

The Jewish Final Solution to the World's Problem - Introduction to the Rapture

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[0 : 00] Announced some time ago, we planned this morning to engage the subject of biblical prophecy, and we are going to begin with an introduction to the rapture.

It is safe to say that there is no area of Scripture that is so controversial, even among believers, as the subject of prophecy. In fact, some consider the prophetic themes of the Bible to be so abstract and so indefinite and so filled with symbolism that they are absolutely impossible to interpret.

And I have, over the last 50-plus years, encountered a number of pastors who simply refused to even preach on the subject. And I find that somewhat disconcerting because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and all of it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, instruction in righteousness, and so on.

And I do not feel that we have the right to ignore any portion of Scripture. And when it comes to the subject of prophecy and things to come, suffice it to say that everything hinges upon one's method of interpretation.

Of course, that is true for all of the Bible, not simply prophecy, but for every other aspect as well. And there are real divergencies of opinion regarding the issues that we are going to be discussing.

[1 : 33] And we want to say right up front, we do not claim to have the corner on truth. We are not saying that the positions that we will be taking and teaching are absolutely guaranteed as to their accuracy, because every human being's theology and doctrine is flawed.

That includes mine. And I base that on the fact that we are all finite human beings, and none of us, however conversant we are with the Bible, however in tune we are with the original languages, and with theology and the doctoral positions taken, etc., none of us has it all together.

We all have gaps and voids and blips and mistakes in our theology and the positions we set forth. The reason I know that is because I know I am a human being, and I have a human being's perspective.

I don't have God's perspective. So we come to the Scriptures with the intent of trying to understand, to the extent of our ability, what the text is saying and what the implications thereof really are.

And insofar as ignoring prophetic themes, and in particular, this would be the book of the Revelation, and I cannot tell you how many there are who just stay away from the book.

[3 : 06] They just don't teach because it's too controversial, and it's too vague, and it's too uncertain, and so on. But the difficulty I have with that position of ignoring it is, first of all, it is part of the Word of God, and if you will turn to Revelation chapter 1, which I am not going to engage, by the way, but we will later, verse by verse, I just want to point out three or four verses to you that actually contradict the idea that we should not study these things.

And of course, some are really contending for the unity of the brethren, and that's a noble endeavor. God knows the church, the body of Christ, needs to be a lot more united, unified than what it is, but we cannot sacrifice the truth of God for the sake of what we perceive would be unity.

And here in Revelation chapter 1, just a couple of verses, if you would, please. The revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the way, that's the principal thing to note as we look at this book and all of its 22 chapters.

First and foremost, what these 22 chapters are about is the revelation of Jesus Christ. And John tells us that right from the very beginning.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his bondservants the things which must shortly take place.

[4 : 45] And I must inject just a brief word of explanation here, because it would be only logical for someone to read that verse and realize that John, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, wrote this book 2,000 years ago.

And he's talking about shortly to the generation to whom he was speaking. What would that have meant to them? And we say 2,000 years really doesn't qualify as shortly, does it?

Because the events that are poured out here in the revelation have not occurred yet. Unless, of course, you are of the historicist point of view, which says that almost everything in the book of Revelation is history.

It's already happened. That's one of the views of interpretation that we'll be looking at later. But I just want to inject here the idea and the concept that when John uses the word shortly in the Greek, he is using a term that indicates that these things that are described herein, in this book, in the chapters that are going to follow, are things that are going to occur on earth and in heaven in great rapidity of succession.

It means when this great wrap-up starts, it's going to be moving along very, very quickly. It's going to be one newspaper headline after another.

[6 : 25] The world will not have recovered from the last calamity until there will be another visited. And it's going to be bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, with seemingly no let-up.

And there won't be any let-up. And the finale, of course, will be Revelation 19 and the arrival on the scene of Jesus Christ himself.

So, to those who would say, well, you really shouldn't study the book. It's confusing and it's argumentative and it's divisive and people reach different conclusions and so on.

So, the text goes on to say, the things which must shortly take place, and he sent and communicated it by his angel to his bondservant, John.

As far as we can determine, and this is one of few things that scholars tend to agree on, that this John, who is writing under inspiration the book of the Revelation, is the same John who wrote the Gospel of John, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John.

