

Revelation - an introduction

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. I sure do appreciate all you folks being here today. Thank you for coming. And we've got some really extraordinary material before us because we're going to open our consideration of the book of the Revelation.

And today will be more or less an introductory session to that. You should have two handouts, one describing the text that we'll be dealing with from the 26th translation New Testament and the revelation of John, which is wrongly so called.

And we'll tell you why that is a little bit later. And then you have a comparison sheet of the probationary world, the cursed world with the eternal world and the redeemed world. And then on the flip side of that, there is other material that will help you in understanding the book of the revelation as well.

So what I would like to do now is just open with a word of prayer and then we'll get right to it. I suspect that there may be a number of questions as a result of the material today.

So feel free to interrupt me at any point in time. And we will just stop right there and do our best to deal with the question that you have. And then we'll move on. So let's pray.

[1 : 1 6] We are grateful, Father, for this occasion to be together. Thank you for making it possible for each one to be here. Thank you for the truth that is before us. We pray for a facility not only of expressing it, but understanding, comprehending and appreciating it.

We ask your blessing upon our study, upon the meal that follows and the fellowship that we always enjoy in Christ. We pray in his name with thanksgiving. Amen. Amen. The whole subject of future things has been of interest to people ever since, I suspect, the Garden of Eden.

Because from the very first time that sin was committed, a Redeemer was promised. And the coming of that Redeemer, of course, would be something that would take place in the future.

We cannot help but wonder if Eve didn't think that perhaps Cain would be that Redeemer. We know he turned out to be something else. But it took 4,000 years for God's promise of a Redeemer to show up.

And when he did, he came in the person of the babe of Bethlehem and is known as Jesus the Messiah. They waited for 4,000 years in anticipation of the coming of the one that God promised.

[2 : 3 2] Now we have been waiting about 2,000 years for his return. But I'd remind you that we've only waited half as long as they waited for the first coming.

We have always been intrigued by the future. It is probably because we are so displeased or disappointed with the present.

And we tend to think that something better is lying up ahead. What would it be? And I thought it was of real interest to share with you an article that is in a book on the Revelation, penned by Dr. Henry Morris, who in my estimation was one of God's gifts to the 20th century.

He is now with the Lord. But in his commentary on the book of Revelation, he offered this. The proliferation of astrologers, seers, mediums, and other latter-day prophets is one direct result of widespread dissatisfaction with present circumstances and the wistful desire of millions throughout the world to know the future.

Feeling that science and humanism have failed, people shift their faith to pseudoscience and superhumanism, still desperately searching for meaningful answers for their future.

[3 : 55] But these false prophets are still less reliable. To illustrate this fact, consider the predictions made by the nation's leading seers at the beginning of 1979 concerning the major events which would occur in 1979.

Now this particular year is given because it coincides with the year that this book was actually published when Dr. Morris published the book on the Revelation. So we're talking about prophecies that were given in the National Enquirer magazine as they do every year.

But this was 30 years ago, 1979. He says, Each year, the nation's most read newspaper, the National Enquirer...

That gave me pause. The National Enquirer is the nation's most read newspaper? Maybe that helps to explain the mess that the country is in.

That may say more about the readership than it does about the publication. Wow. Amazing. At any rate, they publish their current predictions at the beginning of the year.

[5 : 14] Significantly, however, they never publish their success ratios at the end of the year. As a matter of fact, instead of being supernaturally inspired prophets, they would almost have to be supernaturally uninspired.

Their success ratio is so low that it seems they could have done better just by random guessing. Approximately 90 predictions were published, made by the 10 top psychics interviewed by National Enquirer.

You know, Gene Dixon and that crowd. So far as I can determine, Dr. Morris goes on, not one of those prophecies was fulfilled in 1979 or even in 1980, as they were supposed to have been.

One prediction was partially fulfilled, namely that Ted Kennedy will make a bid for the presidency. Almost anyone could have guessed this.

But the same prediction also said that John Connolly would be his running mate. Another said that Ted Kennedy would announce his belief in reincarnation.

[6 : 28] And still another that Angie Dickinson would tell all of her secret affair with John F. Kennedy. The most flagrantly unfulfilled prediction was that inflation would be stopped dead in its tracks.

