or to proclaim.

That is what it means also to prophesy. And while prophecy relates to something yet unfulfilled, prophesy may not have anything to do in particular with the future.

It may be addressing present situations, describing them, and sometimes contain an element of prophecy in the sense that this is what I am telling you, and this is what you had better do about it, and if you don't, this is what is going to follow.

Then that would be a prophecy and prophesying at one and the same time. As you go through the Old Testament prophets, you find a great many of them, in fact just about all of them, take this tack.

[3 : 40] And the idea is they deliver a message. It is a message of impending judgment or doom. That is always conditioned by, however, if you will repent of your sin, God will forgive and restore.

If you will not, then these are the consequences you are going to suffer. And that's where the prophecy comes in. It is prophesying in response to a refusal to repent.

And this is a theme all throughout the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. God's silver bullet is repentance.

There isn't anything that cannot be corrected or forgiven if repentance is in place. And repentance involves acknowledging you are wrong about something, whatever it is.

And then doing an about face and embracing the right. The word in the Greek is metanoia, and it means through the mind. It is a process whereby you engage content or information that reveals to you that your present position is wrong.

[5 : 03] And you come to an understanding of it being wrong. You are willing to reverse yourself and embrace that which is right. This happens every time without fail when someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ.

It's always this formula. Never varies. There is no forgiveness. There is no salvation without repentance. And repentance cannot be dispensed with.

But it isn't limited to salvation. It covers the whole spectrum of our being. Because we can be wrong about a whole lot of things. So repentance is something that you never outgrow your need for.

And don't connect it with salvation alone. Anytime you change your mind about anything means you recognize that you were wrong and you're going to go with the right way.

But the right way, why should you change your mind? Because of information. And when we proclaim the gospel, for instance, all we are doing is giving people information and a reason why they should change their mind.

[6 : 10] So this is something, as I mentioned, you never outgrow your need for this. Because Christians need to repent just as much as unbelievers. Because as we go through life and as we encounter situations, as we have experiences, it turns out that we are proven to be wrong about a whole lot of things.

Some of them are very serious. And some of them aren't very serious at all. I was going to buy a new Ford until I saw the new Chevys. And then when I did, I repented of my earlier position.

All that means is I changed my mind. And I'm going to buy this car instead of that car. Now that's got nothing to do with sin. But it expresses the meaning of the word. And essentially, that's all it means.

That's all it means. We have given it a religious connotation because that's the way it's generally used. So people associate repentance with something religious. Illustration I've given you before.

And people, sad to say, even too many Christians don't take the term or the concept all that seriously. And probably the most familiarity that the average person has about the subject of repentance.

[7 : 19] Remember the little cartoon guy I told you about? That nerdy little guy wearing the white gown. And he's got a placard. He's got a sign that he's carrying around. He stands on the street corner and the sign says, Repent.

The end is near. And we look upon someone like that as having a real element of kookiness to him. And that's the way most people associate the term repentance.

But let me tell you something. It's one of the very most serious, profound concepts that is set forth in the word of God. And no one can come to faith in Christ without repentance.

Because you have to change your mind from whatever position you embraced before that will allow you to reverse yourself and embrace Christ. So, the subject of repentance and prophecy and prophesying all goes together.

First instance we have of the preaching of repentance was Noah. Way back in early chapters of Genesis. And he preached for some 120 years.

[8 : 30] Didn't succeed in winning any converts at all except his immediate family. And the girls that his sons married. So, it contains usually a message of warning and a calling to repentance.

Includes a prediction of judgment if repentance is not forthcoming. Remember when Jonah went to Nineveh. It was repent. Because the Lord is going to destroy this place.

Yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And the people reversed themselves. And God reversed his decision of destroying them. It also contains a promise of blessing and forgiveness if repentance is in place.

You know, it is incredible what God is willing to forgive. Just amazing. It's called amazing grace.