[7 : 38] And this John is the brother of James, and the two boys were sons of Zebedee, and they were fishermen by trade. John is referred to as the beloved apostle.

And verse 2 says, Now look at verse 3.

Now, come down to verse 11, if you would, please. And John is given instruction, and he hears this loud voice, like the sound of a trumpet, saying, Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, and Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

All of these are to be recipients of what John is going to record. And then in verse 18. Well, let's read verse 17 also.

And when I saw him, John says, I fell at his feet as a dead man. He just collapsed. And he laid his right hand upon me.

[9 : 15] This is Jesus Christ talking. This is the glorified Christ talking. This is not the same as the Christ with whom he walked on the shores of Galilee.

It's the same person. But this is a glorified Christ. This is a risen Christ. When John was familiar with Jesus on earth, it was before his resurrection, and then of course for 40 days after the resurrection.

And even though Jesus was the same person, he was a different person. He had a glorified body. Body no longer subject to death. And he is the one speaking.

And he says to John, Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. That's the Alpha and Omega and the Living One. And I was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore.

And I have the keys of death and of Hades. I want you to note verse 19. Write therefore the things which you have seen and the things which are and the things which shall take place after these things So you see all three aspects of time here.

[10 : 31] He's talking about the past, the present, and the future. The things which you have seen, the past, the things which are, the present, the things which shall take place after these things.

This covers the whole waterfront. Why do you suppose he would tell John to do this? Write these things. Do you think, for instance, can you entertain even the possibility that what Jesus really means as he is communicating to John the necessity, the order to write these things, that in effect what he is saying to John, now I want you to write these things, but nobody's going to be able to understand it.

Write them, but no one's going to be able to figure it out and it's just going to cause a whole lot of questions that they won't be able to settle. Of course not. These things that John is instructed to write are things that are intended to be understood.

No, we are not going to understand probably any of them as thoroughly as we would like. but we will be able to understand them sufficiently to be able to be obedient to it.

And by the way, this is the thrust of all of God's revelation. It is not only so that we might know, but so that we can respond to it, so that we can be obedient, so that we can be informed in order to change our character and our person and conform us to the image of Christ.

[12 : 14] We are given this information for our spiritual growth and development. It is to make a difference. But you cannot use it to make a difference if you can't understand it, if it's all just a big riddle.

It's all symbolism and all kinds of weird things that we cannot begin to understand. Well, I ask you, what benefit or profit is that?

It's of none, really. So, we are of the position that all of the Word of God is intelligible.

That means, it was written with the intent that it be understood. Not with the intent that it just causes a whole bunch of mystery and deep truths that nobody can figure out.

And if you can't figure it out, if you can't understand it, there's no way in the world that you can be obedient to it. You don't even know what you're being obedient to. So, we've got what I think in the Word of God is going to be very clear direction.

[13 : 24] This is not going to be rocket science. You're not going to have to know Hebrew and Greek and have a doctorate in theology in order to understand this stuff. It is going to be intelligible so that we can understand it.

And that, I'm convinced, is what is behind it all. There is an understandable fascination with the future. No question about that.

Gaining an edge on reality allows for preparation. You can't plan for what you don't know. And everybody would enjoy some kind of a leg up, some kind of a heads up so that they would know what kind of decisions they ought to make in the present that's going to impact the future.

Years ago, some of you would not remember this because you're just too young, but there was a lady on the scene who'd gained quite a bit of notoriety and her name was Jean Dixon. Remember her?

And every year in the nation's leading newspapers, particularly in December, they would feature a lengthy article about Jean Dixon and all of the prophecies that she had made regarding what was going to come to pass in the ensuing year.

[14 : 46] And of course, everybody is interested in what's the new year going to bring. And she would make a whole host of predictions, maybe 12 or 15 or some. And they were all attention-getting.

I mean, they were usually some pretty bizarre things as to who was going to marry who and who was going to get divorced. And these were all public personas. I mean, people that everybody knew about or events or some really weird off-the-wall thing and people would read that with amazement and say, wow, look what Jean Dixon said.

Jean Dixon said. Jean Dixon. And everybody would go around quoting Jean Dixon as if she were some kind of an authority. But you never did read at the end of the year where she made all of her prophecies what her percentage of accuracy was.