Along with others, that scientists would announce amazing discoveries that would cure cancer, tooth decay, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, arthritis, the common cold, and the aging process itself.

Other notoriously unfulfilled prophecies include the following. Now remember, this was 1979. President Carter will be injured in a hang gliding accident.

Debbie Boone will appear in an X-rated movie. Fabulous oil discoveries in East Texas. Pope John Paul II will announce plans to ordain women priests.

An Eskimo girl will be elected as Miss World. Food prices dramatically slashed. There will be a woman football referee in the NFL. Spiro Agnew will win an acting award.

[7 : 37] Ford Motor Company will leave America to protest taxes. Ronald Reagan will be deserted by his wife. California coastline reshaped by a fearfully devastating earthquake.

Idi Amin will be assassinated. A new planet discovered by the Venus probe. Jackie Anassas will be appointed ambassador to an African nation. Walter Cronkite will be appointed a U.S. diplomat in the South Pacific.

The genuine holy shroud will be found in Egypt. Muhammad Ali will win a seat in Congress. And the first human, a red-haired boy, will be cloned in Kentucky.

And on and on. None of the psychics predicted such major 1979 events as the Iranian crisis. Remember the takeover of the American embassy that started all of this business with Islam when Carter was president in 1979?

The Russian troops in Cuba. The tragic DC-10 crash in Chicago. The Nicaraguan Revolution.

[8 : 51] The tragedies of the Cambodian genocide and Vietnamese boat people. Or any of the other really important events of 1979. A similar record of failure resulted with the Enquirer's 1980 prophecies.

It is amazing that so many millions of people continue to show any interest in such notoriously unreliable false prophets as these.

And the National Enquirer is still a thriving business. And people are still buying it. And still placing their confidence in it. Because inquiring minds want to know.

Well, if an inquiring mind really wants to know. Then we ought to go to the only infallible source that there is. And there we will find what we need to know.

And we're speaking, of course, of the scriptures. We are going to launch at least an introductory session on the book of the Revelation. And as I pointed out to you, we are not going to be studying the book in detail.

[10 : 01] We are not even going to be studying it verse by verse. But we are going to be studying selected portions of it. I do not know how long this is going to take. I'm sure it will be several sessions.

Because after all, there are 22 chapters in it. And some of them require more attention than others. So, to get some preliminary and introductory things out of the way.

This document that we have, first of all, is in most translations misnamed. If you are looking at the sheet that I gave you from the 26th translation New Testament.

It says the revelation of John. Well, it isn't. And there is no place in the text where it is referred to as John's revelation. This is a designation that was given to by man.

It is a singular revelation. Although, the book does contain a number of astounding revelations.

[11 : 00] About a whole host of things that are going to take place on the earth and in heaven. But technically, in so far as the book itself is concerned.

It is about one singular revelation. It is a revelation of Jesus the Messiah. It isn't really a revelation about things.

Even though it does do that. It is a revelation about a person. And that person is Jesus Christ. He is the recipient of the revelation.

His father gave him the son, the revelation. And he, through the angelic messenger, communicated it to John.

John is the human penman of the book of Revelation. As best we can determine, this was written somewhere in the vicinity of 95 AD.

[12 : 02] That means approximately 55 or 60 years after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos.

And tradition tells us, and I think it is rather well supported. That John was the junior member of the original 12 apostles. Peter was probably the oldest or one of the oldest.

John, who wrote the Gospel of John. First, second, and third John also wrote the Revelation. He is one of the sons of Zebedee. He has a brother by the name of James.

And he is out of the picture by this time. As far as we can determine, John, the beloved, who wrote the Revelation, is the only apostle who died a natural death.

And yet, he was exiled when death came to him because he had been banished to this Isle of Patmos. The word, the Revelation, in the Greek is the Apocalypse or Apocalypse.

[13 : 03] And it simply means the disclosure, the unveiling, the unfolding, the opening, the placing on display.

It is the same word that is used in conjunction with what we would call the unveiling of a statue. If you were to go to a dedication where a statue in someone's honor is going to be unveiled, you will see it there as the crowd gathers for the ceremony.

