

“Questions and Answers”

How to Study the Bible

Various Scriptures

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September 2, 2022

Jeff: Our Father in heaven, You are gracious and kind. You are long-suffering, You are faithful. You are good, You are loving; Your patience is beyond measure. All of these things and more characterize You, as You revealed Yourself to us in the Lord Jesus Christ, as You’ve inscripturated these truths in Your word. And so we bow before You as the living God, the only God, our God.

And Father, we are thankful that You brought us into union with Yourself through Your Son the Lord Jesus. We’re thankful for His work, all that He’s done on our behalf, for the way in which He made Himself through obedience to Your word to be a spotless sacrifice, and how that obedience was imputed to our account at His resurrection and our newness of life. And we’re also thankful that He submitted Himself to the cross and to its curse. And Lord, thank You that we have pardon as a result of that passive obedience.

Lord, we thank You and praise You for the Son. And we praise You for the Holy Spirit who applies all of that work that Christ accomplished to our account. Father, these things are things that we should not pass by lightly, that we should be ever thankful for—moment by moment, day by day. And so we praise You; we thank You. And we come before You knowing that You hear our prayers because of our union with Jesus.

And so as we pray we certainly pray for Sig and for his recovery. We give You thanks that Gregg is recovering as well. Though it will be a long road, we look forward to a full recovery.

Our brother Kevin is ill and in palliative care. And Lord, as he seeks rest we pray that You will give him the ultimate rest that You’ve promised Your children.

Father, we continue to pray for Becky and certainly Bruce. We ask that Your hand would be upon them for good and that You would grant them recovery, especially Becky. Father, we ask that You’ll minister to us now through Your word. Thank You for it, for the time that we’ve had to think about how to grapple with it. We ask now that You’ll bless us as we continue to think about studying Your word and mining its truths.

Father, we’re thankful for the church. And we’re thankful for elders and deacons. We’re thankful for faithful men that You’ve placed over her and over different pockets of Your sheep. Father, we’re thankful for Your hand of blessing as we see that exercised through various men. Father, we’re thankful for the bishop. We’re thankful for his work both in the seminary and in the church. We praise You for his work.

Father, we’re also thankful for Your hand upon us as we gather together—men from various churches seeking your face through the Word—asking that You’ll shape us and fashion us according to Christ, that we might go out into the world and make a difference—not as the world thinks, but certainly as we think our thoughts after You. So we pray that You’ll bless us. Bless us in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. So what we’re going to do today is to think about how to study the Word. Oh, you’re not going to.

Transcriber’s Note: For Don Maurer to play music leading into each question.

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Don Maurer: Oh, you really want me to?

Jeff: Well, I thought we talked about it. Why not? *(Laughter)* I mean, you know, if you don't do it well I'm gonna fire you. *(Laughter)*

Ted Wood: There goes that 15 per cent.

Jeff: That's right. Actually, what we ought to do is that we give him a percentage, and then deduct it with every failure. *(Laughter)* What do you think?

Ted: That's accountability.

Jeff: Yeah, that's accountability, right? That's good. All right. So what we're going to do today is, we're going to think about how to study the Bible for one last time. But what we need to do is, we need to do this. Maybe at Don's suggestion, maybe at somebody else's—I can't remember now,—but we need to have a question and answer time, because apparently there are other things that have been raised that men haven't raised during the course—

Don Maurer: It was Roger and then I agreed with him and suggested it to you.

Jeff: There you go. I should have known. If he was part of the conversation he would be able to give it back to me. So let me just start off by asking if you have questions. And if not, we can—

Transcriber's Note: Don Maurer plays the theme song from “Jeopardy.” *(Laughter)*

Don Maurer: Oh, bad notes! *(He hits the right note at the end.)*

Jeff: All right.

Don: I failed. *(Laughter)*

Jim Hamilton: One per cent off. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: What questions do you have?

David Miller: I have a question. My brother-in-law is really into Reformed theology, and I couldn't get him to answer this question. I read a book that he had recommended. It was about the fact that there is no rapture. I went through the whole book and I couldn't find any reference to 1 Thessalonians 4:17. And I was wondering if you knew how a Reformed theologian would explain that.