Usually, it was something like 15 or 20 percent of what she predicted came true. Frankly, I think I could do better than that. And some of you could too. But her failures were never really noticed.

And people would put all kinds of confidence in her prophecies. It's ridiculous. I remember hearing about one day when the Chicago Tribune inadvertently in a daily newspaper omitted the horoscope for that day.

[16 : 02] And their telephone was ringing off the wall. People were calling from all over Chicago and greater Chicagoland wondering, where's the horoscope? Where's the...

It's amazing. People actually think that they can make better decisions in the day that lies before them if they consult this horoscope and the people who put the horoscope together chart the bodies in the heavens and the planets and see who is where and what.

And if you are a Libra or a Scorpio or a Cancer or a Sagittarius or something, this is a good day for you or this is a bad day for you and blah, blah, blah, blah. And all along it goes, such Tommy Rot.

It's unbelievable. And can you believe that people buy and sell stocks on that basis? That's crazy. But for somebody who would put any confidence in what the Bible says, now that's really nuts.

That's really nuts so far as they're concerned. Nostradamus, perceived to be a prophet. I'm not sure when he lived. I think maybe 13, 1400, something like that.

[17 : 13] He's written the book The Prophecies of Nostradamus. A lot of it is kind of coded and in all kinds of weird language and you'd be surprised how many people give credence to that. But Nostradamus, long off the scene, hundreds of years, sells a lot of books every year.

I'm not sure who it is that's publishing them. Nothing provides the potential for future success like advanced knowledge. You've heard about this little thing that goes on on Wall Street all the time and every now and then somebody gets sent to jail for it.

It's called insider trading. When people who are in the know with some big corporation know that something is brewing that this is going to be sold or that so-and-so is going to buy something or so-and-so, they run out and they either liquidate their stock or they buy up a bunch of stock in connection with that advanced knowledge and they make a killing.

That's illegal. You can go to jail for doing that. A number of people have gone to jail for that. It's called insider trading. It's taking advantage of inside information and using that to enrich yourself.

And the Securities Exchange Commission, the SEC, takes a very dim view of that. And so do the laws of the land, but it goes on all the time. Anybody here see the popular movie? You probably all see.

[18 : 40] It's one of my favorite movies. The Sting. Anybody see The Sting? Yeah, Robert Redford and Paul Newman. That was one of my favorite movies. I really, really. One of the things I liked the most about it was the settings.

It was incredible. It had those old cars in it and old buildings and old everything set back in the 1930s. Now, you're wondering how I remember the 1930s, but I was two years old in 1937 and I remember it all very well.

But I did appreciate all the props and the setting and even the clothing that they wore. It was an amazing movie. And the whole thrust of the thing, the sting was they were set up, they set up a situation to take advantage of this big name criminal and they were all a bunch of criminals except some of them were just petty con men and some of them were bigger con men.

But they set up this sting for this guy to take advantage of him and rest, I think it was a half a million or a million dollars from him or something like that. And they made this elaborate plot.

I mean, it was really amazing. If you haven't seen the movie The Sting, you would at least enjoy Scott Daumann's music, I'm sure. That was great music. And they were taking advantage of information that nobody else had.

[19 : 56] And they set up this scheme. Now, you've got to remember this was back in the 30s and the Western Union was really big. And what they would do, they had this con going whereby they would use the Western Union and the teletype thing which was recording and typing out the winners of different horse races and sending that information over the Western Union wire.

And part of the sting was this guy had a way of intercepting that information and he would get the knowledge of what horse won in what race at what race park.

And he knew because the teletype printed out the winner of the horse. But there was a time frame involved because the time changed from different states and they were actually able to take advantage of knowing who won that race after the race was over.

So all of the the gamble was gone. It was a sure thing. You knew who won the race. But over in a different time change that had not yet been recorded and they would use the Western Union to telegraph to this guy and that would enable him to go and have sufficient time to put down a whole bunch of money on that race that had already been won.

But nobody there knew it. And of course it's a sure thing and you're going to clean up. And I still remember the name of the horse. I think it was Lucky Dan. Wasn't it Bill? Lucky Dan was supposed to place or show instead of win.

