

1Tim 24-05-01a

Good evening, it's Wednesday night at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 1st of May 2024 We're in a way Dualizing we're combining our continuing study of the gospel of the mystery with Paul but we are going to be looking at Proverbs because as we wrap up and summarize our Study of how we ought to act with those in our World whether they are close at hand brethren and Brothers and sisters you might say or whether they are in the neighbor category those with whom we come in contact but are not a part of our Holy Spirit United fellowship and then those who are in the outside world beyond Once sensitized to those distinctions and those Responsibilities and the accountability we have to exercise love in all three spheres the scriptures really come alive with guidance insight and exhortation So that we know exactly what and how? we What to do and how to do it? So we're going to be seeing a little bit on that in James and in Proverbs tonight Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin father what a relief what a deliverance what a source of peace and comfort and encouragement it is to know that we are not carried along by Circumstances and happenings in the world. We're not left to our own devices.

We don't rely on our own intelligence instead we have the Presence and power of your Holy Spirit. We have the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and we have extensive and comprehensive guidance from your word that Enables us to navigate this life successfully and Fruitfully, we pray that as we look at portions of your word tonight together that the Holy Spirit will Enable us to understand it and to see its pertinence In our own daily walk before you that it will enable us to establish good priorities and pursue useful and eternal goals day by day as we wait for the return of the Lord Jesus and the Entrance into the future realms about which we are so hopeful and expectant and to which we look forward With great anticipation. We pray these things in Jesus name.

Amen I want to begin tonight by Doing a little bit of current event Commentary it is not something I Do typically as you know, but I do think it is helpful to have some perspective because of the weight of our past Traditional support for The nation of Israel it is it is reflexive and instinctive for us because we root for Israel in the Bible and there is an Israel on the planet now and they are not the same thing and yet they are inevitably and Irretrievably connected by name by location by the heritage of the people who dwell there and We want to be responsible in our evaluations and our understandings as we see the news unfold, but there is a Commentary that I think very Elegantly summarized the difficulties for Israel right now And the reason I'm covering it is not for a political commentary or social commentary, but because it informs our Understanding of the scriptures as they relate to Israel past present and future This is an article written by a man named Rajon Menon Rajon Menon it's posted on a Website that I follow that is based in the United Kingdom Many times their commentary relates to what's going on with the Labour Party and you know people that are in and out over there But they also have international commentary and I found this to be quite good. It's dated today And I'm going to this is only a few minutes long

It says that they helpfully tell you how long it will take to read The article and I can usually cut that in half. It says it's six minutes long But please pay attention to this and as you listen think about the situation that Israel is pictured in the Revelation During the Tribulation with respect to other nations up until recently the the modern nation of Israel has received widespread support post World War two people's reaction to the Holocaust was to try to do something positive in the wake of terrible tragedy and devastation and that goodwill Began to fade rather quickly in in some of the most Antipathetic portions the the Islamic world Was never too keen on it and many of them Resisted from the outset that there should be the creation of an Israeli state But it has spread from there and grown and Israel has never been less popular internationally Than now since the time of its creation but I find this an insightful article and I thought I would share it with you as it bears on our interpretation of the Bible In assessing Israel's post October 7 military campaign in Gaza It helps to recall Clausewitz's dictum that war though horrific Isn't ultimately about killing and destruction for the sake of it But it is a means for states to achieve their political goals Seen in this light Israel's war has already failed never has the Jewish state been so isolated Internationally never has this nation founded following the Holocaust had to face formal allegations of genocide at the International Court of Justice worse Israel standing in the United States its most stalwart supporter has Suffered its popular support fallen and falling More broadly the war has led to an unprecedented erosion in support for Israel above all among Democrats and young people including American Jews For the first time an American president seeking re-election worries that his support for Israel Typically an asset in any political campaign in the United States could contribute to his defeat His campaign rallies have been interrupted by hecklers yelling genocide Joe and berating him for abetting war crimes According to recent survey nearly a third of American adults believe the Gaza war amounts to genocide And now American University campuses are roiled by anti-war protests, which some Jewish students have joined more pertinently for the immediate situation in Gaza Israel's government appears to lack any post-war plan.

