

Prophecy and Mystery Contrasted - Elaboration on the Kingdon - Prophecy18

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Delighted to have you all here this morning. Thank you for your kind attendance and attention. We appreciate it very much. Let's look to the Lord. Father, we are grateful for this time to share and enjoy together.

It's always an enjoyment and enlightening when your word is open and you speak to our hearts directly from it. And we trust that that will be the case this morning. Thank you so much for the manner in which you've taken care of Frances Arnold and for the quick sale of her home, allowing her to relocate with her daughters.

We pray that you'll undertake for her during this time of transition and just simply help her to remember what she already knows. Thank you again for this pleasure that is ours of meeting together and focusing upon what you've provided for us.

We commit it to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, it's all about the kingdom, and I cannot emphasize that too much because the kingdom of heaven coming to earth is God's endgame.

That's where everything is headed. The need for it surfaced in Genesis chapter 3 with what is referred to as the fall.

[1 : 16] The remedy for it surfaces in the same chapter because no sooner had sin entered the picture and the need for human redemption but what God had graciously moved by way of a promise to provide a redeemer.

He will be God's fix-it man, and he is going to fix a broken world. This refers to none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is described in Genesis 3.15 as the seed of the woman.

And even though he will be struck or wounded on the heel by the serpent, that is a considerably less disastrous type wound than the kind of wound that Christ is going to inflict upon the serpent because it says, and he will crush his head.

That will be the final blow that is delivered to Satan. In the meanwhile, we are in transition. We are between creation and redemption being applied.

Redemption's already been provided, but it has been only partially applied. And the part that has been applied to you as a believer is to your spiritual part.

[2 : 36] It was the immaterial part of your being that dwells inside of you that is the real you that was regenerated and made new when you came to faith in Christ.

Nothing happened to your physical body. It remains the same. However, Romans 8 makes it quite clear that the time is coming when our physical body will receive the regeneration that our internal spirit has received, and that will be the glorified body.

That's the kind of body Jesus had when he came forth from the tomb. That's the kind of body we're going to have. Meanwhile, we are in transition. And from the time God promised that he would send a redeemer, he waited 4,000 years to do it.

4,000 years before the first coming. And then, after he was resurrected and went back to heaven, we've been waiting 2,000 years for him to return.

So we are in that interim period right now that is going on, and it is also described as a time of great conflict. There is a cosmic conflict taking place as we speak.

[3 : 57] I don't know how it is that angelic beings engage in conflict because they don't have bodies. We cannot conceive of what it must be that goes on between them, but we know that it was, I believe, Michael the archangel that said in the book of Daniel that he had strived or had labored different times to get to Daniel with the information that Daniel needed.

But Michael said he was hindered by the prince of Persia. And that's not a human being. That's an angelic being.

And we have no idea, how did he hinder him? How did he go about that? That's completely out of our bailiwick because we have to limit ourselves to the physical when it comes to things like that.

So anyway, this great conflict is taking place, and that kingdom of heaven coming to earth when everything is going to be fixed, and no more tears, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more sin, none of this nonsensical stuff that has been produced by sin, we will be ushered into an eternal state with Christ and redeemed, and that's Revelation 21, 22, etc.

So in this interim time, while this great conflict is going on, Christ is at the very center of it, and those who are in Christ are at the center of it with him.

[5 : 33] So in connection with this kingdom concept we're talking about, and does anybody remember the two things that are necessary for the kingdom to come? Just two?

Absolutely essential? Anybody? All right, it gives me an excuse to give it to you again. John? The repentance of Israel to accept their Messiah and the death on the cross.

Okay, thank you. Thank you. I'm glad you recalled that. Two things. Two things have to occur before that Edenic state will be returned, and evil will be put away finally and forever, and we'll all have our glorified bodies, and it will be, let me put it this way, heaven will be as wonderful as God is able to make it.

How good is that? So with this kingdom business in mind, and the question being offered and answered is, what are the two things?

First thing is, payment for the forfeited kingdom, the ruined kingdom, has to be made, and Christ was the only one, because he was a sinless son of God, he was the only one eligible to make that payment, and he did.

[6 : 57] And when he comes the second time, then he will collect on what he paid for the first time. But right now, Paul makes it clear in 2 Corinthians 5, or 2 Corinthians 4, that Satan is the God of this age.

