



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“Pre-mil Calendar of Future Events”

TRANSCRIPT

Our subject is a pre-millennial calendar of future events. In the last couple of studies we have considered the silence of God, and we sought to show that the reason that God has not been speaking as he spoke in the time of our Lord and the apostles is because his message has reached its culmination in the Lord Jesus, and the Scriptures tell us that the next time that God speaks it will be in judgment. In the meantime, we have a period of time which the revelation of God, having been completed, is being taught us through the ministry of the spirit and the gifted men whom he has given.

Then we took a look at the subject of the certainty of the second coming, and we looked at some of the reasons why we can be sure that there is to be a Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

Now before we begin our study of the events of the future, I want to take a kind of survey of the future under the title of a pre-millennial calendar of future events. So we want to survey the major events of the future according to the Scriptures, and for our Scripture reading, I want to turn to Matthew chapter 16 and read verse 13 through 18, and then read a passage from Revelation chapter 21 verse 1 and 2. So will you take your New Testaments and turn with me to Matthew chapter 16 verse 13 through verse 20?

Now we read – this, as you may remember, is an event that occurred at a very critical point in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. He had unfolded his ministry to the disciples. It had become evident to his ministry of the disciples and to the Jews that they were not going to respond to the teaching. And at Caesarea Philippi, he calls upon Peter and others to make a confession of him. Peter responds. Now this is an indication that the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of Peter and the others was a genuine work, and after they make this confession at Caesarea Philippi the Lord Jesus announces to him that he is going to have to suffer and die, and then he begins to teach them primarily with reference to the time when he would not be here on the earth in the flesh. This is a climatic event recorded by Matthew. Beginning with chapter 16 verse 13 he writes,

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. (Incidentally, that is an interesting commentary upon the impression that the Lord Jesus made upon the individuals with whom he came in contact. Evidently there were things about John the Baptist, things about Elijah, things about Jeremiah and the other prophets that were seen in the life of our Lord.) He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the messiah the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose

on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.”

The reason, by the way, for this request by Lord that they should tell no one that he was the Messiah is because it is evident and almost on every page that they did not understand the character of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus and would have given a message contrary to the true nature of the suffering Messiah. So he asks them to say nothing about it, and of course, they respond by saying a great deal about it, but nevertheless it creates misunderstanding when one does not understand the kind of Messiah that he is and that is why he asked them to be silent.

Then in Revelation chapter 21 verses 1 and 2 we have a couple of texts that have to do with one of the last of the prophetic events of the Scriptures.

“And I saw (John says) 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, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

It is important that we remember several things about prophecy. First of all, it is impossible for any human being to prophesy. That is stated for us most plainly in Isaiah chapter 41 verse 21 through verse 24, three or four verses that I am going to read. Now if you wish to turn you can, but I am going to read beginning at verse 21 of Isaiah chapter 41. I want you to notice specifically that God reserves the ability to prophesy to himself. Verse 21,

“Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth; (he speaks about the false

prophets or particularly in this context about the idols) Let them bring them forth and shew us what will happen. Let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come that we may know that you are gods yea do good or do evil that we may be dismayed and behold it together. Behold ye are of nothing and your work of naught an abomination is he that chooseth you.”

So, the Lord challenges the idols and those who support the idols to tell him the meaning of things that are past, and then to prophesy with reference to the future. Only God can tell the things that are coming to pass, and even when the prophets of the Old Testament prophesy of the future, it is because they themselves are the mouth pieces of the Lord, and when they prophesy they say, “Thus saith the Lord.” No human being can prophesy. Remember that ironic Chinese proverb, to prophesy is extremely difficult especially with respect to the future. [Laughter] There is a great deal of humor in that.

The second thing that we want to notice about prophecy is that there is not only an impossibility of the part of men to prophesy, but human interpretation inevitably has weakness about it. Now, when we speak about the future what we seek to do is to look into the Scriptures in which God has revealed to us the future, and we seek to say, interpreting the Scriptures, what God says is going to come to pass. But we must distinguish between what God says with regard to the future and the human interpretations of what is going to happen in the future, or the human interpretations of God’s word.