And there is a huge covering over the statue so that nobody actually can see it. It's under there.

And when the appropriate time comes, then the covering is removed. And that which is behind it is unveiled.

The veil is taken off. And now you can see what the statue is. Only in the case of the book of the Revelation, it will not be a statue. It will be the unveiling or the disclosure of Jesus the Messiah.

[14 : 14] And that is described in the early chapters as we look at it. The book was written to show the things that will come to pass.

I think it is safe to say that probably most people consider the book of the Revelation to be the most confusing book in all of the Bible.

In my estimation, it most certainly is not. And it was never intended to be. It is a book that is designed to set forth a series of disclosures culminating in the disclosure of the person of Jesus Christ.

It is not a book of concealment. It is not a book of intended befuddlement or obfuscation or mystery. It is a book that is designed and written to be understood and appreciated.

A book from which we can and should draw immeasurable comfort. But again, it is all in how you interpret it.

[15 : 28] And that is true with everything in the Bible. Now there are basic schools of interpretation that are applied to this book. And we are going to just briefly mention them.

First of all, there is the preterist view. The preterist view, that is spelled P-R-E-T-E-R-I-S-T. The preterist view sees all of the events in the book of Revelation as history.

They have already taken place. At the time John is writing these things, he writes them in a kind of code. Because the content is designed to communicate truth and information to those who are initiated.

And to those who can break the code or understand the code. And one of the reasons it was written in code was because they believed this was during a time of intense persecution. And if the writer John came right out and named names and people and places, etc.

It would get a whole lot of people into more difficulty. So he wrote a veiled message. And the whole thing has already taken place. It is history. And then there is a different, slightly modified historical view that sees the content of the book of Revelation as a progressive historical reality.

[16 : 52] In other words, if you know how to interpret the book of Revelation, you will be able to find in it the Napoleonic Wars, which took place in the 1800s.

And you will be able to find the rise of Islam, which is recorded in the book of Revelation. So that as you read through these 22 chapters, you can identify certain historical events that transpired in human history from the first century up to the present time.

In other words, it is history marching on. And as you flip the pages of Revelation, you are flipping through the centuries that are past. That is another modified historical view.

Then there is an idealist view. This is a popular way of approaching the book that many implement today. Especially among the more liberally persuaded who do not see the book as inspired word of God as we do.

They would take the idealist view of interpretation, which is simply this. The entirety of the book of Revelation is made up of nothing but parables and myths.

[18 : 14] None of this is actual. None of it is really true. It was never intended to convey that idea. The whole point is nothing more than a parable of one type after another that is designed to set forth the ongoing struggle between good and evil.

And that in the end, good wins out. That's the only message of the book. It is a struggle. It is parabolic. It is all myths, allegories, fictions.

None of it is actually true. None of it is really true. It's all made up in story form. Some of it rather grotesque and bloody, etc.

And it is just depicting man's struggle of good and evil. And in the end, good wins out. That's the idealist view.

And the view that I have left for the last is that which we espouse. And that is the futurist view. The futurist view, as the word implies, sees the majority of the Revelation as future.

[19 : 27] These events have not yet transpired. They will. They are going to come to pass in God's own timetable.

And the vast majority of this is all yet to happen. And there's, of course, all kinds of speculation in regard to that.

But we will not engage in any of the speculation because that is futile and ultimately embarrassing. Because you're usually always wrong.

We are going to approach the book from a literal standpoint, not an allegoristic standpoint or a figurative standpoint. Because I am convinced that only a literal understanding of the text provides any kind of coherence.

It has got to be interpreted literally. Now, this is not to say that there are not significant symbols in the book. Of course there are. The book is laced with all kinds of symbols.

[20 : 35] But here's my point. The symbols point to a reality. That's what I mean by a literal approach. What do these symbols mean?

A beast with seven heads and ten horns. What does it mean? Well, you can take the position. It doesn't mean anything. Just an arbitrary number. Just a number the writer wanted to depict.

A really grotesque beast. So he made up one. And it has seven heads and ten horns. Well, that's nonsense. The seven heads and the ten horns are symbolic.

But, what are they symbolic of? The answer is, they are symbolic of a literal reality.