And in case you've ever wondered, what is wrong with the world? That ought to be a major clue. This globe is under his jurisdiction, and he's running it. And that's true.

He can go no further than what God is willing to allow him. But he does have a great deal of latitude. The question has surfaced, and I think it's a very good question.

I remember this question over 60 years ago, when I was a student at Cedarville College. And the issue came up in one of the theology classes, and it was this.

All right, if we insist that Christ came to provide the basis for the kingdom, and he offered the kingdom to Israel, Israel rejected.

[8 : 07] They said, we will not have this man to reign over us. They rejected him, and a period of persecution began for those Jewish believers who did accept Jesus as the Messiah.

And the question was, what if they had accepted him? What if they had believed that he was the Messiah?

What if there had been no cross? What if Jesus had never suffered and died for the sins of the world? What would have happened? We would not have had a redeemer?

Could we have had a kingdom, but we wouldn't have had a... How is that going to work? What's in mind there? Very good question. And the answer, of course, we can dismiss it by saying, well, that's just a hypothetical, and you can't say, what if, because you have no control over the what if.

What if could be anything. But here is the answer, as far as I'm concerned, and I think the scriptures support this, and that is, there was no alternative, and there was no legitimate possibility that Israel would make Christ their king and avoid the cross, and the reason being, God knew full well in advance that they would not.

[9 : 34] And even their rejection is set forth in scripture. In Isaiah 53, that is the most poignant passage regarding the coming of Christ and how he would be treated by his own, spells out very clearly a picture of a suffering savior, a suffering Messiah.

Christ came to suffer. He came to die. And that was not only predicted and foreordained, but, and here's a really, really important point.

Because this was predicted in scripture, some say, well, you're saying then that Israel was pre-programmed, that they had to reject the Messiah, because after all, it was prophesied that they would.

How could they not? So, aren't we facing a situation where Israel is kind of locked into this thing? And the answer is no, because here's the difference.

There is a huge, huge distinction to be made between what God predicts is going to occur in the future and what God does to make that happen in the future.

[10 : 50] Those cannot be equated. They are radically different. So, when the scriptures talk about Christ coming, Christ being rejected, Christ being crucified, the resurrection, and all the rest of it, it isn't because Israel and those who opposed him were pre-programmed to do that and they had no choice.

They did have a choice. They had a choice all the way. But God knew full well what their choice would be. And perhaps a parallel kind of an example can be given, and then I'll open it for some questions and I want to get into this paper that I've distributed.

And that is, some actually take the position, and I just simply cannot abide this at all, but I suspect they hold it in good faith.

I wouldn't know what other kind of faith they get hold of it. Considering the betrayal of our Lord by Judas as one of the twelve, I've actually heard some say, well, Judas, you've got to understand, Judas didn't have a choice.

I mean, it was pre-determined. Judas was pre-programmed to be the betrayer that would end up in the death of Christ. And actually, he was kind of like a pawn.

[12 : 06] He didn't have any say-so in the matter. Oh, yes, he did. And even though the betrayal is prophesied, that does not mean that God is going to intervene and see to it that the betrayal comes about.

Human volition is still intact and God has not violated it. So for God to say that a certain thing is going to occur in the future is radically different from saying God is going to make it happen in the future.

Do you see the difference? In one, God is complicit. In the other, he is not. It is a human effort kind of thing. And the idea being, well, if Israel had accepted Jesus as their Messiah, then there would have been no cross, there would have been no payment for sin, there would have been no redemption.

And that's the hypothetical that I'm talking about that, of course, cannot be figured into it. But if you make that distinction between what is prophesied is not something that God says, this is what I'm going to do.

That's not what the prophecy means. The prophecy simply records what is going to transpire because God knows that's exactly what's going to transpire, not because he's going to make it happen, but because he knows it is going to happen.

[13 : 31] And really, that's the basis for all prophecy. And God is not complicit and man is responsible in his volition in the same way that Adam and Eve were responsible for their sin, Judas was responsible for their sin, Israel was responsible for their sin and the rejection of Christ, and it all fits into the picture.

God is holy, remains acknowledging man's volition, and at the same time, man is responsible. Any comments or questions about that, we'll stop right there if there are.

Gary. I know a lot of times when I've used it myself, we say, well, God is in control, and it's for the future. Well, don't worry about it because God's in control of this.

