



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Daniel 9:24-47

"Calendar of Future Events – Part II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we are concluding our series of studies in basic Bible doctrine, and taking the second of our brief looks at a premillennial calendar of future events. Last week, in the message that I had actually intended to finish in one message, but was unable to do so, I began by commenting upon the fact there are many things that we cannot know certainly regarding the prophecy countdown. There are some things that suggest, however, that we may be in the last days. For example, the Bible says that Israel shall be destroyed. Moses predicts that.

And we have in the history of Israel, down through the centuries, have seen that Israel as a nation has come under the judgment of God, and has been scattered to the four corners of the earth, and was for a lengthy period of time, as far as the nation was concerned, destroyed. The Bible also has predicted the present distress of Israel. In Hosea chapter 3, in verse 4 it is stated that there will be a period of time in Israel's history when they will not have a prince. They would not have a sacrifice. And they would also, of course, not have access to the city of Jerusalem where sacrifices were to be made. That also has been fulfilled. Even at the present day Israel does not have priesthood. They do not have a king, and they are unable to carry out the sacrifices of the Old Testament as required by the Old Testament itself. On the place of sacrifice there is the

Mosque of Omar, and so Israel does not really have control of that city in the sense in which the prophecies of the word of God suggest that they will.

The Bible also predicts that Israel shall have a future return. I think that one may distinguish a return in faith and the return in unbelief; the return in unbelief preceding the return in faith. Well, we know that on May 14, 1948 Israel became a nation again. The nation was born. And we also know that those who have come back have largely come back in unbelief. The Bible predicts that there will be a great future return following the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that will be a return in faith. We also commented upon the fact that it is impossible for us to predict the things that have to do with the future. It's important to remember the impossibility of human prophecy, the weakness of human understanding of prophecy, and the necessity and utility of human interpretation under the Spirit.

I made reference to the fact that medieval maps were not very good maps. The maps of the world drawn by those cartographers were so hopelessly inaccurate, so filled with factual error that they elicit condescending smiles today when almost the entire surface of the earth has been charted scientifically. And yet, the great explorers could never have discovered the new world without them. Nor could the better more accurate maps of today be drawn until men working with the limited evidence available to them set down on paper their bold conceptions of the worlds that some of them had never seen. So, when we explore the future, we are very much like those ancient map makers. And it's in this spirit that we should come to the word of God, remembering that in the Bible we have the word of God in the first place, but we are human beings, and our interpretations are not always accurate. I think I made reference to that rather ironic Chinese proverb "To prophecy is extremely difficult, especially with respect to the future." And to interpret prophecy is just as difficult.

In our study last week we discussed the course of the present age. I just singled out a few things that I thought were important such as the growth of the church. We

discussed the growth of Christendom, that is the professing church, and the growth of apostasy, and pointed to a few passages in the word of God that suggested that these were large trends that would characterize our day. Then we looked for a moment at the passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 13 through verse 18, in which we have a reference to the translation of the church. I commented upon the fact that there are Bible students who believe that the church is going through the tribulation. There are Bible students who also believe that the church is to be raptured before the tribulation. To my mind, there are rather difficult problems with each one of these views. Both of them are built upon inferences from the word of God. It is very difficult to find texts of Scripture that clearly teach either one of these views, and most of those who hold to them would admit that. It's my own personal view that the rapture is the next event of the church, but I don't hold that with dogmatism in the sense that I don't recognize that there are a lot of good things that might be said of other views.

I mentioned to you that just recently I was in a conference in Chicago just about three weeks ago, maybe only two weeks ago, and at that conference one of the members of the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, which is a seminary committed to the premillennial interpretation of the word of God, took the post-tribulational position. Another member of the faculty took the pretribulational position, and still a third member of the faculty, a well known man, took the mid-tribulational rapture theory. Each one of the presented their viewpoint, then each also gave rebuttals, and then it was opened up for a discussion. Needless to say, no certainty arose out of that particular; I think it was about a three hour confrontation by those who were interested in it. There were about three to four hundred preachers from all over the United States who were there listening to the presentations. At any rate, that's my view and I, at the moment, have to stick with it.