What God is willing to forgive if repentance is in place. Prophets. Prophets. Prophets were appreciated and honored by the righteous.

[9 : 43] Prophets were ridiculed and vilified by the unrighteous. The unrighteous. Now, I want you to think about this not only biblically.

But in terms of today where we are living right now. The unrighteous always constituted the majority. And usually included and were led by government establishments.

Has anything changed? Not really. As I've been telling you for the last couple of years. The screws are tightening on the Christian community throughout this country.

There is not and has never been a population entity comprised mostly of righteous people.

Due simply to the pervasiveness of sin and the human sin nature. This means that prophets of old and of the present have always been perimeter people, not popular people.

[10 : 59] Described as a voice crying in the wilderness. Described as a voice crying in the wilderness.

In fact, one of the most striking things that we will see when we get into the revelation. Is that in connection with the seven seal judgments. And the seven trumpet judgments.

And the seven bowl judgments that follow. Each one presents a new opportunity for mankind on planet earth to repent.

And the phrase that is used repeatedly is, and for all this, men refused to repent.

They refused to acknowledge their sin. They refused to accept the judgment that was upon them. So, that's nothing unusual.

[12 : 18] Let's go first of all to Matthew chapter 23. If we may. Matthew chapter 23. I want you to get fixed in mind a real flavor for this occupation of being a prophet.

It was in some respects a very thankless task, despite the fact that it was a very, very important one. Matthew's gospel chapter 3. And let's just jump in here with verse 29, if we may.

Matthew 23 and verse 29. Christ is speaking. This is right before. He begins his Olivet Discourse.

Right before he enters into the city of Jerusalem for the last time. And in verse 29, Christ says, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees.

And these really represented the establishment. These were officialdom of Israel. For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous.

[13 : 34] And you say, if we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.

A little bit of self-righteousness here that Christ is putting his finger on. Consequently, you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

And when the scriptures use the term sons, as in the sense of offspring, it connotes in the Hebrew mind of the son being like the father.

And it means that you are identified with your paternity. Now, we recognize that that is not always the case.

But very often it is. Because sons tend to replicate the attitudes and actions of their fathers. There are exceptions, happily so. But by and large, that's the way it is.

[14 : 41] In fact, from the time Junior is about that high, what he wants to be more than anything else is just like his dad. You know, that's the way it is. And when the scriptures use the son of, it means you're just like them.

And when John and James are referred to as sons of thunder, they were men of action and could be prone to violence. And that's why they are designated. When Barnabas is called the son of consolation, that means he was always ready to put his arm around somebody and give them some encouragement.

And when Jesus called this crowd, sons of vipers, guess what that means? You're just like the snakes, as it were, from which you came.

So, fill up the measure, verse 32, of the guilt of your fathers. In other words, what Jesus is saying is, go ahead and finish what your father started.

And he's saying it in a sarcastic kind of way. Because this is exactly what they are going to do. And he's going to be on the receiving end of that kind of treatment that their fathers perpetrated upon their ancestors.

[15 : 55] You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? This is, I would remind you, the meek and mild and gentle Jesus talking here.

Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify.

And some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city. That upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth.

From the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who were sent to her. And why were prophets ever sent to them?

[17 : 01] By God. Simply as an act of the grace of God, giving his people adequate warning about their sin and what they needed to do about it.

And of course, they turned a deaf ear to it. Now let me ask you a question. What does our culture do today in the Western world, and for that matter, the rest of the world as well, when and if anyone comes on the scene, whether it's a Billy Graham or Ravi Zacharias or whatnot, and speaks out publicly about sin and righteousness and judgment, it's all poo-pooed, dismissed, vilified.

Religious fanatics, that's what they are. So nothing has changed. This is just a picture of humanity. This is the way we are. And it is against this kind of backdrop that God raises up people called prophets to give warning.

And those who heed the warning and turn from their wicked way, of course, are spared. Those who do not have their culpability added to. Because with each additional warning comes additional accountability and culpability.

Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

[18 : 36] Here is a play on human volition where the will of the individuals are involved. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate.

And the house, of course, he's speaking of has reference to the temple and to the throne and the... What's the word I'm looking for?

The throne and the... Well, the whole royal picture of the house of David is being left empty. And this is because who is the last one in the line of the house of David?

Jesus of Nazareth. And he's going to be leaving by way of the cross and the ascension. And this is why the house of Israel is left desolate.

And truly, I say to you from now on, you shall not see me talking about his departure until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

[19 : 37] You know, Israel, 2,000 years later, has never yet said, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Time is coming, of course, when they will. So, there has always been a negative price to be paid by those who declare the message of God.

And the reason is simple. is because God is holy and man is not. So, when a message is proclaimed that reveals the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man, what do you do?

You have a conflict. You've got man and God at loggerheads. There is an impasse. And somebody's got to give. And it isn't going to be the deity.

So, this is why when spiritual truth is revealed, it is often met with a turned up nose and discounted and denied and ridiculed and all the rest because man does not want to come to the light lest his evil deeds be reproved.

[20 : 52] John chapter 1. So, I'd like you to turn before we get into this further to Jeremiah chapter 20 and let me show you the mixed feelings and the dilemma of the for-profit back in Jeremiah's day.

And I guess at least probably some preachers feel pretty much the same way as Jeremiah did. You know, Jeremiah felt in some respects I think Jeremiah who's frequently referred to as the weeping prophet I think in some respects he felt very privileged to be used of God and yet I cannot escape the attitude that Jeremiah somewhat in his heart of hearts resented God calling him to do what he did.

And he reflects that I think in this passage. Let us read it if we may. I'm in Jeremiah chapter 20 and I'm going to begin with well let's start with verse 3.

It came about on the next day when Pashor released Jeremiah from the stocks. And why was he in the stocks? Simply because he insisted on relating what God had told him to relate and the people didn't appreciate it.

Somebody said need to shut that guy up take him out of circulation. And of course they had him in the stocks and Jeremiah said Pashor Pashor is not the name the Lord has called you but rather Magor Mishabib for thus says the Lord behold I am going to make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends and while your eyes look on they will fall by the sword of their enemies so I shall give over all Judah to the hand of the king of Babylon.

[22 : 58] You think that was a popular message? When Jeremiah preached this they accused him of being a traitor of being a sympathizer with the enemy of trying to demoralize the people so that they would cave in to the Babylonians rather than resist them.

And he paid a very dear price. I shall give over well verse 4 I'm going to make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends and while your eyes look on they will fall by the sword of their enemies so I shall give over all Judah to the hand of the king of Babylon and he will carry them away as exiles to Babylon and will slay them with the sword I shall also give over all the wealth of the city all its produce and all its costly things even all the treasures of the kings of Judah I shall give over to the hand of their enemies and they will plunder them take them away and bring them to Babylon.

you know all of those exquisite things that your artisans have crafted and that those before you constructed when they were in the land of the wilderness before they even came to Egypt the ark of the covenant the golden candelabra the lampstand the table of showbread all of those intricate exquisite works of your craftsmanship they're all gone Babylonians are going to load them up and carry them off to Babylon what do you think of that how well received do you think that message was and yet this is exactly what's going to happen but nobody believed it when Jeremiah was preaching it and by the way one of the most intriguing things about the ministry of Jeremiah before he ever delivered his first message God told Jeremiah what he wanted him to say and then he added something to it which went something like this oh by the way Jeremiah something else you need to know people aren't going to believe a word you say well good grief how's that for a downer thanks a lot