Almost always something is lost between the statements of Scripture and the interpretations of those who seek to understand the words of God. Remember always that it is the word of God that is inspired and not the interpretations of the teachers. One interesting way to see this in its true perspective I think is to consider the first coming of

the Lord Jesus. I doubt that any of those who sought to interpret the word of God apart from direct inspiration, such as the prophets, were ever truly correct in understanding the Old Testament prophetic picture.

Now I think that we can see that when we come to the New Testament, and we see the reaction of the apostles and others to the events in our Lord’s life. They did not understand the things to come to pass. The apostles themselves, it is said of them, did not understand anything of those things that were happening. They were largely in the dark until the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, and they were enabled through the Holy Spirit to put together the things of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Perhaps we can say that in our Lord’s post resurrection ministry of forty days, he was enabled to instruct them in such a way that when Peter got up on the Day of Pentecost he was able to make sense out of the Old Testament. If, as I personally think, he did receive in John chapter 20 a portion of the Holy Spirit as a temporary enablement for the period of time between the Lord’s resurrection and the Day of Pentecost, then we could relate it perhaps to the Lord’s teaching ministry in his post resurrection appearances. But in any rate, it is evident that during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus they did not understand what was going to happen.

I do not feel myself that we have any evidence that anyone would have ever been able to put passages such as, for example, Micah chapter 5 in which it is stated that the Lord Jesus would be born in Bethlehem together with statements such as are found in Isaiah chapter 9 with reference to Galilee of the nations. It would have been very unlikely that any prophetic teacher knowing these prophecies of the Old Testament would have been able to put them together in such a way that he could say before the events took place he shall be born in Bethlehem, but he shall be from Galilee and probably what will happen is that he will temporarily be in Bethlehem of Judea at the time of the birth, whereas his home will be in Galilee somewhere.

That is the way, of course, the prophecies were fulfilled. He was his family did live in Nazareth in Galilee, but he was born in Bethlehem, and to put these two together and to see ahead of time how God would arrange the events so that providentially these prophecies would concur in our Lord’s ministry, I personally feel that was beyond those students of the Old Testament. They may well have said, as the scribes of the Jews did, say the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. They have understood that Galilee would have something to do with it from Isaiah, but it is very difficult for me to understand or to think they were able to put this altogether.

Now personally, I am not trying to down grade the study of the prophetic word of all, but I have I must confess a great deal of doubt about the constructions of many of the Bible teachers of the future when we come to the details of the prophetic word. I do not want you to think for one moment that that means that we should not study the prophetic word, that we should give up, that we should because of this, say well, we cannot put it together, so why study the Scriptures? That of course is a false inference and a very wrong inference, and one for which we shall come under the judgment of the Holy Spirit. But I think at the same time it is necessary for us to have a great deal of humility when we seek to interpret the many details of the prophetic word.

A third thing I think is important and that is that in spite of the fact that human interpretation is often weak and faulty, still there is a necessary for it, and there is also a utility, a usefulness in the human interpretation of the word of God under the Spirit. Perhaps I can illustrate it in this way. Many of the ancient discoveries that were made in this world in which we live, some of the great explorers for example, many of those discoveries were made by the use of the faultiest of maps. If you have ever seen any of the ancient maps that many of the great explorers used, you would have wondered how they were able to find anything. They were drawn by medieval cartographers who had never seen the lands that they were seeking to map out, and yet they were very useful instruments. It is doubtful that many of the great discoveries that were made could have

been made were it not for those very faulty, and wrong in many ways, maps that they used. So it is entirely possible for very useful things to come from maps that are not accurate.

And so likewise in the study of the prophetic word, no doubt, in my explanations in the weeks that follow, there will be a few things, a few things [laughter] that will be out of order, and the day will come when perhaps you will be able to say, Dr. Johnson you taught us wrong there. I want to say right now, I apologize a head of time, but still we need to remember that these are attempts of human beings to interpret the future, and we are called upon in the word of God to attempt to do it.

Now I hope I’m not going to fool you by my interpretations. I hope you will not be misled. It has been said no one can fool all the people all the time, but weather forecasters come close, [laughter] and I think that some teachers of prophecy come second after them, but still I’m not trying to mislead you – just to remind you the fact that we are studying a very difficult subject. We are studying something in which we are trying to put together a number of passages from the word of God. It is amazing how much of the Bible is still concerned with prophecy. Trying to put it all together into one coherent whole is a very difficult task. So I want you to understand that if you discover that I have been wrong, well it’s what you should expect of a human interpreter of the word.