Jeff: Yes. So that's a great question. 1 Thessalonians 4 is one of those texts that one might go to for the Rapture. Let's go there for just a minute.

Brave Man: 1 Thessalonians what?

Jeff: 1 Thessaloonians chapter 4—

Don Maurer: 1 Thessaloonians?

Jeff: You know, I expected to get a (musical) duh-duh-duh out of you. *(Laughter)* I mean, Sig gets a duh-duh-duh. And then we'll look at verse 13. So let's just look at what this says.

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord: that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with the cry of command and with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive who are left will be caught up together with them in the

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clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Now the Reformed camp typically looks at that text and sees it differently than the way that a dispensational pre-millennialist would look at it. And what’s the difference? Well, the difference is this. That verse is oftentimes used to talk about a secret rapture. So there will be a time. Usually it’s placed after the 3&1/2 years of the seven years that are usually talked about. There will be 3&1/2 years of peace and 3&1/2 years of trouble. After that 3&1/2 years of peace the church will be raptured out of the world, taken out of the world before that time of tribulation when a time of intense persecution begins. And so this is oftentimes argued as a text that is the secret rapture.

The Reformed camp would look at this text in a couple of different ways. First of all, it doesn’t appear to be secret. It doesn’t appear secret because of the cry at the end and the sound of the trumpet of God. All of this seems very, very loud; it seems very visible.

And there’s another reason why the Reformed would not look at this text and see it as a secret rapture. The reason is because oftentimes there seems to be a general judgment at the end of time. And if you were to go to just one more book—to 2 Thessalonians—here you’ll see an explanation of the end. And this is again written to the same group of people.

Just listen to this. It’s verse 5 of chapter 1, and this is what it says. *“This is the evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering, since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He comes on that day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who believe, because our testimony to you was believed.”*

And so it looks in that passage like there is the persecution of believers. And when the Lord comes there’s going to be vengeance and that God is going to glorify Himself in His people. So it looks like there’s going to be this general judgment; there’s going to be this general appearing.

For instance one might go to other passages to show that. But one thing I would want us to think about as we think about this idea of a secret rapture versus a non-secret rapture is this. I want you to look with me at Acts 28 for a minute. In Acts 28 it says this in the last part of verse 16.

This is when Paul appeals to Caesar. He’s sent to Caesar. And after a long circuitous road he ends up getting to Rome. But in the last part of verse 14 it says, *“And so we came to Rome.”*

But then he pauses and he tells us about his entrance into Rome. He says this: *“And the brothers there,--“ Where? There in Rome. “when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. And when we came into Rome.”* Paul is allowed to stay, and so on.

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Now one of the things that you realize is this. You realize that here is the city, and here is the road coming out of the city. If you are an important dignitary, valleys are filled in; mountains are made low. The curves are taken out of the road and you're way out of the city. And then you're ushered back into the city.

That's a custom that is still applied today. For instance, even if you're a visiting scholar, they'll come out of the city just a short way to meet you and usher you into the city because that's Middle Eastern custom. So when we see that he came to Rome and they came out as far as these two places in order to meet him and bring him back, that's his custom.

So when we turn to 1 Thessalonians, and we see that we will meet the Lord in the air, and so we will all be with Him, again I think the idea is that the custom of the day applies in this sense. And it shouldn't surprise us that we see this sort of thing. The Lord adopts these kinds of things all the time.

For instance, circumcision was not something that God invented for the Israelites. It's something He took out of culture. And He said, “Now this will be a sign for Me and you.” So it's not like God invents things in order to do the things that He does. God takes existing things and He utilizes them.

Another one is covenants. The covenant that God made with Abraham is one that we call a suzerain and vassal treaty covenant that was used by the Sumerian people. And so it's not a surprising thing that God takes the existing and uses it in His own plan and purpose. So when people in the Middle Eastern culture go outside to meet the lord or to meet the dignitary, it's not surprising that we would, out of respect for the king, rise up and meet the Lord and usher Him to earth.