[21 : 38] Yeah something like that. Anyway it was a fascinating movie. And all that was because they wanted inside information. Because when you have inside information that removes the risk.

And the odds are all in your favor. It's a sure thing. So. Is there an appropriate venue for receiving advanced knowledge of what will transpire later?

Now we know there are inappropriate venues. That's when people cheat. Insider trading, horse races and so on. If there is where is this information provided and for whom is it intended?

Most of all is it reliable and on what basis can it be relied? First he who knows the future that is God of course has chosen to disclose it.

This is the one who calls things that are not as though they were. Because with God there is no past, present, and future. There is just the eternal now.

[22 : 45] God never learns anything. God never waits for anything to transpire so he can figure out what's happening or how to counter it. Secondly, the disclosure of the future is intended for believers.

believers. And it is limited to believers. Unregenerate people have no interest in this nor is it available to them.

They can read the words just like you can but they will not compute for them at all simply because they are understood in a spiritual sense and those who do not have the spirit of God are unable to delve into these things.

Three, question, is it reliable? It is reliable because the revelator is reliable. God who cannot lie. And four, prophecies already fulfilled provide credulity for relying upon the accuracy of those unfulfilled.

And if anyone were to ask you, well what makes you think these things you're talking about are actually going to happen that way? What gives you the confidence that these things are going to come to pass like it says?

[23 : 59] And the answer is very simple. It's because of the things that have already come to pass. There's an enormous number of prophecies, in fact, 50 and counting, regarding the life of Christ that are portrayed in the Old Testament in considerable detail that are already fulfilled.

They are matters of history. Where he was to be born, Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, root out of dry ground, son of Jesse, son of David, and so on.

All of these things are given. And the likelihood of anyone being able to fulfill the prophecies regarding Jesus Christ, some of which were given hundreds of years before he was ever born, the possibility of those being fulfilled coincidentally is a staggering number that's unpronounceable.

A detailed scenario is spelled out from both the Old and New Testaments that clearly reveal what is yet to transpire upon the earth. Matthew 24, verses 1 through 14, merely provides a brief but important description.

And if you'll turn to that, I promise not to dwell on it, but we want to at least read it and get it on the record. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 24, this is the most lengthy of all the prophetic portions of Scripture that our Lord Jesus Christ revealed.

[25 : 26] And it is his answer to a question that is posed by the apostles. This passage has specific reference to the nation of Israel, but it involves the entire world.

Matthew, chapter 24, chapter 24, and Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when his disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to him.

Now, remember, this temple was still under construction. It was in process when Jesus and the apostles were here talking about it. This was an enormous architectural undertaking by King Herod, Herod the Great.

and he was an absolutely evil, wretched man. But do you know something else? Most people don't know this, but Herod had a gift for architecture and for building.

And the brilliance of it was displayed in this beautiful temple. The temple already existed, but what Herod was doing was upgrading it, enlarging it, the temple mount, and all of the rest of it, and it was an enormous undertaking.

[26 : 44] Probably employed up to 25,000 to 30,000 artisans, many of whom were stonemasons because everything they worked with was stone.

Nothing wood. Everything was stone. And the quarry was probably fairly nearby, so they've got these huge, huge stones, each one weighing several tons, and they are all carved out of solid limestone, a stone that is more easily worked, of course, than what would be granite or marble.

But nonetheless, they had an enormous amount of it, and if you ever see pictures on television of the Jewish people standing at the western wall, that's the one thing that survives in Judaism, and you'll see the men all gathered on one side, and then a kind of a fence that separates the men from the women, and they're standing there at this western wall, wall, and if you get a close look at that wall, you'll see that it is made of massive stones, one on top of another, huge building blocks, and it may have been some of these that the disciples were talking about as they were relating what was going on in the building of the temple to Jesus, and they're standing here, and they say to him, they came to point out the temple buildings to him, and Jesus answered and said to them, do you not see all these things?

Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down. What?

Torn down? Well, they're just now building them. Isn't even finished? And you know, this building project will not be completed until years after Jesus has been resurrected and ascended.

[28 : 41] Building project will not be finished until something like 40 to 50 AD. And it is going to be breathtakingly beautiful.

And when viewed from a distance, like from coming from the far off hills, and seeing the temple, and the temple mount in the distance, we are told that it was a glory to behold.