God why am I doing this what's the point what are you sending me here to proclaim this stuff for if they're not going to pay any attention to it and we know it's so that a record would be established and so that their guilt would be compounded and magnified because they are sinning against a clearly revealed knowledge wow and you pastor and all who live in your house will go into captivity and you will enter Babylon and by the way you'll enter Babylon on foot you're going to walk all the way and there you will die and there you will be buried you and all your friends to whom you have look at this falsely prophesied there's certainly nothing wrong with preaching good news but when the good news is not true it's deadly and that's what pastor did pastor delivered a message of hope of encouragement but there wasn't a word of truth in it and the only one who had any truth to offer was this negative guy by the name of Jeremiah and who wants to listen to that and now

Jeremiah is going to take his complaint about this whole thing to the Lord because he feels he's in a losing proposition and look at what he says in verse 7 oh Lord thou hast deceived me and I was deceived it's as if he's saying I'm being led on in this you're using me well truth be told God was using Jeremiah and he's always pleased to use human instruments not because he has to but because he chooses to and Jeremiah has got an element of complaint here he's saying you set me up for this you set me up for failure and he's kind of resentful he says you have overcome me and prevailed I have become a laughing stock all day long is there anybody that wants to be laughed at and made fun of made the butt of jokes I don't know they probably didn't have political cartoonists in Jeremiah's day but if Jeremiah had a ministry today can you imagine what the political cartoonists would do with it how they would portray that ridicule butt of jokes make fun of insult all the rest of it

[28 : 02] I become a laughing stock all day long everyone mocks me well I think he was exaggerating it you know preachers tend to exaggerate a little bit I don't think everyone mocked him but that's the way it felt to him I think he was probably coming from the position that I don't think anybody's listening to me I don't think anybody's paying any attention everybody is mocking me each time I speak I cry aloud I proclaim violence and destruction because for me the word of the Lord has resulted in reproach and derision all day long and frankly I'm tempted to hand in my resignation my message is not appreciated you set me up for this and I don't like it I'm the butt of jokes they're just ridiculing me making fun I get tired of this did he have a beef yeah I think he did speaking from our humanity he had a beef but you know what being a prophet could be hazardous to your health and it has always been that way nothing has changed

I love the rationale that follows but if I say I will not remember him or speak any more in his name he's doing a little reminiscence here and he's saying to himself you know what I just I want to quit I want to throw in the towel and say okay you don't want to believe my message go ahead and go to hell I'm not going to serve you anymore I quit and there are times when probably every prophet has felt like doing that felt unappreciated and unbelievably it's difficult for me to imagine but I have been assured of this from numerous things that I have read over the years that one of the most fitful things that Charles

Haddon Spurgeon ever had to contend with with deep bouts of depression and the man suffered from a severe case of gout later in life that'd be enough of depression right there wouldn't it anybody who's experienced that hard to imagine but Spurgeon used to resign every Monday morning to this is Spurgeon and yet he would be back in the pulpit again the next Lord's Day here is a man who succeeded in writing and publishing 3,000 sermons that are still in print today and when Spurgeon was in his prime at the Metropolitan Tabernacle the text of his sermon was found beginning on the front page of the

London Times on the next day wow imagine that why in the world would a man like that ever suffer from depression but we had on good authority that he did call it the Jeremiah complex if you want so if I say I will not remember him or speak any more in his name look at this look at this then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary of holding it in and I cannot endure it for I have heard the whispering of many terror on every side denounce him yes let us denounce him all my trusted friends watching for my fall say perhaps and he these trusted friends there aren't in the text here but I would suggest that you put quotation marks around the trusted friends these are like the friends of Job you know the trusted friends watching for my fall say perhaps he will be deceived so that we may prevail against him and take our revenge on him but the

Lord is with me like a dread champion therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail they will be utterly ashamed because they have failed with an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten I think it was Nate Saint one of the five martyred missionaries with the Alcas back in the 1950s who said he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose and that's where Jeremiah is coming from I've had it up to here with this business and I quit you'll have my resignation on your desk Monday morning Lord count me out I'm no longer your boy and then as he sat and thought in solitude of his decision and his calling and the power of God and what he's supposed to be doing the truth of the word of God just wells up within him and it all comes back again and he's saying