So it's not a secret rapture. It would be the end—the general judgment—and we would meet the Lord in the air and bring Him back. That's the idea. Does that make sense?

David: So I was mistaken with what my brother-in-law was saying when he said that there isn't any rapture at all.

Jeff: Well, sometimes it depends on where you are in Reformed theology. For instance, I'm an amillennialist. And sometimes people will say, “Oh, you don't believe in a millennium.”

And I'll say, “No, I believe in a millennium.”

Don Bishop: And we're in it.

Jeff: I'm in it. Amillennialism is a little bit of a misnomer because it means “no millennium.” But that's not what amillennialists believe.

And so for instance I would not be opposed—although it would probably lead to confusion—but I would not be opposed to saying that this is the rapture of the church. But as soon as they go up there, they're coming right back down; that kind of thing. Yes?

Don Bishop: I think the confusion is that dispensationalism takes Christ's Second Coming and applies it to some other activity of God. And then when we say there is no rapture, they will say, “Then you don't believe in the Second Coming.”

Jeff: Yeah; I think that's really true.

Don: I mean, that's the confusion.

Jeff: Yeah, I think that's very true.

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Bishop Rodgers: Another explanation I’ve heard is that when the triumphant army comes back in ruin, people that have committed funds that belong to and support that war join with the crowd outside as they come in.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: And so in a sense you could say that we’re coming in with the royal King, as He comes in to share—

Jeff: The spoils.

Bishop: The victory of the spoils, yes.

Jeff: And that puts me in mind of Psalm 24, where it talks about “*O gates, lift your heads.*” The idea is that the gates are personalized. Raise your heads so that the King can march through in all of His victory; yes.

There are places where you can go. For instance I’ll just show you a couple of places where it might be interesting to you. First of all, maybe Daniel would be an interesting place—Daniel chapter 12 verse 2. “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*” All of this pictures a general judgment, doesn’t it? There’s going to be a rising from the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and they’re going to meet their final end.

For instance, 1 Corinthians 15 is very much like what we read about in 1 Thessalonians 4. “*I tell you, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*”

And so this idea of the trumpet that you read about in 1 Thessalonians 4, not being a secret rapture, a secret summoning of God’s people, but a public one. This is where the dead in Christ rise and they’re changed; their bodies are changed. This isn’t where we dwell in the ethereal realm by spirit: this is where our bodies are changed; this is a visible thing.

Another one, for instance, is in Revelation; it’s one of my favorite passages, in Revelation chapter 11. Revelation chapter 11 is about the two witnesses. Now I realize that some people will see these two witnesses as perhaps Elijah and Moses. I think the witnesses are symbols; this is the witnessing church. I think that when the witnesses lie on the ground as if dead that this is the church as it has been persecuted.

And then notice that after three-and-a-half days in verse 11 that “*a breath of life from God entered them. They stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Come up here!’ And they went up into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there came a great earthquake.*”

So when the saints rise, at that hour judgment comes upon them on the earth. So there’s this idea of the saints meeting the Lord in the air. I would fit in there the rising of those who come from the tombs. They meet the Lord in the air, and at that very hour God brings judgment on the wicked. So in general that’s how I think this is how a group in the Reformed camp would see those different passages.

It’s not as monolithic as all that. But anyone that would be right—*(Laughter)* Either they’re sleeping this morning or I don’t know. Yes, Don?

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Don Maurer: Should I play music first or just ask the question? (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Music, Don; what are you here for?

Transcriber’s Note: Don plays the keyboard.

Jeff: Oh, it’s going to be a melancholic question; you can tell by the music. Let’s hear it.

Don: By the way, Jeff, that was from the ‘80s; I hope you recognized the song.

Jeff: I didn’t.

Don” “Born Again” by Sherita and Billy Preston. (*Laughter*) Anyway, back to the millennium. I think my perspective is probably the same as yours. I’m amillennial too, although I have a friend who’s trying desperately to convert me to post-millennialism.

Jeff: Don’t go, Don; don’t go!