But having said these things now away we go to the future and its calendar. And first of all in outline, the course of the present age. Prophetically, three aspects of the present age are important. The passage that I read for you in the Scripture reading in Matthew chapter 16 verse 13 through verse 20 contains a very important section, and probably a section in which we should begin when we think about the course of the present age. The Lord Jesus, replying to Peter’s confession had said to him, “And I say also unto thee thou art Petras and upon this petra, I will build by church.” He refers most likely to the confession that Peter has just made, thou art the Christ the son of the living

God, so upon this confession and upon the Lord of whom the confession is made, the Lord Jesus says that the church will be built.

Now I want you to notice that expression, I will build my church. Now it is evident from the statement as it is made that the Lord Jesus is the head of the church. The Lord Jesus is also the one who is building up the body of Christ, and furthermore, that the church is something that is with reference to this context, a future thing. He says, I will build my church.

The expression in the Greek text is not the expression that speaks of continuous action in the future. He could have said, I will go on building my church or I am building my church, but he rather uses an expression that simply states that in the future I will construct my church. We gather from this that the church is a future entity from the time of this confession at Caesarea Philippi. So that one of the great characteristics of the present age is that it is a time in which the church, the true church built upon the confession that Christ is the Messiah, is being built. We are part of that church if we have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and if we are engaged of ministry of any kind whether it be public ministry such as I am engaging in now by standing behind this podium here, or whether it be your own personal confession of Jesus Christ in your business or in your home or among your friends. You are also engaged in your part of the activity of the Lord in building the church of the Lord Jesus.

Now that is one aspect of the present age and that evidently has not been completed, because we are still here. When that work is finished, then we shall not be here. I have a good friend that likes to say, as long as I am here then it’s all optimism, because God must have some purpose in my being here. I think that’s a biblical kind of expression.

The second thing that we notice in the word of God concerning the present age is that there is to be a most unusual growth in the profession of Christianity. Let me read for example a passage in Matthew chapter 13. I’ll just read this very brief little parable of the



mustard seed, and it’s found in verses 31 and 32 of Matthew chapter 13. If I had longer time I would like to read the parable of the tares and the wheat, for the same kind of thing is set forth in that parable in a little more detail, but this is characteristic for the present age. “Another parable bringing forth unto them saying, the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sewed in his field which in deed is the least of all seeds but when it is grown it is greatest among the herbs and becometh a tree.” He speaks of the growth, the rather the almost supernatural growth of the kingdom of heaven, and then he says, “so that the birds of the air (and this is a reference to the Satanic activity of the evil hosts of the other world) so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it.” The parable of the wheat and tares is much the same thing. The Lord Jesus says that throughout this age there will grow the wheat and the tares until the time of the harvest,” and then he says, “Let them both grow together until the harvest and the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into my barn.”

What is taught in this then is that the present age is an age in which there is to be an almost abnormal growth in the profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, and also in the organizational makeup of Christianity. Now I think that we are living in a day when we can truly see this. Not only have we had this amazing organizational growth in Christianity, particularly in the Western world, but we have all that is implied in our Lord’s parable of the wheat and the tares which means in the light of these statements of his that in this group of people who make up organizational Christianity, there are many who are not truly born again, but who look very much like those who are truly born again. In fact, it is so difficult to tell them apart in the parable, the Lord Jesus says, let them grow together unto the harvest. We are told in the mustard seed, the birds of the air come and nest in this great tree, suggestive of the Satanic infiltration of the work of God in Christendom.

Now Bible teachers have often used the term, Christendom, instead of Christianity to simply express the difference of that which is true and that which contains the truth but also the false as well. Christendom. Now I have before me an article concerning the World Council of Churches and the fact that the World Council of Churches is going to meet. The author of this article has a great deal of discussion in the article about some of the trends of the World Council of Churches. Now the World Council of Churches is one the representations of Christendom. One of the things that are striking about this meeting is the content of the study material.

Now one of the things that is expressed is human experience. I am going to read a few things from this. [Reads] This packet of materials may show the main theological motives now starring the World Council of Churches. The basic principal is the idea that God is to be found at work in the World in the context of the church today. He is to be found for example in other religions and in the political movements of our time in as much as they aim at the humanization of man. The task of the church is to discover and support him in these signs of the time. The church can recognize the voice of God in what men most long for. In dialogue with other religions, experience will be more useful than ritual doctrinal statements. [Stops reading] In other words we can unite in religious experience even when we cannot unite in the doctrines of the word of God.