This is the part. I encourage you to listen to carefully remember Clausewitz you prosecute a war because you have National interests that will be benefited by so doing Pertinently for the immediate situation in Gaza Israel's government appears to lack any post-war plan and That matters even in the unlikely event the Netanyahu achieves all his stated objectives in Gaza Freeing the hostages while also destroying Hamas seems impossible More than 9 million Israelis and more than 5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are fated to live cheek-by-jowl Neither community plans to depart nor can they be expelled the dreams of the most radical Palestinian movements of destroying the Jewish state and the calls for some within Israel's hard right to expel Gazans en masse are equally fantastical So what can we expect after the war ends? The most likely scenario is that Israel's leaders will continue the policy that despite intermittent Negotiations with the Palestinians has been in place since 1967 when Israel took control of the West Bank and Gaza following the six-day war Often called quote mowing the grass You remember this keep it even and low and if anything raises its head by way of opposition You know the dandelions start to sprout you got to mow that down Mowing the grass it

boils down to the open-ended occupation and suppression of Palestinians using massive force when deemed necessary. One example of the latter is Operation Cast Lead 2008-2009. Which followed peaceful Palestinian protests that gave way to rocket and mortar attacks by Hamas over 22 days the IDF the Israeli Defense Force killed some 1,400 Palestinians including 300 children its deadliest war in Gaza before the current one. Another operation protective edge in 2014 left nearly 1,400 Palestinian civilians dead including 500 children on a smaller scale mowing the grass features intermittent clampdowns on Palestinian resistance to occupation and dispossession. The byproduct of this approach has been and will surely continue to be an endless cycle of bloodletting. The sole uncertainty is how much time will elapse between one phase of violence and the next and how long each lasts. Yet mowing the grass doesn't rely on naked force alone to avoid directly ruling the West Bank. Israel has relied on the Palestinian Authority the PA for day-to-day governance and this has been sort of the buffer. So that it is it doesn't rankle so badly the Palestinians feel like they have an Advocate with the Israeli government in the form of the Palestinian Authority to replicate this arrangement in post-war Gaza. Israel will have to persuade people who enjoy legitimacy and respect in the community to serve as administrators in place of Hamas. The alternative military rule is a recipe for rebellions and violence that will entrap the IDF indefinitely. The problem here is that after the carnage and destruction in Gaza few if any non Hamas Notables will rush to volunteer. Some eventually may but risk being viewed as quislings and discredited as the PA has been. Aside from its corruption and ineptitude. The PA has come to be seen as Israel's subcontractor. In a November-December 2023 survey by the Palestinian Center for survey research 60% of West Bank residents say they want the PA dissolved. Despite the pitfalls perhaps local notables will agree to govern their territory either because the IDF succeeds in destroying Hamas. Or because Hamas has forfeited Gazan support by perpetrating October 7. Which led to the pitiless Israeli bombardment. In the first place then again the many thousands of young men pay attention to this. This is your common-sense Observation. The many thousands of young men who have seen their parents and siblings killed their homes and neighborhoods demolished and their own lives Upended may equally become a deep recruitment reservoir for follow-on armed resistance movements. Israel may end up creating more extremists than it has killed. Though Hamas may die its animating ideology will likely live on. But far from homogenous the anti-war left that is organized around this war shares a simple ambition. Israel should jettison this mowing the grass model and resume negotiations aimed at a two-state solution. Which has only been pursued in fits and starts since the Oslo Accords of 1993 in 1995. Those summits had some accomplishments. Israel's recognition of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. Palestinians renunciation of terrorism and accepting the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state and the creation of the Palestinian Authority. All of this was a pathway to a Palestinian state albeit with undefined contours encompassing the West Bank in Gaza. The ultimate goal seemed achievable on at least two occasions the 2000 Camp David talks between Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. President Bill Clinton Mediating exerting pressure and presenting a far-reaching proposal then in 2008 Prime Minister Ehud Olmert Put forward his own two-state proposal both initiatives envisioned Israel living in peace.