Well, it's either isn't he, I guess, really a question that they say. Okay, the phrase, God is in control. Yeah, well, that's a good, legitimate phrase, and it is true.

God is in control, but there's one word that I would insert there that we are so prone to leave out, and I've been prone to leave it out myself. God is in control, ultimately, and it's that word that we have problems with, and I would reference this right back to Romans 8, 28, that we're all very familiar with, that God works all things for our good, for those who are the called, and that ultimately, and therein is the problem, ultimately, everything that happens in a believer's life is going to ultimately turn out for that person's good, and that is really, really hard to believe when you're going through a difficult time.

[15 : 26] Okay, God, where is the good? And when we say all things work together for good for those who love the Lord, we're looking in terms of day after tomorrow at the latest.

We want the good to show up pretty quick, and it is beyond our ability to comprehend that our life and every ingredient that comes into it, large and small, seemingly of great significance and seemingly just passing of little significance at all.

God is the eternal weaver who alone is able to take all of the good and all of the bad and weave it together into a beautiful mosaic so that ultimately it does turn out for our good.

And the prominent poster boy for that, of course, is Job, which is a study in itself. And I don't think anybody ever hit bottom like Job did and came back and he is.

But we, our problem is with the Romans 8:28 thing, all things work together for good. Well, most Christians believe that is true for most Christians, but not for them because their situation is different.

[16 : 51] And you know, in our humanity, we just tend to think that way. We want to be the exception and it's hard for us to believe that that is really true. And you, listen, this is a point that I'm reluctant to make because you may think it's extreme but I'm convinced that it's right on.

And it has nothing to do with your believing it. God is committed to working all things for your good whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not.

Now, that is a big pill to swallow because some may qualify that by saying, well, God will work all things together for good for those who have faith in Him and believe it.

No. He is committed to working all things together for your good ultimately whether you believe it or not. Now, when I talk about having faith in Him, I'm not talking about salvation.

I'm talking about in believing that He is working and He's doing what needs to be done. You see, God's got His timetable, we've got our timetable and they almost never coincide.

[17 : 59] Almost never. Because God does things in accordance with His own timetable and what He does, He does a thorough work. But we want results now.

We want proof now. We want results now. And that's just the way we're built. That's just part of our fallenness. So, back to the subject about the kingdom. I want you to look, if you would please, at Luke chapter 19.

Luke's gospel chapter 19. I want to treat this just a little bit more about the rejection, the acceptance, the offer of the kingdom and so on. And we've already looked just briefly at verse 11.

While they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable because He was near Jerusalem and they, meaning the disciples, they supposed that the kingdom of God that everybody had been preaching, including Jesus, was going to appear immediately.

Immediately when? Well, immediately when they got to Jerusalem because that's where He's going. He's on the way. This is Palm Sunday. And then Jesus gives this extensive parable and the parable teaches the truth that the Master is going to be absent from the scene for a long period of time and then return.

[19 : 13] And that those who are His, those who are His followers are going to be responsible to carry on His ministry in His absence. And that parable explains the absence of Christ and He's still absent, of course, but He is coming back.

So what I want you to note in verse 41, Luke chapter 19 and verse 41 again, talking about the same thing. When He approached, Jesus saw the city and He wept over it.

This does not mean, this does not mean that Jesus shed a tear. It means that Jesus broke up. He sobbed.

He sobbed. And in weeping over it, He said, if you had known in this day, what day was He talking about?

He was talking about what was then today. He was going to mount that donkey and ride into Jerusalem. And many people were going to throng the way and throw palm branches in front of Him and some would take off their garments and lay them in the path so that the animal could walk on.

[20 : 35] It was their equivalent of rolling out the red carpet for the Messiah. and they were saying, Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord and so on.

But we know that was going to be very short-lived because the rulers and shakers had already made up their mind that Jesus was going to have to go. And the crowd that was welcoming Him had no idea at all.

Neither did the disciples. No idea at all that this last trip to Jerusalem would end with Jesus on the cross. Never entered their mind.

They're saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. And He said, If you had known in this day even you the things which make for peace but now they have been hidden from your eyes for the days shall come upon you when your enemies and in this case it will be Rome will throw up a bank before you and surround you and hem you in on every side and will level you to the ground and your children within you and they will not leave in you one stone upon another.