Now, the next great event after the rapture of the church, according to the word of God, is as Daniel puts it in his particular prophecy, the 9th chapter, the seventieth week

of Israel. And I'd like to turn to that passage. Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through verse 27, and just for a few moments point out just one or two things that I think are significant here. The seventieth week of Israel is a period of time of seven years, in which there are some significant events that take place on the earth after the church is gone. Daniel, prophesying in this 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel writes,

"Seventy weeks (Now we have talked about this prophecy at other times, and we understand, I hope, that seventy weeks is seventy weeks of years. Seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years) are determined upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (a reference to the temple of the future.) Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (that's forty-nine years plus four hundred and thirty-four years, giving each one of these weeks the number seven; so that that's four hundred and eighty-three of the four hundred and ninety years. And then we read) the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off (Now that is, I think that is clearly a reference to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ), but not for himself (for that is that he shall have nothing): and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; (Notice the expression "the people of the prince that shall come." This is not the same prince, this is a different prince. It is a reference to the prince of the people. We read,) and the people of the prince that shall come (That he is to be referred back to the prince that shall come, not the Messiah. So he, that is the prince that shall come who belongs to the people who will destroy the city of Jerusalem. Therefore he belongs to the Roman Empire.) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (that is for a seven year period): and in the midst of

the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

That happens to be one of the most difficult sections in the Book of Daniel to interpret those last clauses that I just read. It's very difficult to make real clear sense out of the Hebrew text at that point. Now, I think I can do it, but my sense is not accepted by all who take a look at it. It's a very difficult section. So, we'll just leave it at that. The reference is clear, it seems to the fact that the prince that shall come, who shall be from the Roman Empire shall make a covenant with many for one week, in the midst of that week he shall break the covenant, and from that time on to the end, desolations that are determined by the Lord God shall be poured out. Or it is the period of time referred to in other passages as the great tribulation.

Now, there are series of events then that characterize the seventieth week of Israel in the future. One of them is the rise of world government, and the rise of the beast who is referred to here as the prince who shall come. In Daniel chapter 7, in Daniel chapter 8, in Revelation chapter 13, specifically, details are given concerning the rise of this beast. We call him, or he has been called, the antichrist. There is to be, so far as the Bible is concerned, now mind you I am going to speak very generally, there is as far as the Bible is concerned, international government, and finally the government of this whole earth shall be in the hand of the one man. There is also, so far as we can tell, a tendency toward one religion, for all shall be called upon, on pain of death, to worship the beast.

There are other things that indicate that the economy will be a world-wide economy controlled also by the beast. I was reading a prophetic book just the other day, by a popular prophetic teacher, and he commented upon the fact that there are five pieces that must be put together in the prophetic scenario, as far as he's concerned. He set them forth as the rebirth of Israel, as a fact that there must be in the last days an Arab

Muslim confederacy because of the events of the last days upon the earth. In the light of the fact that in his opinion Ezekiel 38 and 39 had to do with the nation Russia, there must be the rise of the Russian nation. By the way, that is a very debatable point. I know that Bible teachers tend at times to accept it as if it were demonstrable truth, but it is not demonstrable at all that Ezekiel 38 and 39 have reference to Russia. It may be, but there are other interpretations that command consideration, too. The fourth thing that he suggested was the rise of China.

Now, we do read in the Book of Revelation of kings who come from the east, and there are other indications that perhaps China shall have a significant part in the events of the last days. So, there are four things and looking at world history today, one would say, "Well, it's entirely conceivable that these four things have come to pass." The fifth he suggested was the revival of the Roman Empire, and then he went on to speak about the common market. Now, this happens to be something that occasionally disturbs me about prophetic teachers, because they like to look around often for things that fit into their particular theory, but when they don't then, of course, they very quietly drop them.