alongside a Palestinian state encompassing most of the West Bank in Gaza with a corridor between the two places the incorporation of the largest West Bank Jewish settlement blocks such as Ariel and Ma'al Adumim into Israel and the Palestinians compensated through land swaps the negotiations failed for many reasons including the status of East Jerusalem who would control it and how You know, this includes the Temple Mount Area the right of return for Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 how many and where? These structural obstacles remain but the two-state solution also becomes progressively harder to achieve So long as Israel while mowing the grass keeps building Jewish settlements on the West Bank ignores outposts that are proliferating there and there are some statistics about the ongoing effort to settle these areas with Israelis that have been quietly going on and to which the Palestinians vehemently object The government recently earmarked 940 million dollars for renovating constructing roads for the exclusive use of settlers and so on Settlers are a small segment of Israel's population, but they are also a powerful one They regard the West Bank Judea and Samaria as a divine gift between bequeathed to Jews for eternity right-wing parties draw strong support from them true largest settlement clusters could be joined to Israel as part of its two-state deal and Unbalanced land swaps, but Palestinians are right in arguing that all settlements are illegal under international law No matter that Israel has insisted they must demonstrate their readiness to compromise by accepting them This point of view is increasingly in the political ascendant following the collapse of the Israeli left the growing power of right-wing parties and movements increase in settlements and the expropriation of more and more Palestinian land to make way for them Unsurprisingly polls show that disillusionment with this 30-year quest has reduced support less than a third of Jews and only 30% of Palestinians back it the upshot of all of that is There is no Reasonable way forward there is no answer.

There's no solution. Nothing will make enough people happy to succeed And I will say on my own that any notions of a two-state solution are simply going to cultivate this would be like us saying that we should find a Solution that lets Russians occupy Cuba and get close to our border Remember Kennedy's reaction to that And the disaster of not being fully committed the Bay of Pigs and the rest of it But the Cuban Missile Crisis back when I was a child It was memorable to anybody who lived through it and spent time hiding under their desk in drills for nuclear preparedness attack preparedness There is there is no answer. There is no political answer.

There's no Negotiation that is going to end up with something satisfactory to both sides Palestine Palestinians will settle for nothing less than the river to the sea Israelis are not going to allow their state to be reduced demolished threatened and It's intractable. It is Unsolvably but in doing what they have to do by attacking Gaza and seeking to destroy Hamas Israel has sacrificed Almost all of their international support What little remains is under attack and is so detrimental to the people who express it including our current president? Who his party believes is going to sacrifice? Victory in the next election on the altar of support for Israel So the only way he can recover any chances of winning the election is To throw over support for Israel. That's the equation.

He will either lose the election or he will Shift his ground and you can see early signs of this in the proposal to bring Gazan refugees to the United States and You know you shrug your shoulders and say why not you've let everybody else in Anyway, this the conclusion of this article is The Most modish panacea to this intractable problem a one-state solution a single state that stretches from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and ensures equal rights to Jews and Palestinians Muslims and Christians alike is even less likely It contradicts the fundamental principle underlying the Zionist project Namely that Jews must have their own homeland Moreover, there's little evidence that replacing the Jewish state created in 1948 with this Imaginary one that provides Jews and Palestine the same rights has much appeal even among Israelis on the left It would be an even harder sell now because it will require Israelis to abandon deeply rooted conceptions of self and nation at a time when the Gaza War has increased both their distrust of Palestine Palestinian leaders and their vigilance about security for now There is no chance that this idea will take wing the Netanyahu government rejects a two-state solution Which won't even entertain even the thought of it Unless it involves a single one between the river and the sea with no more than a small minority of Palestinians in it the same goes for future governments that are formed by or include parties from the political right as For the long run the rightward trajectory of Israel's politics partly due to demographic trends favoring white ring voters All that guarantees that the one state vision will remain just that So in times of stress people hold fast to what is familiar Perhaps the Gaza War will be an exception and proved to be a catalyst that shakes things up and despite the fear and suspicion on both sides Israel and Palestinians will create the conditions for the bold political choices required to achieve the two-state solution That would be nice but not likely Not until the passage of time reduces the Gaza Wars psychological grip on Israeli Jews and Palestinians the ideology of extremists in both communities lose ground and a new generation rooted in the center and left moves Israel on different direction in Other words, it's never going to happen Until then Israeli leaders will fall back on mowing the grass Little Beelzebub thing Until then Israeli leaders will fall back on mowing the grass, but we know now better than ever where that can lead so The reason I bring this up is this completely unsolvable problem and the continued and Accelerating erosion of support for Israel in the international community This is the situation in which you see Israel at the beginning of the tribulation period So you have an unsolvable problem? You've got a highly unpopular Israel and suddenly you have someone who appears on the scene with an elegant answer. I Will make a covenant with the many for one week Let's just try this for seven years Put off your aspirations for a single Palestinian state put off your aspirations for a single Israeli state put off your need to Perpetrate violence and oppress and suppress and Create a security state where they're checking your papers and forbidding you access to certain places. I am the man with the plan and When this individual arises and Is able to achieve what no one thought was possible.