Don: Okay; all right. But anyway, I think I know what I would say. But if somebody would ask you, “Wait a minute. You say that Satan is bound. Well, there’s still evil in the world, more now in our culture than we’ve known in our lifetime. It doesn’t sound like Satan’s bound to me.” How would you say that Satan is bound now?

Jeff: Okay, so Don is taking us to Revelation 20. And this is the passage on the millennium—actually the only place in the Bible where the word “millennium” appears. And what he’s asking us is this. He’s asking us a question that arises out of this text, so let’s look at it. You know, this is supposed to be a class on how to study the Bible. I’m finding really quickly where your heart is. (*Laughter*) Maybe the next class ought to be something a little different. Yes?

Don Bishop: This is an example of it, because you said this is the only place in the bible where you can find it. Dispensationalists build a whole theology on one verse.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely; I agree. Okay, so take a look at this. It says, “*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon—that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan—and bound him for a thousand years.*” That’s the millennium. “*And threw him into the pit and shut it, and sealed it over him so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*”

Now I’m going to ask that you be patient with me for just a minute. But I want you to understand that what we’re dealing with in this text is that idea that Satan is bound for what purpose? So that he might not deceive the nations any longer, at least in the thousand-year reign.

Now I want you just to think with me for a minute about Old Testament stuff. This isn’t going to be long; just really brief. When you think about Old Testament stuff you think about Israel inheriting the land. And what does God give them? He gives them a law, and for what purpose? Not to be saved; they’re already saved. “*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of—*”

Don Bishop: The land of Egypt.

Jeff: “*The land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*” “I saved you. And now here’s a law.”

Now why does He give them the law? He gives them the law to differentiate themselves from the rest of the nations, right? He wants them not to be like the Canaanites. So He says, “This is how you will differentiate yourselves from them. You will show yourselves to be Mine by keeping the law. So I will be your only God; there

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will be no Baals. There are no local Baals, none of that junk. You will worship Me the way I stipulate. You will not take My name uselessly; you will not use it uselessly. You will keep the Sabbath day. You will then love your neighbor in all of these various ways. So in these ways you will differentiate yourselves from the pagan nations.”

Now what they were supposed to do is that they were supposed to impact those other nations, so that those other nations behaved like them. I mean, that was the whole point of it, right? Just to make this point very clear, go back to Genesis chapter 12 for a minute. This is where God gives Abraham the promise of land. He gives him the promise of being a nation. And then what does He do? He says to Him that His nation—His family that will become a nation—will bless other nations. This is what He says in verse 1 of chapter 12: *“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.’”*

Now listen to this. *“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all of the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

Now that was Israel’s purpose: to bless the nations. That was what they were supposed to do. They were supposed to carry these shadows and types of the gospel to all the nations.

Now how do we know that’s the gospel? Well, the New Testament tells us. Look with me at Galatians chapter 3 for a minute. In Galatians chapter 3 inverse 7 it says this: *“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying: ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’”*

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So the Scripture was foreseeing that all the nations would be blessed. The command to Israel was ‘go and bless the nations; go and bless those Gentiles.’ And yet the Jews basically developed hardness of heart toward them and said, “Let them all be damned.”

Okay. So by the time Jesus comes the Jews are insulated. Oh, they’ve been exiled for their disobedience. But after they’ve returned they’re still insulated.

Now Jesus comes. And what Jesus does is He fulfills the Old Testament. One of the places in the Old Testament that He fulfills is Psalm 2. Now I want you to take a look at Psalm 2 with me for just a minute.

Psalm 2 is a Messianic Psalm. It has four different players in it. So you have the Psalmist opening up, saying: *“Why do the heathen nations rage?”* You have God who is on high. He sits in the heavens and He laughs at all this stuff. But in verse 6 He says: *“I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill.”*

Now that King, the Messiah, speaks. And He says this in verse 7: *“I will tell of the decree:*

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The LORD said to Me:

‘You are My Son;

Today I have begotten You.’”

This is the Messiah! And listen to what the Father says to His Son the Messiah.

*“Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage,
And the ends of the earth Your possession.’”*

That’s striking, isn’t it? Now by the time that Jesus ascends into heaven, I want to go to Daniel chapter 7. Daniel chapter 7 is a prophetic image. Now just listen to this. This is Daniel seeing what’s going to happen.