A few years back, when the common market numbered ten nations, or was close to numbering ten nations, there was quite a bit of excitement, because there was an identification of the common market with the world wide empire of the beast. Now, there are a couple of things that we need to remember. The beast is a world wide empire. The common market is not a world wide confederacy of nations. And so, the identification of the two is not at all certain. In the second place, the common market a few years ago did have ten nations, but that only was true for a few months, or at least a very short time. I've forgotten the exact number of months, because finally Norway, as I remember it, dropped out of it, and there were only nine. So, the prophetic teachers were right for a while, and then they were wrong. And recently again, the common market has, I believe, become ten again. In the first place, there is no certainty that the beast's empire is to be identified with any western empire. It's really a world wide

empire, and so consequently the question of the ten nations of the common market being the world wide empire of the beast is very questionable. And the permanence of the ten nations, members of the European Economic Community, that also is a very questionable thing. So, I think it is very unwise for us to regard these things that we can say are the fulfillment of the word of God.

We do know from the word of God that the temple in Jerusalem is ultimately to be rebuilt. Not long ago, after Israel had won the Six-Day War, one of their leading historians, a man by the name of Eldad was asked, "Is Israel going to rebuild the temple?" And he said, "Well, I would like to remind you of the fact that David conquered the city of Jerusalem, and then in one generation Solomon built the temple. And it may well be true now. That is, we have taken the city, and in one more generation we shall have a temple in the city of Jerusalem." And the one who was interrogating the well known historian said, "But the Mosque of Omar is in the hands of the Muslims. What about that?" He said, "Well, that is difficult, but perhaps there will be an earthquake." [Laughter] That was the way he put it. Well, perhaps so, that's something else that we cannot be certain about. But we do know this; there will be the rise of world government during that period of time. The beast also as a world ruler will rise and become just what the Scriptures say, a world ruler. The Bible also says that this beast will conclude a covenant with the nation Israel. That is referred to here in Daniel chapter 9, it will be a covenant made at the beginning of Israel's seventieth week.

But we also read that that covenant will be broken, and the result will be great tribulation. Now, great sections of the word of God are devoted to the content of the great tribulation. If you turn to the Book of Revelation and begin reading at about the 4th chapter on through the 19th chapter, we have a kind of overview of that whole period of time. Now, it isn't possible to go into much detail, but that period of time, particularly in the unfolding of the seals and the trumpets and the bowls and the judgments that are contained within them, set forth the details of that period of time characterized by

judgment. The Great Tribulation is a term that refers to the last half of that week, the last three and a half years, in which the most intense forms of judgment are to be poured out. And these are so intense that it is said that there has never been a day like that, and never will be like that in the future, the great tribulation.

Now, the next great event that follows the seventieth week of Israel is the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is described in Revelation chapter 19, in verse 11 through verse 16. And I think it would be good for us just to turn over and read that very familiar section in which the Scriptures describe the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ following the events of the tribulation period. We read in chapter 19, verse 11, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." These words incidentally are rather significant. They bear reference to what has been happening in the week of the Israel's seventieth week. He is faithful in contrast to the unfaithful beast. He is true in contrast to the beast. We read, "In righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

Now, this is a symbolic picture of our Lord. Many of these things having certain symbolical significance; in the first place, the white horse, that's not a literal horse. That's not a horse that you would enter in the Kentucky Derby, it's different. It's a picture that John has given us in symbol. His eyes are like a flame of fire, because he comes in judgment and so on. And he has a name that no one knew, but he himself. Well, he also has a name called the word of God, so there are certain aspects of his being that have to do with him himself, there are certain aspects of him that have to do with others. And they can see the significance of that. "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of

iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

In the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ you can see from this, there is the judgment of the enemies of the Lord God. The fact that our Lord is coming in his Second Advent is something foretold in Scripture in the Old Testament, confirmed all the way through the New Testament. It is a strange thing in the light of this, that some people who read the Bible can really doubt that our Lord is going to come again a second time. One of the Trumbull's who was associated with the Sunday School Times many years ago, and one his works describes a conversation that he had with a Korean in the city of Seoul, a number of years ago. He was visiting over there and he asked them, "Do the Korean Christians believe in the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ?" And the man said to Mr. Trumble, "Well yes, Korean Christians believe in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, because they believe the Bible. It's only when the missionaries come and tell them that the Bible is not to be read that way that they begin to doubt that our Lord is coming. But just reading the Bible, their faith is that he is coming." Well, at our Lord's Second Advent, there will be the judgment of the unbelievers in the nation Israel and the judgment of the living Gentiles. Those facts are stated in passages like Ezekiel chapter 20 and Matthew chapter 25, 13 through verse 46.