These things mean something. They do not mean nothing. Nothing. Nothing. And they do not mean whatever you want to assign to it. They have a meaning that is intended by the Spirit of God who inspired this.

[21 : 39] And the text itself, in most cases, will interpret for us what the meaning is. Now, we'll have to make periodic visits to the book of Daniel. Because Daniel and Revelation are significantly connected.

And you cannot understand one without the commentary that is provided by the other. So, if the meaning... And this isn't true only of Revelation.

This is true of the Bible as a whole. If the meaning is not literal, it must remain unintelligible.

Because if it is not literal, then it has to be figurative or allegorical. But, then who is to determine what the figure or the allegory is?

Because you'll have one answer, you'll have another, and you'll have another, and I'll have another. What this boils down to, bottom line is, the text is unintelligible.

[22 : 45] Nobody can understand what it means. And, therefore, if it is unintelligible, if you cannot determine with any degree of certainty what it means, what can you hope to achieve from it?

How can you possibly be comforted from it when you have no idea that your interpretation is the right one? How can you be enlightened when you have no idea because equally good minds completely disagree with you as to your interpretation?

So, the revelation is essentially worthless if you do not approach it from a literal standpoint. And, not only that, but I am convinced that this is true of the scriptures in general.

It must be approached literally. God did not speak with the intent of confounding or confusing or obfuscating.

This is a record that is designed to be read, understood, and appreciated. In the very first few verses of the book, as we'll see shortly, we are told that there is a special blessing that is promised and reserved for the one who reads and understands the prophecies of this book.

[24 : 04] Well, now, what does a verse like that do to what we've just been talking about? If you cannot understand it, how can there possibly be any meaningful blessing derived from it?

Everything is just a huge question mark. Listen, God does not want his people to be in the dark. That's why he gave us this book. We are expected to benefit from it.

We are expected to read it and understand it. Before we go into the text, I want you to understand also, and to me this is very powerful. Revelation, the book of the Revelation, is the sequel to the book of Genesis.

As Genesis is the book of beginnings, Revelation is the book of endings. It is the wrap-up.

All that is written between Genesis and Revelation is simply an historical explanation of how mankind has gotten from there to here.

[25 : 15] That is, from creation to the conclusion. It opens with Genesis and it concludes in Revelation. Genesis is the alpha.

Revelation is the omega of God's revelation. Probably more commentaries and more varied interpretations have been written about this book than about any other.

I think it is safe to say. Now, in connection with what I just said, I want you to take one of the sheets that I've given you and look at it, if you will, of the page that has the probationary world, Genesis and the eternal world.

The connection between these, I think, is just absolutely unavoidable. And it is impossible to conclude that this is coincidental. On the left-hand side, you see all of the listing of Genesis.

On the right-hand side, the eternal world and the redeemed world as opposed to the cursed world. And I'm not going to take the time to read all of these off because with you having the copy in front of you, you can read them just as well yourself.

[26 : 27] And these are take-homes, so you'll have a permanent record of it. But as you compare the right and the left, you cannot, I think, reach any conclusion other than the fact that there is orderliness here, there is intentionality.

This is far too great to consider a coincidence. Remember, we have spoken of the Bible as a whole, as a book of redemption. And as the record opens, we have Milton's classic paradise.

And then with creation that God pronounced good. And then we have paradise lost. And that's the fall.

The paradise is lost. Man is ejected from the garden. And then all of the rest of the Bible, from Genesis 3 all the way through the book of the Revelation, has to do with the historical events that have occurred between the time of paradise being lost and paradise being regained.

The regained, of course, is where the redemptive factor comes in. And that portrays Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. So the Bible is a book of redemption.

[27 : 43] It starts out with something wonderful. Something wonderful is lost. And then an enormous price is paid in order to regain that which was lost.

Also, if you will turn over to the backside of that, I want to call your attention to another thing that is just absolutely remarkable.

And again, too much for coincidence. Look, if you will, at the bottom part of the page for the seal of the seven. It is remarkable. We have in the book of Revelation seven churches, seven spirits, seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven lamps, seven seals, seven horns, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven thousands, seven heads, seven crowns, seven angels, seven plagues.