Ted: What verse is this?

Jeff: This is verse 13. Thank you. *“I saw in the night visions. And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came One like the Son of Man. And He came to the Ancient of Days.”*

Now think about this. This is not the Son of Man coming *from* the Ancient of Days to the earth; this is the Son of Man coming *to* the Ancient of Days. Okay? *“And He was presented before Him. And to Him”—to the Son of Man—“was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed.”*

Now think about this a minute. The Psalmist says to the Son: *“Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations.”* Daniel sees the end of it all. He sees the Son of Man after He has come to earth going back to the Father. And the Father gives Him all the nations. Apparently the Messiah had asked.

Now how do we know this? Look at Matthew 28 for a second. In Matthew 2verse 18 8 Jesus says this to us. This is right before the Ascension; this is right before the Son of Man goes to the Ancient of Days—what Daniel saw. *“And Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.’”*

Now how can He say that? He can say that because He did what the Father told Him to do. He asked and the Father gave because of His righteous work being accomplished. And now Jesus says to His disciples, *“Go and disciple those nations; they are Mine.”*

Now think about this. Revelation 20 tell us about a time we call the millennium. I’m going to just tell you how I understand the millennium. The millennium begins with the resurrection and ascension of Christ into heaven. And it ends with the Second Coming.

Now I’m going to nuance that in a minute. But what I’m here to tell you is that this time period is the millennium. And this is the time period in which Satan is bound so that he can no longer deceive the nations. Why? Because all authority over the nations has been given to the Son. And He sent the disciples into the world to disciple the nations.

And that’s happening. And you can say, well, wait a minute. Peter says that Satan is a roaring lion prowling about, seeking to devour. Of course he is. It’s not as if Satan is in a box. Satan’s power over the nations has been restricted; that’s what Revelation 20 is about.

So it’s not as if Satan is on the shelf. Satan is very much active, and he very much opposes the work of God, but not like it was in the Old Testament. Go and read the Old Testament. In the Old Testament every nation was under the sway of the Baals and the

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Asherahs. They were all under the dominion of the idols. But not now. And that’s how I understand Revelation 20 and the binding of Satan.

Now let me say just one more thing, because I’ve got to put this in there, or else my brother Don might be tempted to sway toward post-millennialism. *(Laughter)* And I would not want that to happen. Post-millennialism is very triumphant. Post-millennialism says that the gospel good is going to get better and better and better and better, and evil is going to diminish such that, by the time Christ comes, it’s already going to be heaven on earth! Hurray! Okay?

I’ve asked friends of mine—ministerial colleagues of mine--, “When is this going to happen?”

“Long after I’m dead, I’m sure.”

“Oh, that’s the confidence that you have in the gospel. Oh, right!” *(Laughter)* Okay, this is where I would call myself amillennial.

Ted: Which means?

Jeff: “Amillennial” means literally no millennium. But I would say that we’re in the millennium. And in this millennial period, when Satan is bound, I would say to you that gospel good is going to get better and better and better.

Think about it! I view the rider on the white horse bent on conquering as Christ riding forth, conquering with the gospel! And in His wake is religious persecution, famine and death, because they are pursuing Him.

What does that mean? That means that evil is going to get worse. So as the gospel good gets better the evil is going to get worse.

Why is that? Ronald Wallace in his commentary on Daniel has an excellent explanation. He says this. This is a paraphrase. He says that as gospel good gets better evil is frightened by it, and so reacts to it with more evil trying to always suppress it. But it can’t suppress it. And yet, even as gospel good grows, evil will rise to oppose it. That’s amillennialism. And that is realistic.

And I’ll tell you something. That’s what you see in the book of Revelation. In the book of Revelation you see seven different snapshots. And they are recapitulations—re-tellings of the previous story. They’re all the same story.

But I’ll tell you what. I would love for you to show me any one of those snapshots in the book of Revelation that don’t have both good and evil. And most of them have the final climactic ending where evil is being put down and good is being exalted. And I can show you that if you want. But that’s real.

