

Special 24-08-28a

Greetings, welcome to Wednesday night at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the conclusion of our two-part special study on earth-shattering stuff going on in 2024 and people interpreting it in various ways. This is the 28th of August, 2024.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll dive right in. Father, we are so grateful for these times that we spent together searching out the truth of your word and being enriched by the ministry of your spirit, both personally and through the gifts that you've distributed amongst us, that we're thankful that you are interested in our lives, you provide us guidance and direction, light on our path. We pray that our time together this evening will contribute to that goal.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Sunday passed, we took a look specifically at this ongoing fervor of prophetic interest in current events, those who are seeing what is going on in the world and in our nation through the lens of biblical prophecy, biblical principles. And as I said on Sunday, I think this is in some ways a good thing.

We should be aware of who we are and why we're here. We should resort to our spiritual identity and the scriptures that God has given us to understand our lives and to discern the way forward. Those who, by whatever means, draw attention to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we saw this in Philippians on Sunday.

Paul says, you know, people are preaching Christ out of various ways, means, and motives. Some of them are actually trying to put Paul in his place by preaching. But he says, you know what? If Christ is being preached, I'm happy.

And to the extent that attention is being drawn to the reality of God, salvation through Christ, and our presence as his representatives and giving us an opportunity to speak the truth in love, to reflect his glory in a way that will draw others to him, that's good. It's a good thing. At the same time, we would like to shine that light of truth as clearly as possible and focus it.

You can have a vision that allows you to see daylight, but if everything is blurry and fuzzy, you're gonna be searching for glasses or contacts or a surgeon to fix your cataracts or your detached retinas or whatever it might be. Not that any of you would know anything about that. But obviously it's one thing to have light.

Light perception is pretty much always a good thing, but the sharper and more clearly we can focus. And if we can have two working eyes and get perspective and depth perception, so much the better. So while we celebrate and applaud the focus on spiritual aspects of what's going on in the world in general and our lives in particular, we hope to sharpen that focus and try to make sure we're seeing things accurately.

So we looked at, and just as an example, and I don't mean to pick on Jonathan Cahn, C-A-H-N. He's a wonderful guy. He's got a lot of things going on and he is rightly and properly drawing attention as a Messianic Jew who is a Christian to the presence of God and the things of God in the world today.

And I think that's great. I have very little negative impression of him other than I think there are much better ways to make those points and to interpret scripture by starting with scripture, observing, interpreting, and then applying it to current events instead of working that triangle of interpretation backwards, observing what's going on, and then going to the scriptures to see if there's anything that looks like it, and then trying to figure something out that way. Our church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

All biblically-oriented, God-fearing, Christ-loving churches should start with the pillar and ground of the truth, which is God's word. That's what needs to be in our soul. That's what gives us spiritual vision and context and experience so that we can interpret what we see around us clearly.

So that's our starting point. We covered that in detail on Sunday. As promised, the two videos that are posted on the listing for this special, you can watch.

The first was earth-shattering prophetic things that are going on. I can't remember the exact name of it. Very interesting.

Looking at jubilees and 50-year intervals between various events and understanding some of the things associated with a jubilee, the return of property to its rightful owners, and so on. Jonathan Cahn is an intriguing speaker. Anybody that's enthusiastic about their subject, you can hardly help but admire their delivery and their dedication and their investment in what they're talking about.

And he's certainly in that category. So, you know, God love him. He's certainly raised a level of interest.

But we're going to conclude our analysis of that and move on to the second video that I suggested of many. If you go to his channel on YouTube or Google him on YouTube or whatever, you will find that there's any number of these mystery videos. They're fun to watch.

There's no denying it. It's intriguing. It's interesting.

You'll wind up getting your Bible and flipping back to a passage to see if these things are so, you know, how can that be a bad thing? So I'm just recommending these two because they're sort of representative for different reasons. One of them takes events that have happened over the last 100 to 150 years and then finds correspondences to jubilees and such. The other takes the specific event of the assassination attempt on Mr. Trump and his bloody ear, finds a couple of bloody ears mentioned in scripture and

makes a connection there.

So let me start though by saying that there is a long history of this. We have sort of a historical, social, personal myopia where we see what's happening in front of us today. We've got news as never before.

Pull out your phone. You can get any number of reports and stories on any number of things. We're in the actually post-information age and the danger, as you may have heard some current commentators, particularly ever since, I would say the last 10 years or so with the founder and CEO of, is it, who's Zuckerberg? What's his thing? Facebook or Twitter or what? Facebook, yeah, the Facebook guy, Zuckerberg has come out and admitted that the government pressured that widely read platform into skewing the news, which had a material effect on the election.