[33 : 50] I just can't quit I've got to keep on keeping on I can't go silent I've got to proclaim this so here is a prophet with those mixed feelings and his humanity is all up in arms and this is just being human this is the same stuff that every preacher is made of and any preacher that tells you he doesn't know anything about this is lying to you and he may be lying to himself as well so the essential message of prophecy Old and New Testament is that of forthcoming divine judgment for sin that can be averted only by man's repentance by acknowledging his sin and turning to God for his grace and forgiveness in the Old Testament the principal target for the prophets judgment and message was the nation of Israel this was because of their privileged position as the chosen people of

God Israel bore more responsibility because of the abundant revelation God had made known to them as the chosen people after Israel's setting aside and subsequent dispersion as God promised because of their unbelief it is now the Gentile nations that are the target of the prophetic ministry this in which we are living today which we are a part is referred to in scripture as the times of the Gentiles this simply means that the Jewish nation of Israel is no longer front and center God is not principally operating through Israel as he did in the Old Testament times this is the day and age of the Gentiles it's also the day of the church the day of the dispensation of grace so the movement is from the old to the new but the message remains the same the key of which is of course repentance so this is the time of the

Gentiles and the forthcoming judgment is not now upon Israel it's upon all nations including the U.S.

of A. and this is the unmistakable venue of the book of Revelation in the Revelation the focus is upon three different sets of judgment we'll see each of these in detail and by the way memory serves me correctly we spent I think we spent 60 65 hours verse by verse in the book of Revelation back in the 1970s 80s maybe 1980s and they are still available as far as I know but that was an extensive examination and we are overdue for another so the three different sets of judgment consists of the seven seals the seven trumpets the seven bowls filled with the wrath of God Almighty humanity and with each successive period of devastating judgment humanity that will be described in the book of

Revelation as those that dwell upon the earth that's a description that is given repeatedly and it has reference to the concept and the idea that earth is their permanent home it's all they have it's all they want it's all they know they are earthbound as opposed to believers who of course with our citizenship in heaven and with each successive period of devastating judgment upon those who dwell on the earth they will be looked to for their repentance but it will not be forthcoming and the next wave of judgment will be released and the most devastating one of all is the final in the seven bowls and those judgments are called the pouring out of the wrath of God and humanity and the earth has never seen anything like this this is

[38 : 30] God doing his utmost and it is graphically described which we'll be considering later how all of this is to be understood is of course paramount to our investigation just how do we go about understanding these prophecies and are they in fact even future this leads us to at least briefly explore the other approaches to interpreting prophecy besides our own and why should we do this someone might say well why do we even care about what other people believe about prophecy if we believe them to be an error why are we going to spend any time studying what we believe to be wrong why don't we just focus upon what we believe and forget about the error that is in the camps of others well for a number of reasons first of all those who hold to different positions and different interpretations of prophecy than we do are for the most part true believers as we are and out of respect for fellow believers we owe them cordiality and honest consideration of their conclusions even though we disagree with them and secondly we need to be able to tell those with whom we disagree as well as ourselves that we are aware of their position and their conclusions and that we have given them thoughtful consideration and three we cannot be fortified in our position and conclusions if we do not know there are others who disagree with us and understand the reasons for their conclusions to have to admit that we have never even heard of preterists or historicists or idealists in interpreting prophecy does not strengthen our position but reveals its inadequacies so we not only need to know what we believe and why we believe it we ought to know at least something about what others believe who disagree with us and why they believe it so that you will never be in a position encountered by one of those who tells you something and you have to scratch your head and say never heard of that before well we need to have heard about so that's what we are going to do and for it is not enough to be able to know what we believe but we must also know why we believe it rather than a myriad of other beliefs out there these differences in positions and conclusions reached are focused primarily upon the interpretation of the book of the revelation is not limited to the book of revelation but includes the whole of prophetic content in the