Now notice, look, because you and He's speaking collectively of the Jewish people and of Jerusalem the city because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

[22 : 16] What He is saying is Israel Jerusalem this is your hour your time your opportunity but you don't have a clue.

You will not recognize this time of your visitation as being the time of your release and Jesus was not surprised at all. In fact, He told the disciples before He ever got there.

He said, we're going to Jerusalem. He told them what was going to happen. Remember Peter's rebuke when Peter took Him aside and said, that's not going to happen. We won't let that happen. Forget it. Stop talking that way. Jesus knew all along that the rejection was going to be in force and what the end would be.

He knew there was a cross and He also knew there was no crown of glory without a cross of crucifixion. That was all part of the deal.

And all of these things have to be taken into consideration when we look at this whole subject of the crucifixion and the rejection of the kingdom and the offer of the kingdom.

[23 : 23] Now, if you would take the sheet that you were given, it is Bible answers to Bible questions. This is very timely. It came in the mail just a few days ago and I thought, wow, this is really neat.

And this is Dr. Bob Nix. He's the president of Berean Bible Institute. And I would like you to turn the page if you would down to the second page and the inside and the question down in the corner of the right hand side of the page because it ties in with what we're talking about, the last days and prophecy and so on.

And by the way, I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but on some of the religious television programs now, every now and then I check some out because there are a few really good things on television.

I know David Jeremiah is on and sometimes Erwin Lutzer and sometimes other good teachers, but there is so much garbage out there. I mean, so much name it, claim it and health, wealth, gospel stuff that's just and it just leads people astray.

It's terrible. It's out there. And with what's going on today in our culture, in our country, in the world, there are those who are eager to say and make a big deal of the idea that prophecy is now being fulfilled and that we are in the last days.

[24 : 49] Well, we are in the last days and I'll explain in a moment what we mean by that. But to say that certain things that are taking place, whether it's in Washington or Iran or wherever it is and to say that prophecy is being fulfilled and blah, blah, blah, so much of this is just dishonest hype designed to sell books and contributions from people and I want you to, let's look at this article.

I want to read it and I thought, well, I'll just give it to them. They can read it themselves. I don't have to read it. But then I'm reminded we've got more people listening online that aren't here and they would not have the benefit of this because they don't have it.

So bear with me if you will and let's just, I'll read it and we'll just read it together. The question, we know, we know from Scripture that there will be a second coming of Jesus Christ, but does the Bible tell us anything about when he will return?

There are many who claim that prophecy is currently being fulfilled and that the second coming must happen soon. Can this be true? Now, before I go into the answer, let me give you a warning.

There is a huge difference between the translation of the church, the rapture of the church and the catching away of the body of Christ and the second coming. In the rapture, Christ comes for his church.

[26 : 14] In the second coming, he comes with his church. In the first coming, he does not come to the earth. He comes in the clouds and we are caught up together to meet him in the air.

Second time he comes, he will come physically to the earth and there he will dispose of the Antichrist and his minions. So that needs to be kept in mind. Let's go on.

This cannot be true. For one thing, the claim that in times or last days, prophecy is being fulfilled today is most problematic for those who believe this. What is probably the most prevalent flaw in the prophecy is being fulfilled today idea is that the same prophecies from scripture are said to have been or are now being fulfilled year after year after year after year and so on.

And quite often, these kind of claims are made by the same Bible teachers, researchers, scholars, etc., who seem to have completely forgotten what they have said in the past about specific Bible prophecies in the past years.

I know of more than a few popular Bible teachers who focus on Bible prophecies that they say are currently being fulfilled.

[27 : 29] They continually point to the latest news reports that tell of any kind of disaster, such as famine, war, social upheaval, riots, political turmoil, wildfires, earthquakes, floods, or anything else that they can find a Bible verse that they can point to that seems to support their claims that the last days are most certainly upon us.

Well, I don't want to confuse the issue here, but we are living in the last days and I'll explain what is meant by that momentarily.

So, let us go on. This erroneous approach to Bible study has been going on for well over 100 years now and it's true.

I can tell that from the books that I read and the copyright data of them and it doesn't show any signs of slowing down and why do they do this? Because it's dramatic. Because it gets people's attention and as I've said, sometimes it sells books and whatever, so all of these things and you know what?