Now of course, if we can unite in religious experience then the sky is the limit. Any kind of religious experience would be a means of uniting. If I have a religious experience in Believers Chapel by believing in the gospel as it is preached from the pulpit according to the Scriptures that’s my religious experience. You may have a religious experience in a church of Satan, and your religious experience may be actually demonic, but you have a religious experience too, and so we can unite in the fact that we both have had a religious experience. Now that is a far cry of the teaching of the word of God.

The author of this article who has studied these documents considerably suggests there are three major changes that are needed in the plans for the meeting of the World Council of Churches. He says, number one, the time has come to put the edge of sharp theological analysis to the religious poetry produced at Geneva and related places (he refers to headquarters and other meetings that they have had). Then he says the authority of Scripture must come to prevail again – it does not prevail in the World Council of Churches. He then goes on to say that we need to come back to our primary theme, which is God. We have had enough of horizontal theology – that is the theology that God is to be found in the human relationships that we have with one another, not in our relationship vertically to God. Then he says, for example, according to section one material, the death of the gorilla is similar in character to the sacrifice of Christ’s flesh and blood and has to be remembered at the Eucharist.

Now imagine sitting down at the Lord’s Supper and remembering Che Guevara because he gave his life, and paralleling that with the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for our sins. That is so far from the teaching of the word of God that one wonders that a person could actually hope to pull the wool over the eyes of people by doctrines such as that, but we are living in a day when men can do it in the leading representatives of the World Council of Churches.

The writer of this article says no. Make theology go back to its true and proper content: God in Christ. Then he concludes by saying, “The World Council of Churches reintroduction of religious experience signifies no improvement. Experience not clearly distinguished might be only this worldly religiosity: the kingdom of man extended into religion. Nothing less than the reality and the authority of God himself according to the Bible must become again the number one theme of the World Council of Churches.”

And this poor brother is a good brother – I shouldn’t say this poor brother – but this good brother has actually written an article in which he concludes on a note as if

thinking that such is possible in the World Council of Churches. I wish it were so. I wish that it were so, but I haven’t the slightest confidence that that will happen.

Now I think that is evidence of the growth in Christendom in professing Christianity of false doctrine to such an extent that our great institutions in Christianity or in Christendom are in the hands of those who are not simply liberal Christians but who are not in any way at all Christian and who actually acknowledge all religions as having a similar foundation with Christianity. We are in a sad period today.

Now the third of the great things that is going to happen in the present age is the growth of apostasy. Now we have many passages in the word of God that state this. You remember, for example, in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 13 in one of Paul’s chapters in which he deals with the future. He says, in the last days perilous times shall come, and then in the 13th verse he writes, but evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Now I also have another piece of literature in my hands also from this week’s edition of *Christianity Today*, and this one is an editorial entitled, “The World Council of Churches at Nairobi, twenty seven years later.” Now this one is a little different in that it centers attention on one of the doctrines that fills Christianity today, and you may be supposed when I say this, but it also is a doctrine that has penetrated evangelical circles. When I was in Basil, Switzerland studying, in an assembly of the saints where the Lord is remembered in the Lord’s Supper every week, where they do not acknowledge any authority but the Scriptures, where there has been a very fine testimony to Jesus Christ – for many years, I knew this church fifteen years ago when I was there – in that assembly there had recently been a division over the particular doctrine that is referred to here among Bible believing people. Let me read you something about it. It has to do with the doctrine of universalism.

Now there is a man by the name of Paul Ferguesa who is on the central committee of the World Council of Churches. He is responsible for the writing of a lot of

the material, and in essence what he has written is that Jesus Christ frees and unites, and it’s almost totally socio-political freedom and uniting. He says for example, or this is what was said by the World Council of Churches at Bangkok in a meeting a few years ago, “Salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and released from the captivity of power in the north Atlantic community. That’s salvation. That’s biblical salvation.” So we had biblical salvation when the Vietnam War was concluded. We are looking for salvation in the independence of Angola.