Old and New Testaments nevertheless it is the revelation that provides the basis for the majority of differences one's position regarding the position the reality and duration as well as the millennium and the eternal state are all arrived at depending upon the school of interpretation one embraces even even even so with each school embraced it has areas of cloudiness and fuzziness and each has their hard liners and moderates regarding the extent to which they adhere to a particular method of interpretation and suffice it to say that people who hold differing views from ours as regards the interpretation of end time events are not bad people they are people who for the most part of course there are always some unbelievers mingled in but for the most part those who care enough to even make a study of this despite the fact that they reach different conclusions than we have usually have a relationship with the

Lord and they love the Lord just as much as we do most of them have been reared in communities and denominational backgrounds where they grew up believing what that particular denomination or community taught regarding those things and they just kind of morphed right into it and continued the beat which is a very understandable thing I'm sure there are people who embrace our position also not because they have really examined it critically and come to the conclusion that it's true but they believe it because that's the way I was raised and that's what my church taught and my church couldn't be wrong but we all know that's not necessarily true so however one interprets the subject of prophecy in general and the book of revelation in particular is limited to four possibilities and these you might make note of the first one and it is probably the majority opinion is called the preterist and probably the single word that would most typically characterize that is this the past the preterist has to do with pre before the preterist view and as I mentioned this is probably the majority view in

Christendom so bear that in mind and once again we are going to find ourselves in the sometimes uncomfortable minority because this is the majority position it's the preterist and that view is nearly everything in the field of prophecy has already been fulfilled and largely culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD now there are shades and variations of the preterist position there are extreme preterists and there are moderate preterists and there are weaker preterists but by and large they believe that whatever the Bible has to say of a prophetic element already happened it's history but not to be confused with the historicist view and that's the second one by the way there are only four views

I don't care who you are you've got to buy one of these four because that's all there are and if you can think of a fifth one I sure would appreciate knowing it the historicist and that includes past and present the historicist view says that much of the church age that began in the first century to the present involves tribulation type content that is the present as well as the past is a continuation of the tribulation we are now undergoing now here we have one of two really super extreme views because this is a view the historicist that says tribulation we are in it this is it we are living in the tribulation right now that's a position that is taken by the historicist view which views all of prophecy to either have been fulfilled or it is being fulfilled as the flow of history goes on tribulation is being exacted upon the faithful and we are now living in the tribulation now to give you an example of how utterly radical this is in its departure from another view take that of the all millennialists and we'll get to that eventually the all millennialists is the view that this isn't the tribulation this is the millennium can't you find two greater extremes than that but of course they have to spiritualize the millennium and they say that this is the millennium and

[48 : 31] Christ is already ruling and reigning in the hearts of believers after all doesn't that passage in Matthew where Jesus is talking to the Pharisees doesn't he say the kingdom of heaven is within you and that's where Jesus is ruling and reigning and you are living a little personal millennium right now unless you are of course preterist then or a historicist then you're living the tribulation so it gets kind of crazy doesn't it wow to the historicist much of the church age that began in the first century to the present involves tribulation content that is the present is a continuation of the tribulation we are now undergoing and they the historicist is able in his own mind and by the way bear in mind now this has nothing to do with people's salvation this doesn't mean that people who believe these things are not

Christians it just means they have a different approach to the book than what we do and they are just as sincere in what they believe as what we are so you need to bear that in mind and this will enable us to treat one another with respect and cordiality rather than name calling and bitterness and ridicule and all the rest there's no room for that in the Christian community no excuse for Christians engaging in that kind of stuff so and then the idealist the idealist is the third view and I cannot resist this word and I cannot escape it because it so aptly describes the idealist and the idealist interpretation of prophecy is whatever whatever take your pick