I suspect that most of the people who are doing this are probably doing so in good faith. I mean, they really believe that themselves. It isn't that they're trying to hoodwink it, although there is an element, there is an element that's just trying to capitalize on it and make money on it.

[28 : 50] But I think most of these people believe these things out of good faith, but we all know believing something in good faith doesn't make it so. Let's go on. While they are wrong in their understanding of end times prophecy, I do believe that most of these preachers and teachers are sincere.

Their problem is that they are sincerely wrong because they have failed to rightly divide the Bible in their study of the Word of God. In other words, it is a failure to study the whole Bible dispensationally.

In so doing, they cannot help but to mix prophecy, the foretelling of the last days by God's prophets, and mystery. They never before, the never before revealed message of grace that the Lord God kept hidden in Himself until He exclusively and personally made it known to and through Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

While these Bible teachers are dispensationalists, they make their mistake in thinking that the church began in Acts chapter 2, and that Peter and his associate apostles preached the same gospel message that the apostle Paul did.

And this, by the way, is by far and away the majority opinion of the Christian church. You can probably, you can count on one hand the number of Bible teachers that are really well known that do not believe the church began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

[30 : 25] Well, a church did begin then, and King James translators rendered that in verse 47 of chapter 2 by saying, the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved, but the word isn't used there in the original at all.

It's just the Lord added to their number daily such as should be saved. But you know, there was a church. There was a church that began on the day of Pentecost, and it had 3,000 people in it.

And there was a church that began when Moses led the children of Israel out of the wilderness, and it was called the church in the wilderness. So there are all kinds of churches. There are multiple churches in the Bible.

But the church, which is the body of Christ, and when it began, is an entirely different thing. And the thing that made it most significant is the fact that it was blending of Jew and Gentile together in one body.

And the best expression of that church, of which we are members, is found in Ephesians 3. So we've got to go on. So let's see. Yes, they both preach Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior, but Peter and the other 11 apostles preach Christ in the context of the gospel of the kingdom of God, a message which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

[31 : 45] In contrast, Paul preached Jesus Christ in the context of the gospel of the grace of God, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began.

Can these two statements both be true? Yes, they can, and in fact are. As they are recorded as revealed truth in Scripture, we know that they are both true.

But they do not say the same thing. Rather, they actually say the opposite of each other. How can this be? Simple.

The respective good news that Peter and Paul preached referred to different dispensations or different administrations. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he told the men of Israel that heard him to repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians about their salvation, wrote, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, by which also you are saved.

[32 : 59] For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Now let me ask you a question. When did that message become available? It wasn't available until after the fact.

Do you think the twelve ever preached when Jesus sent them forth to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God that they ever preached Messiah is coming, Jesus is coming, and he's going to die on the cross for your sins?

They didn't preach that. They didn't believe that. They didn't know that. What they preached is repent of your sin. The kingdom of heaven is at hand because the king is coming.

Nothing, nothing about his crucifixion, nothing about his resurrection. They didn't know it and they didn't believe it. What I'm saying is it was the death of Christ on the cross and his resurrection that changed everything, everything, including the message.

[34 : 12] Now the message is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. What about baptism?

What about remission of sins? What about the message of Pentecost? That was the message then. We've got a different message now. And do you know who really is insisting on preaching?

Listen, Acts 2, the Pentecostal, which was a Jewish event attended only by Jews. In fact, Jews were the only ones that were even allowed to be there.

This was in the temple, the Jewish temple. And when that message was preached, it all had to do with the coming of the Messiah, not, not the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah.

just, here, let's, okay, let's go back to the crucifixion itself. How many people thought, Christians, and today, and it's probably the majority opinion today, that Israel had an opportunity to receive Jesus as their Savior before the cross, but because they refused to do so, the cross was Israel's final answer, and with the crucifixion and Israel rejecting Christ, that left Israel out of the picture completely.

[35 : 41] And they take, they take the death of Christ and the demand from the Jews, crucify him, crucify him, they took that as Israel's final answer.

And what we are saying is, it wasn't. And it wasn't their final opportunity. But do you know, it really looked that way. It really looked that way.

When Jesus is presented as the Messiah, instead of accepting him, you crucify him? Well then, that's the end of Israel. And here, I'm telling you, and this is a huge, huge item, big, big, big turnaround.