He will be viewed internationally as the savior of world peace he may throw in some sort of truce and cessation of hostilities in The Russia Ukraine conflict or any other current conflict of the time Whether it is this one or whether it is a future one. Just remember This individual will burst on the

scene after we depart So We're not going to see the elegant solution in the offer of the Covenant We are going to see the situation of stress and unsolvable problem that immediately precedes it It could be now it could be in a near term or even distant future But in terms of application, what should believers do? when faced with these Intractable hostilities these impossible conflicting values and interests and It comes home. It's at Campuses it is in communities.

It is in your neighborhood It's not something far afield. Do you support one side or the other halfway around the world? It is what are your decisions and attitudes your support or lack thereof for people? Just a block or two away or next door Being aware that this is a necessary Prelude it reminds you of the words of the Lord Jesus You know, these things must come but woe to him by whom they come talking about Judas and That a man's enemies can end up being members of his own household and there is division. There will be division in our Friendships in our family relationships as people divide over issues like this and consider them to be definitional and important and What is the application for us if you have a close family member or a close friend or a co-worker or someone in the periphery whose relationship matters and they come down squarely on the side of The opposite Not supporting Israel.

We don't support them now because they are faithful people of God We support them because they are the vessel into which God is going to place the people that he is going to preserve through the tribulation and this is Respect for the vase before the flower is put in there. This is respect for the structure that God is Putting in place and We anticipate what God is going to do. This is the care that you have for someone who Has potential to become a believer, but hasn't arrived there yet someone who isn't opposite isn't opposed isn't Antipathetic isn't isn't an enemy of Christian faith, but hasn't gotten there yet We we watch for that seeking note and right now there is a seeking note in Israel It's not so much seeking for God as seeking for deliverance They recognize the need for deliverance and they're beginning to come to the awareness that it is more than political It is more than existential.

It's more than national there they are turning more and more to the hope of Messiah and That is the Cleared area where an understanding that the Lord Jesus was and is that Messiah That is nearer now than it has been in a long time so we we honor the prophetic future that Tells us that in the present this Israel is something God is going to preserve. He is going to support he is going to Provide manna for the generation that drops in the wilderness because it is their children who are going to go into the land and you know the Bible talks about how how Israel is beloved for the sake of the fathers in this mirror time of the the Chiasm of human history the symmetry of human history The the present Israel is is being honored and protected and preserved for the sake of the generation That is going to come like that generation that raised their children in the wilderness and gathered the manna every day They weren't qualified to enter the land but their children were and they were preserved and fed and protected by God in anticipation of that generation that would be qualified and I view the current state of Israel and it's it's Israeli population in that way now and so is it a good expression of Christian faith and understanding to support Zionism and

national Israel With moderation with caution and with a biblical Viewpoint a biblical understanding that it's not the current state That we support in anything. It does is right because they are God's people.