Following the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the victory that is won at the battle of Armageddon, there comes the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. So, will you turn over to Revelation chapter 20, and let's read verse 4 through verse 6. John is given another vision, and this is a vision that has to do with that millennial reign.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who would not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received

his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and they reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

That passage is one of the most important passages in dealing with the question, is there to be an earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus upon the earth? I think it's also fair and accurate to say that this particular passage is the one passage that amillennialists, who believe that there is no kingdom of God upon the earth, and post millennialists, who believe that we are to bring in the kingdom by the preaching of the gospel, and then our Lord will come; this is the one passage that they have never been able, to their satisfaction, to successfully interpret. I take a particularly scholarly journal, which is edited by, and the authors generally in it are millennial or post millennial men. And over and over again there will be articles on the interpretation of Revelation 20, verse 4 through 6. And it will be, generally speaking, another new attempt to answer the premillennialists on this particular passage. They have never, up to this point, been able to interpret that passage in a convincing way, and explain it in such a way that the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is ruled out.

Premillennialism rests upon several very significant things. From the stand point of history, I think it can be demonstrated fairly easily that the early church was premillennial. Men such as Papius, for example, who was a man who lived and ministered shortly after the Apostle John, Irenaeus, who was also a very early father; Irenaeus was clearly a premillennialist. Justin Martyr, the first of the apologists, who also was a very early man, associated indirectly with the Apostle John, as was Irenaeus. Justin Martyr was also a premillennialist. So far as we can tell, not all of the men refer to premillennialism, but those that refer to the millennial question are premillennial. Justin

does say that there were other people who held other view points, but he said, "Those of us who were orthodox in the faith were premillennial." I'm just paraphrasing his words." So the early church, so far as we can tell, was premillennial. Now, let me say, we don't argue the truth of the Bible from the standpoint of history.

There are many things, no doubt, that some of you may believe that you may discover were relatively new interpretations of the word of God. Take for example, the rapture of the church. Before the tribulation, or even after the tribulation for that matter, so far as we can tell reading the early authors, no one really gives an exposition of a pre or a post tribulational rapture. In fact, just to take the pretribulational rapture. It is very difficult to find any reference to that. More than a hundred and fifty years ago, it arose largely with the teaching, there's some debate going on over this point right now, but at least it arose in the 19th century, so it's a relatively recent doctrine so far as the literature is concerned. Some of you, of course, are convinced that it is the teaching of the word of God. That's all right, because in the final analysis, we're interested in what the Bible says, and not what the church may have said about certain issues down through the years. So, I want to just say that while the early church, I think, can be demonstrated to be premillennial, that's not the basis upon which one decides and issue like that.

If we look in another way at this question, and look at the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament as they are fulfilled in the New Testament, those prophecies generally are fulfilled in a literal way. Many of those prophecies and many minor details of the prophecies are fulfilled literally in the New Testament. That's the general way in which the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled. Very few of them can be shown to be fulfilled in any other way than that. There are many that are typical, but they too rest upon historical literality of the events. There is one that I have in my mind that is fulfilled symbolically in the New Testament, that is it's a rather a symbolical or figurative kind of prophecy. But it's of that character in the Old Testament in which it is found.

Now, that is an argument for the literal fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if it is true that those great prophecies of the Old Testament are to be literally fulfilled, then the prophecies concerning the kingdom of God upon the earth, are to be literally fulfilled. Premillennialist regard that as an argument in their favor. Amillennialists like to say, "Well there are prophecies, a number of them that are spiritualized in the New Testament, and therefore we ought to spiritualize those great prophecies concerning the kingdom of God upon the earth." The covenants of the Old Testament, the Abrahamic covenant particularly, but the Davidic covenant also, and perhaps the new covenant too, continue to the premillennial position in that those prophecies are conditional prophecies, and they contain prophecies concerning the land. And one gathers from that therefore that they will be fulfilled in a literal way.