It was just unreal what had been accomplished there. And within 20 years of it being finished, it's all going to be destroyed.

70 AD, Titus, Roman general, who will later be the emperor, is going to reduce Jerusalem and this temple to rubble.

And all of the stones are going to be cast down, exactly as Jesus was saying. As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be?

[29 : 51] And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age? Today, we probably refer to this as the end of the world.

When is it going to be the end? Well, the world is not coming to an end. The planet is going to survive. The world isn't coming to an end, but the world order is. And the way the world conducts business, this is all going to come to an end.

A screeching halt, we might say. Jesus answered and said to them, See to it that no one misleads you. The implication is, there will be those who try. Don't fall for it.

Many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars.

See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place. But that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

[30 : 58] earthquakes. Sounding more and more like today, isn't it? You have any idea how many people in the world's population goes to bed hungry every night?

and now we are experiencing earthquakes in multiple places throughout the earth? But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Then, that is, in connection with these things happening, then they will deliver you, it says Gentiles, will deliver Jews up to tribulation, and will kill you.

And you, you Jews, will be hated by all nations on account of my name. Hated by all nations. The Jewish people will be the pariahs.

They will be the world's scapegoat. Hitler made the Jew Europe's scapegoat in World War II. And Hitler convinced an enormous number of people, you know what?

[32 : 04] The economy and the welfare of Europe could be healed and prosperous if it just weren't for the Jew. They're the fault of everything. Eliminate the Jew, and of course that's what they tried to do.

And at that time, many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another, but many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold, but the one who endures to the end it is he who shall be saved.

He's talking about survivors here. And he's talking about enduring, surviving, because it's going to be really tough to do, especially if you are a Jew.

You're going to have a big bullseye printed on you, and there will be open season on Jews. who's going to be preaching this gospel?

Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 tell us that there will be 12,000 Jewish evangelists from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, 144,000 Apostle Pauls turned loose on the planet.

[33 : 24] And the only reason they are going to succeed is because God is going to make them indestructible. And let me say this, during this time, please pick up on this, it's very, very important, during this time, with the 144,000 having the seal of God on their foreheads, and being indestructible, Israel, the planet is going to be returned to a place of commonplace miracles.

There are going to be miracles abounding during this time period because it is a reverting to the dispensation of Israel, and the Jews require a sign, and God has always given them signs, he's going to give them signs in the future, there are going to be all kinds of miraculous manifestations that we would consider completely abnormal.

They are going to be part and parcel of this time of which Jesus is speaking. One of those miracles will be the inability of people to put to death the 144,000.

There will probably be attempts, but nobody is going to succeed because God is going to protect them supernaturally. And there are going to be other things, going to be some really bizarre things happening. Actually, this is going to start.

I can't say that this is part of it because dispensationally it is not part of it, but it is going to happen nonetheless. And I'm talking about the rapture that we are introducing in this particular session.

[35 : 08] will probably scratch the surface, but I'm telling you that based upon the passages that we have recorded and that you have printed out in your bulletin from 1 Thessalonians 4 and from 1 Corinthians chapter 15, both of these passages set forth a miraculous thing that is not going to happen during the dispensation of Israel.

is going to happen at the conclusion of the church dispensation, which is the grace of God, of which you and I are members.

And that is called the rapture. It is the removal. It is the translation. And it involves only those who are in Christ.

There will not be any non-Christians involved in this rapture. We'll look at this in some detail, but I want you to consider the passages, if you would just retain your bulletin and take it home and read those passages that are in it, or read them from your own Bible, because they are very key and germane to what we're going to be talking about in connection with the rapture.

This is going to be a really, really extraordinary, supernatural, bizarre thing. It is going to involve the instantaneous removal of all living Christians anywhere and everywhere in the world, no exceptions, and they are going to be gone in the twinkling of an eye, just quicker than you can snap your fingers.

[36 : 55] others. Doesn't that sound fanciful? Doesn't it?

Sure it does. Why does it sound fancy? Doesn't it sound fantastic? Yeah. You know, the word fantastic is related to fantasy, and what that means is something that is not true.

It is a fantasy, and this sounds like a fantasy, fantastic, amazing, incredible. Do you know what the word incredible means?