We don't view it that way But they are beloved not for the sake of the fathers they are beloved for the sake of the generation God is going to preserve and from which is going to come the 144,000 servants and So we respect that this is a creation underway This is God forming Adam's body out of the dust of the ground the nesha ma The spiritual life is not yet there but I honor what God is doing and creating the body that is going to house that life and that future and With respect to abortion we've talked about this many times that at least in my view to mess up what is God at work in prospect is a very dangerous and and unfaithful thing to do I Wanted to talk about that because that I think gives us some perspective for what's going on in our own country with respect to these rather uninformed and Well, let me just say they're uninformed and leave it at that Short-sighted Hypocritical in many cases. I think there's a bandwagon effect. I think there's a hey, there's something going on Stephen stills had a song before a lot of people were even born That says there's something happening here what it is ain't exactly clear People are marching around and carrying signs mostly saying hooray for our side It's an anti-war song, you know, stop children.

What's that sound? Everybody look what's going down and people would just want to want to be a part of it Want to be a part of history want to look back on it in the future and say I was there for This and that the way they've heard their parents and grandparents to for the Vietnam generation And so this bandwagon effect isn't actually informed There's not a level of commitment and understanding that says I'm willing to put myself on the line I'm gonna mask up and ask somebody to bring me sandwiches while I do this very safe protest that costs me nothing gets me out of finals and I can cover myself with glory and assign righteousness to myself for participating in it, but it costs me nothing So That's a bit of perspective at least from From how I see it we're going to be turning to the Proverbs tonight interestingly and if you have a minute turn to Say if you have a minute if you have a Bible turn to Proverbs and let's begin at chapter 22 this how do we Endeavor to live our lives before the world whether and this is pretty much outside the one another Fellowship we have replete guidance for that. We have the love chapter in Corinthians 1st Corinthians 13 We have seen the one another's from the Lord Jesus and from the remainder of New Testament scripture But when it comes to neighbors and those who are outside What should our life look like we have seen that in 1st Timothy chapter 3 and it's parallel in Titus for What regard Christian leadership should be held in by those who are outside? But look at chapter 22 of Proverbs a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches loving favor rather than silver and gold if there is a choice between making a lot of money and having a good reputation and Sometimes this is a choice The Bible speaks the rich and the poor have this in common the Lord is the maker of them all If there was ever an opportunity to invoke the image of God This would be it, but it doesn't say the rich and the poor have this in common that they are made in the image of God it's that they are made by God and This is not just that they are a product of God's

creative acts The Lord is the maker He also has assigned these situations Either by fiat or as a consequence of choices, but the reason there are rich and poor this is part of God's Creative action God did not intend Everyone to be equal economically There are supposed to be rich and poor this is a part of divine wisdom and You can in the same way that a vessel of Wrath can change himself into a vessel of honor the poor can become wealthy Generally in the spiritual sense and it is often easier to become spiritually wealthy when you are not Distracted by riches the words of the Lord Jesus about camels and needles comes to mind but those who are poor and those who are rich do well to remember that both existence and economic status are Under God's creative ordination a Prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass right along and are punished Prudence looks ahead at consequences It doesn't get caught up in the immediate stimulation of the moment you wish that our young people Particularly at some of these college campuses had this piece of wisdom firmly in the application bucket of their mind By humility and the fear of the Lord are Riches and honor and life and as we've seen in Proverbs We've seen this structurally so many times that these are not just a pastiche Somebody didn't just throw aphorisms in a blender and spit them out in random order this connects directly to verse 2 Humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life the rich and the poor have this in common the Lord makes Them that way Thorns and snares verse 5 are in the way of the perverse he who guards his soul will be far from them What's the first mention of thorns in the Bible? Genesis chapter 3 Sweat of your brow the earth is going to bring forth thorns Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse he who guards his soul will be far from them Reverse the curse this would be a great bumper sticker for those who could figure out what it means but God turns cursing to blessing and these thorns and the the natural painful Outcomes from the presence of sin will be far from The one who guards his soul verse 6 train up a child in the way He should go when he is old he will not depart from it. It doesn't say how old The rich rules over the poor and the borrower is servant to the lender This is a Tongue-in-cheek, I think statement.