Post-millennialism is basically a hyper-pietistic view which says, “You don’t really believe that the gospel is going to conquer unless you believe that there’s going to be a diminishing of evil!” No! No, no, no! I’m a realist in that sense. I believe there is going to be an exaltation of the gospel. But I also believe that evil is going to really oppose it. Yes?

Brave Man: So you’ve probably already answered the question I have on this subject. You look at the events in Revelation as a series of parallel events, not chronological events. Would you agree with that?

Jeff: Yes.

Brave Man: It’s one event?

Jeff: It’s one event.

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Bishop: So it's seven glances.

Jeff: Seven glances. It's seven glances at one event. And here's another thing I would say to you. The book of Revelation is not about a topic that we are unfamiliar with. The book of Revelation is in fact the gospel. It's not a different topic than what we find in the Epistles or even in the Gospels; it's the gospel.

Let me give you an example of what I mean; let me just show you this. Look at Revelation. We're going to do a whirlwind, okay? This is a whirlwind.

Ted: For an hour each minute?

Jeff: Yeah, that's right. *(Laughter)* If you go from Revelation 1 to chapter 3 you will find the first section; that's the first section. And what's this? This is the perspective of the church on the earth. This is what the church is going to experience on the earth. But the glorified Lord is in her midst. He's in the midst of the lamp-stands, right? And so on the earth this is the trouble we're going to have. But God is in her; she won't be moved. How about that! I was a Lutheran there for just a split second.

Ted: *(Singing)* “God is in her; she won't be moved.” Is that Lutheran?

Jeff: Oh man, this guy is such an Anglophile! He doesn't even know what Luther said. *(Laughter)* Matt just puts his head down. Look at that. Okay, the second section starts in chapter 4. And the second section wraps up at the end of chapter 7.

Section 3 starts with the beginning of chapter 8, and it wraps up at the end of chapter 11. Section 4 begins in chapter 12; it wraps up at the end of chapter 14.

Section 5 begins in chapter 15 and wraps up at the end of chapter 17. Section 6 starts in chapter 17 and wraps up at the end of chapter 19. And section 7 begins in chapter 20.

Now let me show you something very quickly. If you look at the end of the second section at the end of chapter 7, notice verse 9. A great multitude of every nation is at the throne of grace, *“clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. Salvation belongs to the Lord.”* They're falling on their faces; they're rejoicing, and so on.

What happens in chapter 6 verse 12? *“When He opened the sixth seal, there was an earthquake.”* And great disaster comes upon the wicked. *“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth.”*

What are they doing? They are harvesting the earth for the righteous. This is the people of God under the figure of the number of Israel. And this is the great multitude that stands before the throne.

I started a little too late. But my point is that what you have at the opening of the sixth seal is both the general judgment of the wicked and the harvesting of the saints who will stand before the throne of grace.

Go to the next section. In the next section, at the end of chapter 11, remember I said that you have the two witnesses, which is a figure for the witnessing church. They are told to “rise and come up here,” and they do. And at that a seventh trumpet blew. And this is when judgment comes. And there are *“thunders and lightning's and peels of thunder and an earthquake”* that comes upon the world, and then the end will come.

My point is, at the end of that second section what we read about was that we read about the righteous being saved and the wicked being judged. And then it starts over again. And what we read about is the righteous being saved and the wicked being judged. And we would see that same pattern happening time and time again.

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For instance we see this at the end of section 4. We see the harvest of the earth. But right after the harvest of the earth what do we see? We see that God comes and in the winepress of His wrath the wicked are destroyed. So at the end of section 4 we see what? Again we see the righteous saved and we see the wicked trodden down.

The idea then is that at the end of every section that brings us to the end of the age we see the righteous saved and the wicked punished. And that's the general judgment that I think we see in other places in Scripture. Yes, Matt?

Matt Kail: So going back to our question about dispensationalism,--and I've not heard of the secret rapture; I just thought it was a general rapture—but the dispensationalist approaches the Scripture and ties that in Matthew and in the parallel in Luke. I'm in the 24th chapter of Matthew.

Jeff: Oh, yeah.