It means having no credibility. But that's the way it's going to be, and it is going to be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, and the dead in Christ shall be raised first, and then we which are alive shall be caught up to meet them in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Oh, come on. Boy, that is already, well, I almost made it through the introduction, but I have to open it for Q&A;, and we got a roving mic back there.

[38 : 30] Just, well, as I've often said, folks, we didn't even scratch the surface, we just barely scratched a scratch on the surface, but this is something that needs our time and attention.

I'm not going to hurry it, I don't care if we're in it for however long. First question or comment, anybody? Okay, over here, Susie.

Do you think that Christians would have to be persecuted on a global scale, I mean, a lot, tremendously, for people, for them to be caught away like this and for that not to be a big deal for other people who weren't Christians?

Well, one of the strong, strong points that we will be making is that of the imminence of the return of Christ.

Now, we need to make a really careful distinction, and I've got some literature that I think will be helpful to you, because this is an area of great confusion among believers, and that is, we forever seem to be confusing the second coming of Christ with the rapture of the church, and they are entirely different, because the rapture of the church, and we'll look at the origin of the word, and we'll consider why the majority, why the majority of Christendom does not even accept the concept of the rapture of the church, and the principal reason why they do not, is because it is that same majority that insists on replacement theology, and the rapture does not fit that paradigm, so they need to exclude it, and we will look at that, and also at the origins of it, but for believers, we need to know, this is a very, very important concept, that the rapture of the church, or the translation, is referred to as imminent, that means it could occur at any point of time, there is nothing that needs to be fulfilled before this event can take place, and when it does take place, it will involve only true believers, there are going to be a whole lot of church members,

[41 : 04] Catholic and Protestant, who are left behind, because all they are is church members, they're not members of the body of Christ, they will not be taken, they will be left behind.

Jerry Jenkins, Tim LaHaye wrote a series of best-selling books, a bunch of novels called Left Behind, remember several years ago, sold skillions and skillions of copies, and it was all based upon this rapture and they dramatized it and made novels out of it, and I don't know how many millions of them they sold, and then in the 1970s, Hal Lindsey came out with a book that was called The Late Great Planet Earth, and many of you have read it, and it became the all-time best-seller for the whole decade of the 70s, and it was predicated upon this idea of the rapture and the removal of believers from the earthly scene, and there have been movies made about it and so on, some of them good and some of them not so good.

So, this thing is going to be imminent, and it has nothing to do with persecution of believers, because in the economy of God, at a time that we do not know, he is going to sound that trumpet, and when he does, the dead in Christ shall rise first, we who are alive and remain will be caught up with him to be with the Lord in the air.

Jesus is not coming to the earth for the rapture. He is coming with clouds in the air, and we will be caught up from the earth with him, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Now, I know some of you might be concerned because you're scared of height, but trust me, that will not be a problem when that time comes, because in the first place, before we are caught up to be with the Lord, in the blinking of an eye, just quicker than that, you are going to be changed.

[43 : 10] So am I. These bodies of corruption, which means a body that is able to die, is going to put on incorruption, and you'll no longer be able to die.

These bodies of mortality or incorruption, by incorruption I mean our bodies will not be subject to decay and disease like they are now, and when we put on immortality, then they will not be subject to death, and that too.

It's fantastic. Come on, Marv, you don't really believe that, do you? Why would I not believe it? Well, I'll tell you, why people would not believe it is because it is completely contrary to every human experience that we're familiar with.

There's nothing natural about that. It's completely unnatural. Better yet, it's supernatural. And there isn't anything ordinary about it, because we evaluate everything as to its likelihood or its probability based on our experience, and what we know, and what we've seen.

And this is completely off the charts. I mean, this is way out there. So we don't have any basis for comparing and saying, well, yeah, that sounds very reasonable. No, it doesn't.

[44 : 30] It doesn't sound very reasonable at all. In fact, it doesn't sound any more reasonable than, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Bang, that's it. Well, what frame of reference do you have for that?

Zero. Nothing. And yet, we believe that's what happened. So it has nothing to do with persecution. It has nothing to do with the state of the church. It has nothing to do with individual behavior or deservedness or anything of the kind.