It's true at the common isn't that an obviosity? level Surely the rich rule the world and the poor are their servants But what has he just said back up in verse 4? the genuinely rich the genuinely honorable Those who who have real life Are the ones who by humility and the fear of the Lord are made rich verse 2 by God And what's going to happen in the resurrection? What's going to happen in the kingdom? The last shall be first the first shall be last and what's going to happen the spiritually rich are going to rule over the spiritually impoverished It's it's that double-edged sword of the Word of God it has Sort of an obvious material truth But those who heard the Proverbs of the Lord Jesus which half of the sword would they hear and say? Well, of course, there's nothing special about that and not look deeper into the spiritual truth That if you bide your time and cultivate Spiritual wealth and spiritual riches that is where you are going to be Dominant You're going to be victorious you will prevail in the long term the rich rules over the poor and the borrower is servant to the lender and notice it says the rich rules the The verb there tells you that rich is singular. This is not the rich plural. This is the rich one rules and How many rich are there compared to how many poor? As it is in the material economy of this world where there are a few rich and many poor So in the resurrection there are going to be a few rich and many poor and it's

a reversal He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow verse 8 and the rod of his anger will fail notice There is this reminder that this is a long-term perspective.

You're sowing now You're rich now you're prevailing now But you are sowing these seeds of iniquity and when the harvest comes in in the future It's going to be a whole different scenario so as we saw in Ecclesiastes the Spirit that looks at the length of the race not the spirit who stands tall at the beginning. I'm Dancing on my toes. I'm all ready to run this sprint It's the endurance runner that prevails.

It's the one who maps out the length of the race that prevails and For us we look at the world today. We look at the news. We see all of this turmoil and Great Contrary Dispute and conflict and it's unnerving it's alarming you wonder about the future of the country but Taking the long view these things must come woe to him by whom they come, but it's a necessary Prelude it's an inevitable Construction of the world So that when those seals start breaking and the forward progress of God's judgment on evil begins to unfold Those who are his servants will be preserved those who have paid attention will be protected the blood of the martyrs will be avenged and even those who are caught up in and are momentarily Prevailed upon oppressed or even overcome Their momentary light affliction is working an eternal weight of glory.

I can't think of a better verse Than that one out of Romans from Paul our Momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory. It is taking the long view So rather than sowing iniquity He who sows to his flesh shall love the flesh reap corruption the one who sows to the spirit shall love the spirit reap Life everlasting. I learned that when I was three He who sows to his flesh he who sows iniquity he who sows in the short term looking for a quick bounty a quick profit will reap corruption and The anger and the righteous indignation that people experience now it's going to fail He who has a generous eye will be blessed he who gives of his bread to the poor He gives of his bread to the poor How does this work is this not neighbor love is this if you're giving of your bread that means you can personally reach into your Stock of bread and you can hand it to someone with whom you are in face-to-face eye-to-eye contact You're giving of your bread to the poor.

This is someone you've identified. This is someone that you judge to be Willing to take this bread and do something productive with it. You are not sponsoring evil.

You're not helping someone perpetrate iniquity by sustaining them so they can do more evil You know them well enough to Expect good things when you share this bread Jesus did not feed all of Jerusalem when he Got the five loaves and two fishes. Did he who did he feed? He fed people that had come out and heard Bible class for three days Stayed with him without going home even for meals for three days. That's who he fed same thing with the 4,000 people who came out to hear him and stayed and They were willing to forego their meals to hear the truth from the lips of the Lord Jesus, that's The material needs that Jesus met he knew them by contact he knew them by experience He could see their heart and he fed them.

He gave of his bread to them That's the model for us. There's so much wonderful guidance in Proverbs these are not just pithy aphorisms and and catchy sayings they illuminate and they tell us how to Implement the love that we are called to express as Representatives of the Lord Jesus and believers in him in this life. Well, we'll pause here and take our break when we come back We're gonna see a bit more.

We're gonna go up through Proverbs chapter 25 Then we're going to go over to James chapter 4 and chapter 5 and see even brighter light shed on our path