I mean there is no precise chronology there is no precise schedule of events there is nothing that must follow this or come before that or anything it's just what it is one grand description of the cosmic battle between good and evil and it is just played out in the book of revelation with all of these symbols and all of these awful numbers that are given about a third of the world's population being wiped out and of course they don't take hardly anything literal it's all just just it's just a vague general nondescript conflict between good and evil that is loosely described in the book of revelation so don't take it too seriously and there is no correct interpretation it is what does it mean to you what does it say to you how do you feel about it that's what it means to you but the fact that it means the opposite to somebody else that's not a problem neither one is wrong they're both right you know everybody's right so shake hands and forget it and that's the idealist while many prophecies found in the

Old Testament have already been fulfilled particularly regarding the first coming of the Messiah much yet remains to be fulfilled that's our position and this is referred to of course as the futurist let me just plug this in here and in my opinion and in the opinion of those evangelicals of our particular stripe the futurist view is the only one that contains again in our opinion cohesiveness and coherence it is the only one that is based in consistency it is the only view that enables you to nail down anything is the futurist point of view so repeating while many prophecies found in the

Old Testament have already been fulfilled particularly regarding the first coming of the Messiah but much yet remains to be fulfilled and in the New Testament the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and 25 as well as content in the Pauline epistles and nearly all of the book of the Revelation yet awaits fulfillment so we are futurists and this requires an emphasis upon a dispensational approach to interpreting the Bible this insists that when the scriptures refer to Israel it means Israel and when it refers to the church it means the church we are quite confident that the spirit of God is more than capable of inspiring the human writer to use the correct word in the correct place and the

[54 : 15] Bible was never intended to be a book of riddles and puzzles it was intended to be a book of revelation of disclosure and this is the very reason we have a Bible is so God could make the revelation of himself known this requires a literal rapture or removal of the church from the earth and this removal we believe to be imminent meaning it could occur at any time the futurist position emphasizes the 70th week of Daniel as revealed in Daniel 9 requiring a literal time of tribulation upon the earth of seven years the futurist position also requires a future time of 1000 years called the millennium or the kingdom age when Christ will arrive for his second coming to establish that earthly reign we futurists believe this position is the only one available out of the four that provides consistently and answers coherently to both the age and dispensation of

Israel and the church age ushered in by the revelations given by the ascended Christ to the apostle Paul whom Christ designated as the apostle to the Gentiles so this is the foundation or basis from which we will proceed as we pursue this subject of biblical prophecy and I don't know I cannot give you a time frame for how long we'll be involved in this but I do want to say that in connection with the morning service while we are now engaged in an extensive series that we began around the first of the year on the subject of Israel's final or the Jewish final solution to the world's problems this concept of prophecy will be enmeshed with that and will be a part of it because

Israel is going to be very very much a strategic and key player in the unfolding of the plan and program of God and they will once again be removed from off center to dead center once the church is removed in the rapture then the focus returns to Israel and the ministry of the antichrist the negative ministry of the antichrist and what will be taking place then so we've got an enormous chore before us but we want to proceed in a methodical way that will allow each session to build and build and build so my advice to you is that any of the sessions that you miss because you're absent vacation ill or whatever please try to make up for that by getting the CDs that are available otherwise you'll have some holes in your thinking and reasoning and we want to keep all of this together now

I apologize for not having any more time for Q&A; but I wanted to get all of this in and I wanted to do it in one setting so we won't have to spread this content out and we'll get down to business more in our next session are there questions or comments is there something that has not been made clear or has anybody come up with a fifth possibility anyone well you leave me in my fallback position when there are no questions oh yes thank you I was beginning to think I've confused you so much you can't ask an intelligent question or I have so thoroughly addressed all of your questions that you don't have any left and I don't believe that so yes I said the preterist do is the majority of you what are the denominations or people groups to kind of make that up well first of all in so far as christendom is concerned and I'm talking about christendom in general now not evangelicals or limited to born again believers but what the world considers the christian community the roman catholic church would be the head of the preterist and then under them would be the lutherans because when martin made his you