The opportunity for Israel as a nation to still embrace Jesus as their Messiah after death, burial, and resurrection is still open.

And that's exactly what Peter is doing when he preaches that message on the day of Pentecost. He is telling the Jews, you still have a shot.

[36 : 53] It isn't all over. It isn't too late. You can still embrace Jesus as your Messiah. And you know, 3,000 of them did.

But Peter didn't preach justification by faith and salvation through the finished work of Christ to those Jews on Pentecost. He didn't preach that. He didn't preach the gospel of the grace of God in Acts 2.

That wasn't his message. His message was, God sent his son into this world to be our Messiah, to be our Savior, and you by wicked hands have crucified and slain the Lord of glory, but God raised him from the dead.

And he continued to preach that this opportunity, and the people were stunned, and they looked at each other, and they said, you know what? This guy's right.

He's right. That's exactly what we did. How could we have been so blind? How could we have seen? Why didn't we see that? And the text is a beautiful thing. The text says, when Peter preached that message, it says, they were pricked in their heart.

[37 : 59] It was like a stabbing into the heart. What that means is, the message really got to them, sunk in. They appropriated it, they believed it, and they said, oh, no.

What can we do now? What can we do now? Peter didn't say, there isn't anything you can do. It's too late. It's too late.

You already sold him out. Your chance is gone. He didn't say that. He said, you can change your mind.

I know what your position was before when Jesus was presented and you rejected him. You've got to change your mind from that. You've got to reverse yourself.

And 3,000 of them did. Now let me ask you a question. On what basis did they change their mind? The word is repent.

[38 : 58] It means to reverse yourself. It means to do a 180. On what basis did they change their mind? In formation. Peter just gave them the reason for changing their mind.

Every time you explain the gospel to somebody all you are doing is giving them a reason to change their mind. Because everyone who is not in Christ is outside of Christ.

And everyone outside of Christ has a certain set of beliefs that do not include Christ. And they may be I think I'm a pretty good person.

Or it may be the other extreme. I think I'm such a bad person that I couldn't be saved. And everywhere in between. You've got the change of mind. You cannot come to faith in Christ without changing your mind.

Because you believe something that's wrong to start with. That's what you've got to get rid of. That's what you've got to change your mind about. And when you do and you come to faith in Christ you have repented. 3,000 of them did that.

[40 : 09] And because this is so poignant and so powerful, it has been latched onto by believers down through the centuries, down through the millennia, that this was the birthday of the church.

After all, didn't Jesus say in Matthew 16, 18, and I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. And it seems only logical that Acts 2 that that's the church that Jesus was going to build and that's it.

And it all seems to fit except it doesn't fit. It isn't true. The church that Jesus is going to build of which the gates of Hades will not prevent against it or will not empower itself against it, that church has never yet been built.

That's still future. You've got to look at the whole text. And in Matthew 16 Jesus said I'm going to build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

What does that mean? What are the gates of Hades? What is Hades? Hades is the place of the dead.

[41 : 30] It's mentioned all throughout the Old Testament and it's in the New. And by the way, what we think of as hell doesn't even exist now. It's going to exist, but it doesn't exist now.

What exists now is Hades. Hell doesn't exist. It's going to be prepared for the devil and his angels and his coming. But the gates of Hades Hades Hades is the place of the dead.

And the gates represent the place of authority in the ancient world. In every city throughout Israel where there was a town that had a wall built around it and it always had the gate, the gate to the city, and it would be closed at night.

And it was done to keep out invaders. And it was there at the gates of the city that the government met. The local representatives, the shakers and movers, the elders of the city.

We'd call them city councilmen or city fathers or the city manager. It was the city government for that particular town and they sat there at the gates. And people would come to them with claims, with lawsuits, with complaints, with all kinds of things, and they would hear it and then they would pass judgment and render a verdict.

[42 : 52] It was kind of like the court of the day. That's the gates. We read that when Lot lowered himself and went into the city of Sodom, and the next thing you know, he's sitting at the gate.

He had established himself in the city of Sodom as shaker and mover, and he was in a position of authority, and he was in the gate. And the Old Testament makes reference to this all the time.

And the gates of Hades is the authority of death. And let me ask you a question. Do the gates of Hades prevail over the church today, that is the body of Christ?

Of course it does. Of course it does. You better believe it. While it is true that death has no claim on our spirit that is regenerated and absence the body when we go to be with the Lord.