Now one may have political views that are in harmony with these things that he expresses, but by no stretch of the imagination could you call that “biblical salvation.” Fergusson has another important idea which he likes to propound, and this one is that all men will be saved and all men knowingly or unknowingly are already in Christ. Now this is what he wrote. This is a man who is on the central committee of the World Council of Churches now would you imagine there would be a great fiery evangelistic body out winning to Jesus Christ? Well you’d have to be blind to answer yes to that.

Listen to what he says, “Will the un-baptized man be saved? God wills that all men be saved, and he wills as he ought to will, and his will is when the hour of destiny strikes to gather together into one the whole universe in him.” He has the nerve to quote a text of Scripture, Ephesians 1:10 which has nothing to do with that. “Can that will be thwarted? No, for his will is commensurate with his power. But how is his will to be fulfilled? That is a cosmic question. Our task is to learn the answer slowly by the tragic method by laying down our lives for the life of the world. God wills that all men be saved and his will cannot be thwarted. All men are already in Christ.” That is the doctrine of universalism. It is striking, but the World Council of Churches and many of our evangelical friends are living in the fairyland of universalism.

Now that is apostasy. I say nothing about the other evidences of apostasy of immoral character. You know when I was in California in May, I was told that when I

spoke over the radio that I should not say anything against homosexuality. Now the reason for this – I was on, by the way, an evangelical broadcast of The Church of the Open Door. They have come under the criticism of the gays, because they have been speaking out on homosexuality. There are so many homosexual churches in the Los Angeles area, and they are so influencing the radio ministry in that community that they are able now to hinder any evangelical from making statements contrary to homosexuality. We can simply state the Scriptural texts, but one cannot say anymore than that. Otherwise their ability to be on the air is jeopardized, and most of those who are broadcasting want to stay on the air.

I was told, I don’t know how true this. There is an article incidentally in this week’s *Christianity Today* again, the latest issue, concerning the gays in which a number of societies, religious societies of the gays, are mentioned, but was I told in the Los Angeles area there are fifty homosexual churches. That is, churches in which the members are homosexuals in that community. Fifty churches of homosexuals. In the article of *Christianity Today* it is said that many of those who are members of these churches and these groups are graduates of seminaries and Bible colleges and Bible institutes. We are living in days not only of doctrinal apostasy, but of moral apostasy, and the tares are growing together with the wheat for the time of the harvest which lies in the future.

The next thing that I want to say a word about is the translation of the church. The present age will be characterized by the growth of the true church, the growth of professing Christianity, the growth of apostasy both doctrinal and moral. The translation of the church is the next great event that lies before us. That event is described in some detail in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13 through verse 18, and 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 51 and 52. Now when we deal with these events in detail, I want to try to support the chronology that I am suggesting in my outline, but in the study you will have to accept my word for the chronology.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, the Apostle Paul writes primarily of the resurrection of the church. Now he writes primarily of the resurrection of the church in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, because the Thessalonians evidently were concerned about the fact that during the time since the apostle had left Thessalonica when he had preached the gospel to them, some of the believers had died, and they were troubled over the question whether those who had died would miss the rapture and the resurrection of the church. So he speaks primarily to the resurrection of believers who have died, and he says in effect in that passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, that not only will those Christians who have died before the Lord’s coming not miss the resurrection by having died, but actually, he says, they will be raised first. They have a priority; they will be raised first. Then we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the air to meet the Lord.

Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, he doesn’t stress the resurrection of the church so much as he stresses the rapture of the church, of the living part of the church, and discusses the transformation that will take place in their bodies. He states in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 51, “Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep (that is we shall not all die) but we shall all be changed -- that is, both those who have died and those who do not die shall be changed. We are going to have a different body, he says, which is a very wonderful thing to contemplate, and in case you do not understand what I am talking about, if you just were standing back here and looking that way, you would understand [laughter], of course, exactly.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality, so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. So at the translation of the church there shall be the resurrection of those who

have died, whose spirits are with the Lord now, but whose bodies have been placed in the grave, and the rapture of the living – incidentally, the term, rapture, is a term that is derived from the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 in verse 17 where Paul states that we shall be caught up together with him.

I heard not long ago a tape by an amillennialist, and he postulated those who believed in the rapture for taking a term that doesn’t occur in that text at all. Evidently he had read that passage in the Latin version or did not know that the term, rapture, is derived not from the Greek word but from the Latin translation for the word “to catch up” from Latin -- you Latin students will remember is the word *rapio*, and the past participle, the perfect passive participle of it is *raptus a un*, from which we get the English word, rapture.