Anybody who can look at that and say, my, what an amazing coincidence is somebody who just will not be convinced no matter what. We see orderliness here and design and intentionality that is undeniable.

And what is the significance of seven? Throughout the scriptures, the number seven is the number of God. It is the number of perfection. It is the number of completion.

[29 : 02] And it's interesting, the number of man is six. Fall short of God. And the mark of the beast will be the triune six, the six, six, six.

God deals in sevens. And seven is very, very significant to him. It is the number of completion, the number of deity. It is the number of the wrap up.

And it is, I think, virtually undeniable. And there are more. There's the seven vials, the seven mountains, and the seven kings. Of Revelation 17.

So there are 19 sevens. And these sevens appear here in the Revelation more than any place else like this in all of Scripture.

So it is one more indication that there is orderliness and intentionality here. Now if you'll take your Revelation of John, chapter 1. This is, again, from the 26th translation, New Testament.

[30 : 09] A volume that I have admired and used over the years. Unfortunately, it's out of print now. So I've made copies of this and made them available.

And once again, may I remind you that as you read this, the bold print that begins each verse is the translation from the King James Version of 1611.

And then the other versions under that, and you don't know what all of those mean, but I'm used to using and looking at them. The first one, for instance, the unveiling the apocalypse of Jesus Christ which God gave him.

You see a M-O-N. Well, what's that? Well, that's the Montgomery translation which they utilized. And then there is the Knox translation.

And you move on down. There is the basic English translation that is abbreviated with B-A-S. Moffat's translation is M-O-F. Weymouth is W-E-Y. And on down the page, Phillips translation.

[31 : 14] And then there is the Reims-Due, which is the Roman Catholic translation. And verse 2, the A-S-V is the American Standard Version and so on. That's just their abbreviation for each of those 26 translations that they consulted in providing this.

So the book opens with the Revelation, singular, not Revelations. I don't know how many times I hear people refer to the Bible as the Book of Revelations.

And I don't want to be picky because there are plural Revelations in it. There are a lot of disclosures and unveilings in the book. A lot of surprises in the book.

But technically, if you want to be technical, and we should about the title of it, it is the Revelation, singular. It is the Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

That's going to be the capstone of it. And when is that most dramatically going to be set forth? That will be near the end of the book. Now we've got in chapters 4 and 5 some rather stunning things as well.

[32 : 21] And even here in chapter 1. But historically, as far as man is concerned, when every eye will see him. That's the Revelation that is being spoken of here.

When he comes and every eye will see him. Matthew 24 and Revelation 19. That principally is what all of this is working toward. So, it is the unveiling or the apocalypse.

And the apocalypse to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.

Basic English says, So that his servants might have knowledge of the things which will quickly take place. Now, right away, we've got a semantic problem here.

An interpretation problem. Because there is a typical kind of response to look at this and say, Well, how long is shortly?

[33 : 26] Or how quick is shortly? I mean, after all, this was written 2,000 years ago. And if John, writing under inspiration, says the things which must shortly take place.

People who read this as it became available were probably thinking, A couple of years? Ten years max?

And now we're 2,000 years. How can you call this shortly? And immediately we've got a problem. So, what we need to do is look at the derivation of these words and understand.

And right off the bat, the basic English gives us a little hint. But it's not a whole lot of help. So that his servants might have knowledge of the things which will quickly take place.

And that's the key. What we are looking for, and what the Greek is expressing here, Is not that these things are going to happen within a near proximity of time.

[34 : 31] Mere months or a couple of years at the most. That is not what the Greek is expressing. What it is expressing is the rapidity with which these things are going to transpire.

Because the really significant thing about this is this. Two things. Two things. In the Revelation, there are going to be cataclysmic events that are going to make a worldwide impact in a very severe fashion.

Cataclysmic events of worldwide scope. And they are going to happen with great rapidity. One after another.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. You won't even be able to get the latest publication issue of a magazine to press without there being other events unfolding that you will not include in it.

And it will immediately make it out of date. Because this thing is going to happen in rapid fire order. That's the meaning that is being conveyed here. And really, as you read the Revelation, it gives you that impression.