Occasionally people will say, "Why is it necessary for us to have a kingdom of God upon the earth?" I have had some friends who are amillennialists ask me that question. Just recently I was teaching a course in premillennialism, and one of the students asked that question. He was taught by a leading amillennialist, and he asked that question in the class. And it's a good question. Why is there necessity for a millennial reign of Christ upon the earth? Well one reason one might suggest is simply this, that sin occurred in history, redemption occurred in history, our Lord's redeeming work, we have been redeemed through the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ in history, but there is one aspect of redemption that is not yet completed. That's the aspect of redemption that has to do with this material universe about us. Our spirits are redeemed. Our bodies are not yet redeemed. And the creation is not yet redeemed.

Now, we that at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ in history, or the rapture of the church depending on our view point, we shall receive a resurrection body. In other words, in history our redemption shall be completed. But the redemption of the creation itself is not yet completed in history. It certainly seems a reasonable and logical

thing for the redemption of this material universe to also take place in history. And so, for that reason many believe that it is a logical thing for us to expect a kingdom of God upon the earth, in order that the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he accomplished on the cross, which is seen in the redemption of our spirits, will be seen in the redemption of our bodies when we're given a body like his own glorious body, should also find its culmination in this material universe in which the fall of man took place in the first place. So that the whole scheme of redemption is carried out in history. Then we proceed on into the eternal state with the new heavens and the new earth.

Also, one might argue that the kingdom of God upon the earth is helpful in showing us that environment is not a savior, that our problem is deeper than environment. Because even when the Lord Jesus Christ is here, even when Satan is bound, sin still persists and spreads, and it is possible at the end of the millennial reign of Christ for a rebellion to be raised against him. That rebellion described in verses 7 through 10 of Revelation chapter 20.

Well, that's the next of the events after the Advent of Christ, the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. After that John describes in Revelation 20, verse 11 through verse 15, the great white throne judgment. And let's read these verses. The apostle describes his vision in this way, he says, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." What we have here, evidently, is the book of life, and then other books which are something like vouchers for that book.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." This is the settling of all past accounts, and you will notice, men are judged according to their works. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The issue is ultimately the word of God, or turning it around another way, human works. We are not judged according to drama, art, music, peace, love, various things like that; but simply the issue of the word of God and the life of the individual is works. So far as we can tell from reading Revelation 20:11-15, there is no assurance that anyone stands at the great white throne judgment who is a believer. We read, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were open and they were judged." The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books. Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. So far as we call tell, all were cast into the lake of fire. None were found written in the book of life who appeared at the great white throne judgment. So, this is generally described as the final judgment of the eternally lost.

And finally, in Revelation chapter 21, after the great white throne judgment we read, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This is the vision of the new heavens and the new earth. When we speak of heaven this is usually what we think about, the new heavens and the new earth. The first heaven and the first earth passed away, there is no more sea. John sees the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Some interpreters have taken the viewpoint that this coming down from heaven is a coming down from heaven that lasts throughout the whole of the millennial age, and what we have here is a combination of the new heavens and the new earth, and

the millennial kingdom; hoping thereby to solve some prophetic problems. But surely, and if I had time I think I could prove this from the previous use of that phrase in the Book of Revelation, we are to understand this city as coming down and resting upon the new earth. John is here describing the new heavens, the new earth. He is describing the eternal state.

This is a vision, incidentally, of a new, not another, heaven and earth, and it witnesses to man's immortal longings for something other than this that we know in this life. It testifies to man's inherent sense of sin, too, that he would be responsive to a revelation like this. It testifies to man's faith in God. The hope of a new heavens and a new earth does speak to the condition of men. Eric Sauer who has written some helpful books in the interpretation of the word of God says, "The other side becomes this side, eternity transfigures time." The verses that follow give further details. He says, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." There is a most interesting reading of the Greek text in one of the leading manuscripts of the Book of Revelation here, and some others have it as well, although there are not too many manuscripts of good quality on the Book of Revelation. But this particular manuscript has a reading that we could render something like this, "God with them himself shall be their God."