Now next, Paul says – incidentally there is a commentator over the radio who says when he announces someone had died, as must ultimately happen to all of us, so-and so-and-so died today. He is not a very good student of the Scriptures, because it is not going to happen to all of us. Perhaps most of shall die, but not all of us. Some of us are not going to die. I think I want to be with that company, but I don’t know whether I shall be or not. I know what you’re thinking – you’re thinking there are not many years left [sudden laughter] – but nevertheless, that’s my hope.

Now the third thing that Paul speaks about is the reunion and return of the church. He states in that passage in I Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 17, after he has described the rapture, he says, “And so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words.” And then in John chapter 14 he tells us, the Lord Jesus tell us, that he is going back to heaven to prepare a place for us, that he is going to come again and to take us to himself. So at the resurrection and at the rapture the Lord Jesus, after the reunion of all the saints of the present age, he shall take the church home with him to heaven.



The fourth great event associated with the translation of the church shall take place, the judgment of the church at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, where the church will be judged with reference to rewards. The Bible does not specifically state when the judgment seat takes place, but it would seem to be most logical to relate it to the time just after we have returned with the Lord Jesus to heaven, and so must students of the prophetic word associate the judgment seat of Jesus Christ with the rapture and resurrection of the church.

The third of the great events of the future is the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. In Daniel chapter 9 verses 24 through verse 27, the prophet, in one of the most amazing and important prophecies of the Old Testament, gives us a kind of overview of the future. He states in verse 24 of chapter 9, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up their vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.” We don’t have time to speak about this now. We will devote at least two of our times to an attempted careful analysis of the text of this prophecy.

I want you to notice the last verse in 27 which has to do with one of these weeks of years, a seven-year period of time, evidently referring to a time future from our standpoint, in which we read, “He, the prince that shall come, who destroys the city and the sanctuary, the people of the prince that come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, and this prince that belongs to that people shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” And evidently he here prophesies of the period which we know as the seven years of Israel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week at the conclusion of which everlasting righteousness is brought in.

Now there are series of events that characterize that seven-year period of the future. I just mentioned two or three of them. First, the rise of world government and the Beast. After the rapture of the church, evidently a period of time – how long we do not

know – intervenes between the rapture and the rise of world government and the rise of the beast or antichrist who exercises worldwide rule.

This we may see today in its trends. We have many trends that point to the possibility – how far we are along the way we do not know – of a world government and of one man ultimately being a world ruler. There will be world government, world economy, world religion, so the prophecies of both the old and the New Testament imply. We are also taught that this world ruler shall conclude a covenant with the Jewish people who are in the land. Evidently that presupposes the return of a great number of the Israelites to their land in Palestine; a fact of course that has occurred in our time. This covenant evidently too has something to do with the restoration of the ancient worship associated with the law of Moses, for we read that he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the ablation to cease, which would seem to imply that by virtue of the covenant that this world ruler makes with Israel, they are given the right and the authority to rebuild the temple and to institute the Mosaic worship.

I have a good friend who is the president of a Bible college. He was in Israel in 1964, and he told me of an incident that occurred then. He had the opportunity because he was a kind of an official visitor of our United States government to speak with some of the authorities in the country. And he spoke with the chief rabbi of Israel at the time, Rabbi Nissim. And he had an opportunity to ask the rabbi if they were planning to rebuild the temple.

He said the rabbi looked at him rather strangely and then said, “The rebuilding of the temple? Ah, that’s reserved for a prophet”— a very interesting comment because of course that is precisely what will happen. But before the prophet does rebuild the temple, the true prophet rebuilds the temple, there will be an attempt to counterfeit it, and we know of that through the teaching of the word.

The covenant however is broken in the middle of the week and the Great Tribulation ensues, so that the last three and a half years of that future seven year period of time is a time of judgment upon the whole of the earth, judgment upon Israel, judgment upon the Gentiles and finally, the Beast and his hosts are defeated by of all people, a lamb, for the lamb shall overcome the wild beast and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus shall ultimately come.