Matt: The 40th verse. *“Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the hand-mill; one will be taken and the other left.”* And that is tied to 1 Thessalonians 4 to say that is another indication of the Rapture.

Jeff: Yeah. That's a whole can of worms. Let me just see if I can pull the worms apart.

Matt: You were over in Revelation.

Jeff: So I'm going to throw a wrench in here; I hope it works, but we'll see. So what do you have here? You have two questions being asked by the disciples at the beginning of Matthew chapter 24. Those two questions have to do with “tell us when these things will be,” that is, when will this temple be destroyed? And what will be the sign of the end of the age? So those two questions are being dealt with.

Now one of the things that you have to realize is that as you look at Matthew's Gospel it has a parallel in Luke's Gospel. And one of the things that you find in that parallel in Luke's Gospel (if I remember where that parallel is), Don, do you remember where that parallel is?

Don Maurer: I'm trying to think of the parallel.

Jeff: You know, Don, this is really disappointing!

Matt: Luke 17.

Jeff: Is it Luke 17? All right. Hey, Don?

Don: Yeah?

Jeff: You just gotten a per cent deducted.

Don: I know. *(Laughter)* All right.

Don: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeff: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah; listen to him now!

Don: *“One will be taken and the other left.”* Luke 17; that is right.

Jeff: All right. So verse 35: two women grinding; one will be taken, and so on. Now what I want you to notice is that you have to go back to—

Matt: And so while you're doing that,--

Jeff: Yeah.

Matt: If I might,--

Jeff: Please.

Matt: In terms of the two questions that are being answered, I didn't begin early enough. Jesus begins, *“No one knows about that day or that hour, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

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Jeff: Yeah.

Matt: “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*”

Jeff: Yes.

Matt: So unless in amillennialism the destruction of Jerusalem is the coming of the Son of Man, it seems to me that these are events that are happening at the end of the age.

Jeff: Yes. I am struggling to lay my eye on this.

Matt: Okay.

Jeff: Just a second here. There’s a passage in Luke where he talks about “when you see the Gentiles surrounding the city.” Does anybody remember where that is?

Don Maurer: That’s 21.

Jeff: Is that 21?

Don: Somewhere in the Olivet Discourse, in the middle of the chapter.

Jeff: Oh, yeah.

Don Bishop: He gets his money back.

Jeff: Yes. *(Laughter)* He does get his money back. Okay, so this is the interesting thing. When you take a look at Matthew, and then you bring in the parallel accounts in Luke, one of the things that you have to realize is that there is an interesting thing going on here. What does it mean for these things to be fulfilled in the way that they are?

For instance, notice. When the disciples ask when the destruction of the temple will come, Jesus is going to tell them in this answer, although He doesn’t really pull those questions apart. But Luke does. And Luke tells us in Luke 21, “*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that it’s desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let those who are inside the city depart,*” and so on. And so here we find Luke telling us that the temple is going to be thrown down when the Gentiles surround the city. This is in 70 A.D. with Titus.

Okay. Now go back to Matthew 24 a minute. In 24 you find the signs of the end of the age, starting in verse 3. And those go down to verse 14. And He’s talking to them. You know, we oftentimes say, well these things are really about what’s happening in our time. But it’s interesting that He says, “*They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death. And you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.*”

And so the idea is, wait a minute. Is He talking about us, or is He talking to the disciples? Is He saying “you,” that these things will happen to “you”?

Now a lot of people will say, well wait a second. If you go a little further it says this in verse 14: “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.*” But I believe that if you go to Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2 is where all of the Jews from all the nations are gathered. And it says in verse 5 of chapter 2: “*Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews—devout men from every nation under heaven.*” And here are these Jews, gathered from every nation under heaven, hearing the gospel proclaimed.

So He’s telling the apostles about when they, the Jews, are going to experience the destruction of the temple. And so what He’s doing is, it looks to me as if He’s saying to them in the first fourteen verses of Matthew 24, that He’s talking to the apostles. And He’s telling them, “*You’re going to experience these things. And by the way, when the gospel is preached to the nations,*” I think that He’s talking about when the gospel is preached to all the Jews throughout the nations, like we find in Acts chapter 2.