[35 : 41] I mean, each chapter and each event, you no sooner get done with dealing with one of these catastrophes and, oh no! Here's another! Right on the back of it. People haven't even recovered from the other one.

And now there is another. And that's going to be exactly the way it's going to transpire. The idea of eminence is always involved. And the idea of great rapidity.

That may not be as clear to you now as it will become as we move on through the book. The events which must shortly come to pass. None of these translations really do this justice.

I just want to emphasize the meaning of that shortly. And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bear record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein.

[36 : 59] Now, how in the world is there any possibility of keeping them if you can't even understand them? How can you abide by them? How can you order them in your life if you can't even understand them?

And keep those things which are written therein. For the time is at hand. And here we've got another chronological aspect that needs to be dealt with. Montgomery renders it, For the crisis is at hand.

Taylor, I think Ken Taylor in his Living Bible really threw us off here, but it is, For the time is near when these things will all come true.

And once again, he is laboring under the same assumption that so many have, that this is a real short period of time. And by the way, when you interpret it like that, it is easy to understand how people adopt the historical view of interpretation.

That these things have already transpired. They've already happened. Because when the book opens, it says that they were going to happen shortly. So, you move on through the book of Revelation, and here you see these events transpire.

[38 : 09] This was in the 4th century. This was in the 5th century. This was in the 7th century. This was in the 9th century. This was in the 12th century. And all of those things began way back then.

And I can understand how they would reach that conclusion. Unfortunately, the rest of the book, I think, will demonstrate that it is not a valid conclusion or interpretation. And I think that will become very clear to you as we move on.

John, to the seven churches, which are in Asia, verse 4, Grace be to you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come.

And from the seven spirits, which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness. The word here for witness in the Greek word, is the word martyr.

From which we get the English word, martyr. Here, Jesus Christ, is referred to as a martyr. In fact, that's the appellation that is given to all who were witnesses for Christ as martyrs.

[39 : 07] And the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests, unto God and his father.

To him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Now, one other thing that I want to mention, that I think is absolutely essential to understanding this book.

You will be astounded as we move through it, how very, very intensely, Jewish, this book is.

It is very Jewish. Not only does the basic truth of it, center around the disclosure or unveiling, of a Jewish Messiah, Yeshua HaMashiach, but it also centers and focuses upon, God's covenant chosen people, the nation of Israel.

They are very, very key to this book. And apart from seeing the significance, and the peculiarity, that God has established with the nation of Israel, you'll never understand the revelation.

[40 : 25] And when you see the Jewishness of it, it is, in fact, I think it was, I think I was discussing this, one time, years ago, when we were going through it.

And, Dave Weinbrenner, offered a conclusion that he had reached, and he said, he thought, the book of Revelation, is the most Jewish book, in the New Testament.

And I have to conclude, I think he's right. You will see, the Jewishness surface, time and time again. And without the historicity, of the nation of Israel, and its strategic involvement, in the affairs of men, and the plan and program of God, you never understand this book.

And that's another reason, by the way, if I might just slip in something here, why the replacement theologians, vary so greatly from us, in our premillennial dispensational interpretation, of the Bible, and of the Revelation in particular.

They, of course, do not subscribe to our viewpoint. They come to prophetic portions of scripture, and they allegorize it. And they do not at all see, any future for the nation of Israel.

[41 : 47] So, whereas we see Israel, in the book of Revelation, repeatedly, they don't see Israel at all. Except, as it involves you.

You, you, are Israel, in the replacement view of theology, the church, has become Israel. And that, of course, impacts and affects their interpretation, of the Revelation, as ours, impacts our interpretation, as well.

Christ describes himself, as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And, the A to Z, the Alpha, of course, is the first letter in the Greek alphabet.

Omega is the end. We would anglicize that, and say that, Jesus Christ is everything, from A to Z. In the Greek, they simply say, He is everything, from Alpha to Omega.

He is the beginning and the end. He is the Genesis, and He is the Revelation. Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and John was experiencing tribulation, as were, virtually all of the church, at this time.

[43 : 04] Because, in, 95 A.D., the temperature was red hot, with persecution, of believers, of Jews, and of believers, virtually all over, the Mediterranean world.