But what happens to your body? It dies. It dies. That is the gates of Hades exercising jurisdiction in this present day in Satan's domain.

[44 : 11] and the time is coming when that too is going to be done away. That's the one that Jesus is talking about and it isn't until that reign of Christ when believers will have glorified bodies and there'll be no death, no sorrow, no tears, no winning.

That's the gates of Hades will not prevail against that but they sure do prevail against this. Of course they do. So, I want to finish this article.

What has happened is that for the time being the Lord has sent unrepentant Israel aside in unbelief and suspended the gospel of the kingdom and the fulfilling of last day's prophecies.

After the rapture of the church and yes the church will be caught up into heaven no matter what men say the gospel of the kingdom will be reinstated and end times prophecies will begin to be fulfilled as the tribulation begins.

Then the signs of the times will begin to take place as a warning to Israel and the nations at large that the end is near. And this will also involve 144,000.

[45 : 27] For those of us living in the present dispensation of grace there is only one sign to watch for that will precede the tribulation that is the rapture of the church. And when it happens every safe person on earth will be caught up in the blink of an eye and taken to heaven.

1 Corinthians 15. Those remaining on earth will face the most horrible of times as they enter the last days and the last days prophecies begin to unfold before their eyes.

Don't be too concerned with the last days and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, if you have never trusted in the Lord Jesus for salvation by grace through faith, thank God you still have the opportunity, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

He could come to rapture the church, the true believers, at any time perhaps even today. Actually, this problem has been around for almost 2,000 years.

The Apostle Paul was confronted with it during his lifetime. Let's see, where is this concerned? During his time. Beginning with the promise, and here we've got signs of the covenant, and actually this should have been indicated that it was the end of the article here.

[46 : 39] And there are some other interesting things that go on here. But I've got to give you one more quick reference and it's in 2 Timothy chapter 3 and I told you about the last times. 2 Timothy chapter 3.

We are living in the last times and if I understand this correctly, and it wouldn't be the first time that I didn't, but I think it is consistent and holds up.

The latter days, the latter days began with the death of Christ. Everything on the other side of the cross is referred to as the former days.

The former days. Everything prior to the death of Christ was the former days. Everything after the death of Christ is the latter days.

The apostle Paul lived in the latter days. Actually, he lived in both. He lived in both. He lived in the former days and the latter days. He was caught in that transition.

[47 : 40] So the latter days began 2,000 years ago. We're still living in the latter days. But I guess you could make a distinction and say, well, the latter days, and maybe it's not the same as the last days.

When we talk about the last days, most people are thinking, you know what most people are thinking of is the end of the world. And that's how they refer to it.

The world is not going to come to an end until Revelation 22 when God says he's going to make new heavens and a new earth and the former things will have all passed away.

But this is not it. So here in 2 Timothy chapter 3, we read beginning with verse 1, realize this, that in the last days, difficult times will come.

Paul was living in them, he experienced difficult times. Man will be, and you can read the whole long list there, and you can see that in many respects, this list that is given in reference to the last days was also true for the most part in the former days.

[48 : 52] Ever since the fall, it's been that way. But I think what Paul is saying is that in the latter days, there's a text that runs through my mind right now, in the latter days, evil men shall wax worse and worse, and it talks about as the end draws near for what will really be close to the coming of the Lord, the evil that will permeate the world is going to intensify.

Now, that might make some think we're getting closer all the time, because it does seem that men are making and devising more and more ways to demonstrate their evil nature, and someone has said that the technology and the science that we are so proud of has also resulted in our being able to kill more of our own kind more quickly than anybody has ever been able to do before, and we call that progress.

Isn't that something? Well, I'm sorry, time is gone. Can we do this? If you've got questions or comments, would you jot them down right now before you leave?

because if you're like I am, you probably won't think of it another week. And next week at this 9 o'clock hour, let's just begin with Q&A;, and we'll just open it with questions.

So bring whatever questions or comments you have, and we will listen to whatever you have to share instead of what I will be teaching. And that way, I know you'll get to say your piece.

[50 : 43] That's the only way it's going to happen. So thank you so much for being here today. We've covered a lot of material, and our thanks to Dr. Bob Nix for this excellent article. It's a good issue.

You'll appreciate it. Thank you all.