Fourth in our outline of events is the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus follows this period of time known as the Great Tribulation. We are told in the prophetic word in Revelation chapter 19 verse 11 through 16 that the Lord Jesus shall come and shall destroy the enemies that are opposed to the throne of God and that he shall establish his kingdom upon the earth.

Under this Second Advent of the Lord Jesus there are two things that should be associated with it. First of all, the judgment of Israel. The judgment of Israel. The text of Scripture tells us that when the Lord Jesus returns the second time that one of the things that he shall do will be to judge Israel. That is spoken of in Ezekiel chapter 20 verses 34 through 38, and there it is specifically stated that Israel shall pass under judgment. Also Matthew chapter 25 verses 1 through 13 as well speak of the testing of the profession of faith among Jewish people, so that Israel shall be judged at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

At that time there is also judgment of the Gentiles taught in Matthew chapter 25 verses 31 through 46 and that should be B under Roman IV in the outline. So we have the Second Advent of Christ, two great events associated with it: the judgment of Israel and the judgment of the Gentiles. And those of course who survive the judgments of Israel and the Gentiles pass into the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

That brings us to Roman V, the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. The kingdom of our Lord Jesus upon the earth is a necessity for two reasons. Occasionally people wonder why is it necessary for us to have a kingdom of God upon the earth. Does it not seem as

a kind of afterthought of the word of God to have the Lord Jesus return to the earth in his Second Advent and then to have a kingdom on the earth for a thousand years, and then to have the new heavens and the new earth? Why this intervening time of a kingdom upon the earth? Why not just have our Lord come at the Second Advent and then for us to enter into the new heavens and the new earth? That is a good question: why should we necessarily have a kingdom of the Lord upon the earth?

Well in the first place, we must remember that man was created and placed upon the earth. The fall took place upon the earth. Adam and Eve fell. As a result remember of the fall of Adam and Eve, man was judged. Sentence was passed upon him. But you also remember that sentence was passed upon the created world as well. For the created world is identified with man, for man was created to be the king over the earth. So when man fell and man had to be judged, creation was judged with man. And so as a result of the fall we can see the signs of the fall in creation. Thorns and thistles it brings forth for example. Every time you stick your finger with a thorn, you should think of the fact that Adam fell and with him the creation fallen.

And this creation is in an unredeemed kind of state. The creation groans and travails in an pain together up until now, the Apostle Paul says, waiting for the redemption of the sons of God or the adoption of their bodies the adoption which has to do with the redemption of their bodies. For creation is looking forward to the day of redemption of the sons in order that it may enter into its redemption, which is the kingdom upon the earth, when the desert shall again blossom as a rose, which means that Texas is going to be a halfway decent looking place some time. [Laughter]

Now because the fall took place in history, and because the Lord Jesus accomplished redemption in history, because you and I have been redeemed in history, so the creation which is associated with us must be seen to be delivered in history. And that is why we have a kingdom of God upon the earth in order that there may be a

proclamation of the fact that the redemption which we have received has reached one of its culminations in the millennial kingdom and our Lord’s reign upon the earth.

But that’s not all. The other reason why we must have a millennial reign is referred to in the statement in Revelation chapter 20 verse 3 when in reference to the binding of Satan, John the Apostle says, “And after that he must be loosed a little season.” Now it doesn’t say he will be loosed from the binding; he says, he must be loosed. In other words, there is a logical reason why Satan should be loosed. The reason being of course to let us know plainly that environment is no savior of men, and even though men have lived upon the earth in the millennial kingdom in the presence of the Lord with the saints, having access to the earth for one thousand years, the heart of man is unchanged. And at the conclusion of the period of time Satan when released is able to rouse a rebellion against the throne of God again. That is how wicked the heart of man is.

Now the remainder of the great events of the future are the Great White Throne judgment which occurs after that brief rebellion in which the lost are judged, followed finally by the new heavens and the new earth, the conclusion so far as Scripture is concerned of the great events of the prophetic word. Now our time is up next time we shall begin a detailed study of some of these great events. Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the way in which they have been brought home to our hearts through the Spirit. We ask O God that we may respond to them as Thou would have us to respond to them, to remember that we may have only a short time relatively upon this earth.

If there are some here who have not believed in our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered for sinners, give them no rest nor peace until they entrust themselves to him who is able to save the uttermost, and for those of us who do know him, we pray that we may be motivated by the hope that lies before us and effectively serve Thee in the meantime.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