John, was not, given a martyr's, violent death, as were the other apostles, but he was exiled. And we do not know, that this is true, but tradition says, that John lived, to the ripe old age, of being in his 90's, and that he was, at the time of his death, considered to be, the Bishop, of Ephesus, if you will, which of course, was on the mainland.

And when John talks about, the churches, the 70's churches in Asia, that of course is, Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. And if you go to Turkey today, you can take, a guided tour, that, many offer, through, Christian organizations, and they will take you, to the ruins, of these, seven cities, that are mentioned here, in the book of the Revelation, and you can actually see, where these, places were.

They were, seven, actual, geographical, physical, institutions, that existed, at the time, John was writing this. Now I must confess, I have never, been able, to arrive, at a conclusion, regarding, the, identity, or the ongoing identity, or the future identity, of these seven churches, I have never been able, to arrive, at an interpretation, that completely satisfies me.

And I have read them all, from soup to nuts. And each one of them, has their problems. And I have got a lot, of question marks, regarding these seven churches, and I just want to throw out, something, for your consideration.

[45 : 01] This is just a, I can't even say, it's a Wiseman opinion. I'll say, it's a Wiseman opinion, in progress. And I haven't, I can't say that I've arrived, at a conclusion, that I'm happy with it.

But, I'm wondering, I'm wondering, if these seven churches, are not, a description, of seven, different, kinds, of churches, churches, that have, always existed, from the time, it was brought into being, even up to, and including, the present day.

That may be, wide of the mark. Some see, these churches, as having, existed, in, John's day, and I think, they did.

I think, they were seven, actual, geographical places. I think, they did. But, they don't now. They are now, just in ruins.

And that, which we regard, at one time, as having been, a stronghold, for Christianity, is now Muslim. All of these places, are in, modern day, Turkey.

[46 : 24] And Turkey, is an Islamic, country. It is not, governed by, Sharia law. They have a, democratic form, of government, where, the religious element, is not in charge, of the government.

And much of Turkey, is a secular type government. But the predominant, religion there, by far and away, probably 95%, is Muslim.

And you know, it's kind of, gut wrenching, to realize, that this, is the same, geography, that the apostle Paul, spent, blood, sweat, and tears on.

And now, it is Islamic. Sobering, to think of that, isn't it? So these seven churches, that did exist, when John wrote this, and these, this letter, this revelation, was addressed, to these seven churches, they are no longer, in existence.

What part, do these seven churches, play today? Some suggest, that they are going, to be reestablished, and rebuilt, in those same places, and they will be in vogue, when these things, come to pass.

[47 : 46] I suppose, that's a possibility, but for me, it's a stretch. So I want you, to think about that, and I'll certainly, be open to anything, that you can come up with, by way of suggestions, because as I've said, I've never found, any interpretation, pre-millennial, dispensational, allegorical, or anything else, that satisfies me, about the identity, of these churches.

I suspect, I suspect, that, churches, that fit, the description, that is given, of these individual ones, are in existence now.

I think there are, Ephesian type churches, in existence, right now. I think there are, Laodicean churches, in existence, right now. I think there are, Thyatiran churches, in existence, right now.

That is, they are, they are characteristic, of these, attributes, that are ascribed, to them. And we all know, do we not, that, even within, what we would call, loosely, Christendom, there are churches, all the way, from here, that we would call, perhaps, ultra conservative, to all the way, over here, ultra liberal, they all consider, themselves, a church, and then most, are where?

Somewhere, in between. So, it's entirely, possible, that this, message, which is, spiritual in nature, could be very, appropriate to, all kinds, in other words, I'm, what this, what this would be saying, then, is that there are, seven different kinds, of churches today.

[49 : 40] Which one, does your church fit? As you read, the description, that is given, of each of these, seven churches, where would you put, your church? I suppose, most pastors, would put their church, in a position, that would, make them look pretty good.

Take the least amount, of rebuke, and get the most, amount of praise, and we're that church, we're hitting the ball, so we're that church. Next time, we'll be looking, at the churches, and then we'll go into, the text before us.