It is in the time frame of God who has established that time. We don't know when it is. We could be out of here before you hit the parking lot.

today. Or it could be another, who knows, how many years. I don't know. You know my safe answer that I always give, don't you? We are closer than anybody has ever been.

But beyond that, it's foolish to set dates. Other comments or questions? Anyone? Alex, thank you for being our young legs today.

[45 : 39] I was just thinking about when those who believe in Jesus are taken out of here in the rapture, the rest of the world, either there's not going to be that many of us left and won't be missed, or they're going to have to come up with some explanation.

So I've come up with some different things that I think could be explanations that they would give, but given the fact that Donald Trump may be our president, I'd like to know what his explanation might be.

Well, you know what? if Donald Trump is a serious Presbyterian, the vast majority of Presbyterians are into replacement theology, and they would say there isn't going to be any such thing as a rapture.

That's just a figment of your imagination. They deny the reality of the rapture, and they also deny the reality of a literal millennial reign of Christ, and they say that it's simply spiritual, and they have a different method of interpreting the subject of prophecy.

Now, this is interesting, because those into replacement theology, and this is the majority viewpoint, this is, for instance, this is all of the Roman Catholics. All of the Roman Catholics see and believe very firmly that the Roman Catholic Church is the replacement for the nation of Israel as the people of God.

[47 : 19] And those who have split off the Roman Catholic Church, a la Lutheranism and Presbyterian and so on, they believe pretty much the same thing, that they are the new Israel.

And they interpret all of the Bible just like we do, except when it comes to prophecy.

Then they spiritualize it and say it doesn't really mean that. It doesn't really mean that. It's all figurative and spiritual. spiritual. And that, of course, allows them to eliminate the millennial reign of Christ.

And they believe this is the millennium. We are living in it now. And when you look at the conditions that are going to take place in the millennium, it's kind of hard to believe that we're in it now because we don't have very many wolves and sheep lying down together and we don't have the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea.

We don't have men building, men taking their spears and burning and making them into pruning hooks. And this is not a time of world peace.

[48 : 35] That's one of the things that's going to characterize the millennial reign of Christ. The Prince of Peace is going to be here and there will be peace. Not like what we've got today.

So this is a far cry from anything of the millennium. Other comments or questions? I think it was last winter we were at Word of Life in Florida and they were talking about the rapture and the speaker said that if there's anyone here today that's not saved, he said, the rapture occurs, he said, congratulations, you are now the new owners of Word of Life International with a presence in 50 countries.

Because the Christians are gone. Yep. And bear in mind, Christians aren't gone because they deserve to be gone. We're going to look at the objections to the rapture and the opposition that people have to it and the reasons that they give and you'll be able to draw your own conclusions.

But it's a very, very important concept. This is also referred to as the Christians blessed hope. This is looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is Titus 2.13. So, Gary. What's going to be the message of the 144,000? The message of the 144,000 is going to be pretty much the same as the message was that was preached by the 12 apostles, by Jesus and by John the Baptist.

[50 : 04] And it is, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And the message will be the king is coming and you better get ready for them. But this time, it won't be the rapture.

This will be the second coming. And men will have opportunity to repent in order to be ready for the king when he comes. But, one of the chief things that will characterize the tribulation period, and the text makes this very clear, we'll see when we get to it, is that men will refuse to repent.

They will harden their hearts, and dig in their heels, and shake their fist at God. And for all of these things coming upon the earth, we're told, men will still not repent.

And God is going to tighten the screws, and it's going to become more and more devastating. It's going to be something. It isn't called the great tribulation for nothing.

It's going to be something, really. Other thoughts? Okay, we always hear the scripture that says, and the word will be preached throughout the world, and then the end will come.

[51 : 32] And I know a lot of people believe that that's now, when we manage to preach the gospel throughout the whole world, the end will come. But I'm thinking that means the 144,000, when they manage to preach that throughout the whole world, then the end comes.

What do you think? Well, I'm confident that you're right about that. And many believe, and with this we'll have to conclude, but many believe, and this will tie in when we get to it and explain post-millennialism, there is premillennialism, amillennialism, and post-millennialism.

And don't be disturbed by those terms. I trust that we'll be able to explain them fully so that you'll have a good firm fix on them when we get to them. But for those who embrace post-millennialism, that means their belief is that Christ will come at the conclusion of the millennium, hence the word post, post-millennial.