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And then He says, “*So when you see ‘the abomination of desolation’*,” this is going to happen after Acts chapter 2 in 70 A.D. So now He’s going to pull in 70 A.D. He’s going to talk about the destruction of the temple. So He’s going chronologically at this point. If you look at it that way, He’s going chronologically.

And then He’s going to say, “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days, ‘The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. And the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.’ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds, with power and great glory. He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call. And they will gather His elect from the four winds, and from one end of the heavens to the other.*”

Now oftentimes people look at this and say, well this is the end. I want you to think about this just for a second. Notice the language that’s being used to describe this cataclysmic event. “*The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the heavens.*” If you go back into the Old Testament, one of the things that you discover is that with nations, when they fall, you find this kind of language attributed to that fall. Babylon is talked about in this same kind of way. Other nations are talked about in this same sort of way. When a nation falls it’s cataclysmic. And this kind of language is used to describe it.

Now think about this. It says, “*Immediately after that tribulation*”—the tribulation of 70 A.D.—“you’ll see this.” What will you see? The destruction of the Jewish age. And the Son of Man will appear on the clouds.

Now oftentimes we say, well, this is the Second Coming. And I would say, no; this is Daniel 7. This is Jesus, the Son of Man, going to the Ancient of Days, receiving the nations as His inheritance. And we oftentimes read “angels.” But it’s “angelos,” which could be “messenger,” or “angel.” And He sends His messengers to the four corners of the earth because Satan has been bound; the nations are now His. And He sends His gospel messengers out to the four corners of the earth to retrieve those who belong to Him at the close of the Jewish age.

This is the lesson of the fig tree. He brings us back to the lesson of the fig tree. And then He says this: “*But concerning that day and hour.*” What day and hour? The very end of the age. Concerning that day and hour, no one knows—not even the Son of Man.

So now it’s Matt’s question. I think this whole idea of “one will be taken and the other left”—and He even says it—that this is the idea of readiness. There will be two doing the same work. One will be ready; the other one will not be ready. It doesn’t say that the one is going to be secretly taken and the other one will not; that would be to read too much into it. But what it does say is, “*Therefore you must also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*”

So the Son of Man is going to return, right? At the end of the age He’s going to return in a general judgment. And I think that finally, when you get to verse 36, that’s when He’s addressing the general judgment. Why do I say that? This is just a final thing. Look at verse 34. “*Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*” In other words, you’ve got to account for verse 34.

So the way I’ve explained it then accounts for that generation being alive and all those things taking place. And when you get to verse 36, then He starts to deal with the future.

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And Jesus is going to come again, and people need to be ready. Does that make sense?

(Laughter)

Matt: A lot of very good interpretive points. For instance the “you,” who you said was the disciples, because I’m more of a dispensationalist, I would parallel that with the “you” spoken to Abraham. “You” is your seed. Now the disciples bear the seed of the gospel message. And then it’s through you, and then those who will continue to bear the seed.

And then the other point is that I’m thinking from what you’re saying that amillennialists do not believe that there’s a need to build the temple again, because it’s already been accomplished, whereas the dispensationalist says that the fig tree is indicative of Israel reconstituted as a nation in the land. And that’s the sign of the end of the age which is approaching.

Jeff: Yeah.

Matt: So it’s just very good to hear the amillennial point of view, and I appreciate that. It’s the best presentation I’ve ever heard of that.

Jeff: Well, thank you! Let’s pray and we’ll close. Father, thank You for this day and for the time You’ve given. Bless us, Lord. We are so thankful to gather together and as brothers to talk about Your word and to be instructed by it, and Lord, most of all to be challenged by it and to be comforted by it, so that we can take it out from here into the world and minister to those who are in great need of the gospel. And so Father, whatever our differences may be, we pray that You will continually surround us with Your love. Knit us together in our hearts one to another. And Lord, bind us with the gospel. And Lord, as we live out the gospel help us to overflow with it, that this world which is in desperate need of that gospel might experience it and the power of Your Spirit, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. *(Applause)*