So, I'm going to terminate this now, for questions, comments you may have, because the food, will be here shortly, and I realize, we've left a lot of things, unsaid. I understand, I always do, so what else is new?

Comments, or questions, anyone? Carolyn? I always have a question. You've got a fertile mind. Well, my question is, you mentioned, replacement theology, and there are a lot, of churches today, that are, awaiting the kingdom, that's what they preach, every Sunday, you know, they're, they're planning, and awaiting the kingdom, is, and I've often wondered, what is their theology?

Is it, replacement theology, is that, what they're thinking? Some of them, some of them, embrace, replacement theology, and, and, and some of them, do not.

[51 : 02] there probably ought to be, a brief clarification, because there is, and I don't want to be, I don't want to be, you know, overly, overly critical, I want to be accurate, but I don't want to be nitpicking, or overly critical, and, I know that, that there are elements, in Christianity, that are always referred to, as building the kingdom, or aiding the kingdom, and they are not, entirely wrong, if you are thinking, in terms of building the kingdom, by, adding believers, to the body of Christ, because Colossians, uses the phrase, that when, one becomes a believer, we are transferred, from the kingdom, of darkness, into the kingdom, of his dear son, that is a spiritual kingdom, not a literal kingdom, it's not the kingdom, of heaven come to earth, that's for sure, but the body of Christ, which is made up, of all believers, is a spiritual kind of kingdom, that passage in Colossians, says it is, so there is a sense, in which, all believers, belong to the spiritual kingdom, and evangelism, and winning people to Christ, is nothing more, than adding to, that spiritual kingdom, if that's what they mean,

I don't have any, qualms with it, if they are talking about, building the kingdom, in the sense that, through their works, and efforts, they are making, the planet, a better place, in which to live, contributing toward, the coming of the kingdom, that way, they're really way off base, and just wrong, wrong headed, and misguided, so, it depends on exactly, what they mean, and it might be a good thing, to say, when somebody says, we're doing this for the kingdom, or we're building up the kingdom, to just say, well now that's an interesting expression, tell me, what do you mean by that, building the kingdom, what do you mean, more often than not, they'll say, well you know, getting people saved, well, use the term, ushering in, that's the term they use, ushering in, well, the idea of ushering, in the kingdom, does convey, the notion of, of, creating, the kind of conditions, actually this is, what you're talking about now, is, is a kind of, post-millennialism, or, and it's not even,

I wouldn't even, refer to it as, replacement theology, as much as, post-millennialism, with the idea of, every day, in every way, we're getting better, and better, and, don't hesitate to, go right ahead and eat, unless your food get cold, and I'll, I'll run down here, in just a moment, the idea, of, of bringing in the kingdom, is one that prevailed, in the late 19th century, with the idea, of post-millennialism, and it simply says this, that, the church, is commissioned, in the great commission, they would say, the church has been given, the great commission, to evangelize, the whole world, and as soon, as we have done, our job, of preaching, the gospel, to every creature, in the whole world, then, Christ will return, because, Matthew 24, talks about, the kingdom, will be proclaimed, the gospel, of the kingdom, will be proclaimed, throughout the whole world, before the end comes, so, get on with it, expand the missions program, proclaim the gospel, throughout the whole world, because, as long as you don't, you, are what is preventing,

Christ from returning, and when the church, has Christianized, all of the world, with the gospel, we will have made, the world, a fit place, for Christ, to return to, then he will return, and claim his crown, that's the idea, of ushering in the kingdom, and when world war one, broke out, it really, gave a big blow, to that, because it seemed, to say the opposite, of every way, and every day, we're getting better, and better, and then when world war two, came along, post millennialism, went crawling off, to lick its wounds, and it hasn't been, too much heard of since, there are a few around, there's some hymnals in there, some hymnals have, some of the hymns in it, why say you not a word, about bringing back the king, and Christ to the nations, and so on, these are all, old post millennial hymns, any other comments, or questions?

Well, enjoy your lunch, and next, next month, we will, look at those seven churches, and the descriptions, given to each, and there is a real key word, that is found, in those seven churches, and if you want to look ahead, and read that, we'll, appreciate any input, you have on it, next week, next month, thank you.

[56 : 24] Thank you. Thank you.