Now, let me just go back and say a word or two. You remember back in the beginning of the New Testament, as we have it, Matthew cites the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 7 about the virgin birth. He says that a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel. Well now, we've all puzzled about this in reading the Bible. The Lord Jesus is never called Emmanuel. Never do you find him called Emmanuel, and yet his name shall be called Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us." There are many ways in which we know that that is a reference to our Lord, who is always present. That very Gospel of Matthew concludes with "All power in

heaven and earth is given unto me, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Many have commented that's Emmanuel, God with us. But nevertheless he is never called Emmanuel, unless right here, this is the way we are to take it. God with them, himself, shall be their God or, and it may be rendered this way as Christian Dodd and other well known Greek scholars have pointed out, Emmanuel himself shall be their God. I think that's a very fitting way for the Bible to end. Emmanuel himself shall be with them, and shall be their God.

Because in the final analysis, what is heaven? Is heaven living in a beautiful place in which the streets are of gold and we all have mansions like the Hunts or the Marcussens or the Rockefellers? No, no, heaven, we all know, is the presence of our Lord preeminently, the presence of the saints secondarily, the presence of our loved ones thirdly, who are believers. It is the enjoyment of the fellowship with the triune God, and with those who love the triune God. And it's to serve him throughout the ages of eternity in the tasks to which he will call us, and for which he shall give us the strength. In the final analysis, heaven is just fellowship with the Lord God.

I'll always remember the story of the little girl who was sick, and her mother was very ill, and in order that the little child might not be a disturbance for the mother who quite ill, the father and some of the members of the family determined to take her away from the home for a while. Well, she went off to stay with a member of the family, but while she was away from the house, her mother became much more ill, and finally she died. And the father, thinking that it would not be wise to take the little girl to the funeral, left her until after the funeral. And then shortly thereafter he brought her home. And the little girl is supposed to have run through the house. And she went into the kitchen, she went into the bedroom, she went into the sewing room, and finally she shouted out, "Where's mother? I want mother." And then she was told the facts, which they were compelled to tell her. And she cried out, "Take me away. Take me away. I don't want to be here without mother." Well, that kind of sentiment is the sentiment that

we have with respect to heaven. We wouldn't want to be there if our Lord were not there, the new heavens and the new earth.

In the 6th verse, well let me read the verses in between. We read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." One might have expected that these preceding statements here, with respect to the greatness of the Son of God as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, might have suggested to us that we are just little flies on the windowpane, something so insignificant as that. But you notice that we loom large in the plan and program of God. And we read, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Some people like to say, occasionally, "If you preach divine sovereignty as you do, so significantly or so strongly, then you're not interested in the preaching of the gospel to all." But "divine sovereignty," Mr. Spurgeon used to like to say, "is not opposed to the most generous promises of the gospel of Christ." So, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." And the fact that he gives life is guaranteed by the greatness of the Son of God, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Well, these are the great events of the future. There are events that have to do with the church age, the rapture of the church, the great tribulation, the rise of the beast, the rise of world government, and then ultimately at the battle of Armageddon, the destruction of the enemies of the Lord, the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth in which he is glorified from one corner of the earth to the other; and redemption is seen to have its ultimate outworking to

be followed by final judgment and the new heavens and the new earth. It is remarkable the Bible is so accurate in its past prophecies. In one of Dr. Charles Ryrie's books he comments upon the fact that there are a hundred prophecies that are specifically fulfilled in the New Testament, the chances of that happening expressed mathematically are one in one plus thirty zeros after it. The Bible is an accurate book.

Now, I want to say to you as I close this, I don't guarantee all of these events and all of these things in the precise way in which I have set them forth to you. Luther said, "If any one of you considers your doctrine and theology to be completely true and right, you only have to feel your ears and find that they are the long furry ears of an ass." [Laughter] And I certainly do not want to have to go through that experience. But as far as I am concerned, looking into the future as I have studied the word of God to the present time, these represent the events of the future. We have a great future set forth in the word of God. May God help us to continue to study the prophetic word and be strengthened by it? I'm sorry to take you over time a few minutes. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege and opportunity for the study of the Scriptures. And we pray Thy blessings upon these simple outlinings of the future...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]