And what is to bring in the millennium is the church. church, they believe that the church is charged with the task of converting the world, evangelizing the world through preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And when we have succeeded in Christianizing the whole world, we will then have made the world a fit place for Christ to return to.

[53 : 01] And then he will come. That will be at the end of the millennium. And we're going to create the millennium. That's the idea of post-millennialism. It isn't held by a great many people, and you can understand why, because, well, for obvious reasons.

But, nonetheless, that's the position that is held. And many believe, as Dottie has said, that when Jesus is speaking in Matthew 24, he says in verse 14, and this gospel of the kingdom, kingdom, now we have tried to make a careful distinction between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God.

And what we are telling you, and have been telling you, is that there is not just one gospel. There's more than one gospel. And people vibrate when they hear that.

While it is true, there is one gospel that saves today, and that is the gospel of the grace of God, the message of which is, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

That's our gospel. That's what we preach. That's the gospel of the grace of God. But that's not what this is. This is the gospel of the kingdom. Now, if words mean anything, you cannot equate those.

[54 : 21] The gospel of the kingdom did not incorporate the gospel of the grace of God. It was different. It has to do with the coming of the king. And that's exactly what John the Baptist preached when he went out among the throngs of Israel.

He said, repent, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. What do you mean? I mean, the king is coming, and here he is, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. But Jesus rejected that king.

So this is the message. The gospel of the grace of God is for the church, the body of Christ. And when it's removed through the rapture, there aren't going to be any Christians here.

There aren't going to be any Christians here. None. And evangelism is going to begin with the conversion of the 144,000.

I take it, oh my, well, we're really going on the time, but let me just finish this verse 14, if I may. this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world.

[55 : 28] And who's going to be preaching it? These 144,000 for a witness to all the nations. And then the end shall come.

And that end will be the return of Christ, not the rapture, but the second coming, the return of Christ. This is when every eye will see him.

I've got some important paperwork that I want to share with you that make clear-cut distinctions between the rapture and the second coming. And you'll need to get those firmly fixed in mind, and it will settle a lot of issues for you regarding the future and the understanding of prophecy.

Trust me. We're in for some really exciting stuff, and I don't want to, what shall I say, I don't want to dramatize this or oversell it or anything of the kind, but this is pretty dramatic stuff that is coming, and I won't have to dramatize it.

I won't have to hype it. It's going to have hype of its own, and I think it will be quite clear. So what you need to do, what everybody needs to do in the hearing of this, is just make sure you're ready.

[56 : 42] Someone has said, I'm not looking for the undertaker, I'm looking for the upper taker, and he is going to come and catch away everyone that believes in, I know it is going to result in incredible confusion, and conflagration, and misunderstanding, and all kinds of stuff.

You can imagine, who knows how many millions of people are going to be removed from this earth in the flesh of an eye. Where did they go? What happened to these people?

What's going on anyway? I don't know what they're going to do for way of explanations, but we'll look at some of the possibilities. Would you stand please? Father, these are sobering times coming upon this earth, and we just can't imagine the reality of what we're talking about.

And the reason we can't is because it is so very far removed from anything that we are familiar with. Yet, it is all within the capability of our omnipotent God.

And we believe you to be God who is very, very conversant with everything supernatural. Nothing lays beyond your power or your ability or your wisdom.

[58 : 02] And we want this congregation as individuals and as a church to be able to enjoy the peace and the rest that comes from knowing Jesus Christ, regardless of what's happening in this old sin-sick world.

And our prayer for anyone who may be here today, young or old, who has never put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, may they see Him as their only possible hope, because He is.

And apart from Him, we can do nothing. Thank you for that gracious provision that has been made for everyone who will put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus.

Thank you for forgiveness. Thank you for the peace that that forgiveness brings. Thank you for the certain hope that we have so that we are not left in the dark regarding the future like so many in the world are.

We bless you for it and we trust that as we continue an examination of this material, you will undertake for us, enable us to see the practicality of it and that it may urge us on to maturity and godliness in the Lord Jesus.

[59 : 18] But now are we the children of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Pray that each of us will be comforted with that hope in Christ's name. Amen.