All of the people who say you're an election denier, people are actually denying that there was significant influence on public opinion prior to the 2020 election by suppressing some information and enhancing others. Not just Facebook, but Google and Twitter and other platforms consciously with malice of forethought under the influence of various powerful entities filtered what people read, which therefore tilted the table in terms of their opinions and therefore their votes. It's a fact and it wouldn't matter whose favor or whose disfavor.

It worked for, it's a fact that it is very difficult to make an informed and intelligent decision when you're only being given part of the information, whether it's medical decisions you make, whether or not to get a vaccine or how assiduously you should try to avoid some particular infection or whether it is politics, social issues, statistics on this, that and the other. These things being filtered, skewed, there's lies, there are condemned lies and then there are statistics, right? And these things can be employed in all kinds of ways. Oh, look, the jobs report, there were 511 million new jobs created, right? How many were lost during the time of lockdowns and business closings? How many were lost because businesses were destroyed because of riots, nearly 500 riots, hundreds of millions of dollars of damage, countless lives lost, far in excess of anything that happened in January 6th, which made no material difference in the forward progress of peaceful transitions of power or the existence of democracy or any of the rest of it.

What does change democracy is when people are killed and businesses are destroyed and jobs are lost and so on. I say that to say this, this is not new. And the current flurry of interest in world events, current events, things that are pictured on the news, things that come across your news feed or your social media feed or whatever it may be and people saying, is this a part of the hockey stick graph? The end is near.

We may only have hours, days, weeks or perhaps months left. We're coming up on the 2000th anniversary of the closing episodes in the Lord's incarnate life. Is that significant? We benefit by having some historical perspective, which I would now like to provide.

Are we living in the closing days of life as we know it, human history and so on? In the 17th century, this is the 1600s. I was an adult before I figured out that the 17th century was the 1600s. It wasn't really till the year 2000 and I realized that the 19th century was the 1800s, the 20th century, 20th century Fox, that was the 19th.

Who knew? But 17th century writers, these people would be in the 1600s, right? They predicted, many of them, the imminent second coming of Christ based on the events of their time. Thomas, and please write these down, just jot a note. You need this for perspective, lest we forget.

Thomas Brightman lived from 1562 to 1607. He was an English Puritan theologian. You can, if you just get his name, you can Google him.

There's a Wikipedia article for every one of these guys. You can find out in detail what they thought. I just wanna give you a little bit of salient information.

You can explore it in depth, but in the interest of time, I'm just gonna mention these guys. He was an English Puritan theologian. So is he a Catholic or a Reformed guy? Reformation, right? And near at hand, you remember Luther and Calvin and these other guys, this is recent history.

He's an English Puritan. He saw the Reformation as a sign of the approaching end times. Can you imagine the upheaval of the Catholic Church, the city on seven hills in Revelation 17 and the woman seated on it and the papacy and the Pope and all of this? So he wrote a book called Revelation of the Revelation.

Shades of what we see today. I know of at least half a dozen books that have come out on reading Revelation rightly, reading Revelation responsibly, Revelation for the rest of us. It's all ours of alliteration.

Well, he had Revelation of the Revelation way back in, it was published posthumously in 1609. He interpreted the fall of the papacy and the rise of Protestantism as fulfilling the prophecies of Revelation. And you can see how you could find correspondence after correspondence in this.

Pulling down the empire, the woman being gored off the back of the beast and all the rest of it. He believed the imminent collapse of the Catholic Church would precede the second coming of Christ. He didn't live long enough to find out that the Catholics are alive and well on planet earth.

Wasn't that Hal Lindsey's second book? Oh no, that was Satan is alive and well, sorry. So Thomas Brightman was sure that the Reformation was a harbinger of the imminent return of Christ. Joseph Meade, M-E-D-E, 1586 to 1638.

Do you see that this is 400 years ago? Right? We're in 2024. These guys, 400 years from

1638 when Joseph Meade died, that would be 2028 if my math is right and don't trust it. Remember there was such a thing, if you took history, you may only remember the name, but there was a little thing called the 30 Years War.

The 30 Years War. So if you're English, and Meade was an influential English scholar, and he had a work called *Clavis Apocalyptica*. It's the apocalyptic clavicle, basically.

Clavis Apocalyptica, 1627. He developed a detailed interpretation of the book of Revelation. 1627 now, we're coming up on the 400th anniversary of the publication of this book, four centuries ago.

He interpreted the political and religious turmoil of the 30 Years War. You remember this was 1618 to 1648. That's the 30 Years War.

I didn't remember, I had to look it up. But he saw it as evidence that the end times were near. He believed that these conflicts were leading to the final battle of Armageddon and the imminent return of Christ.

John Napier, this is our third guy now. 1550 to 1617. He was looking at the millennial turn of 1600.

The year 16, remember all the kerfuffle about Y2K in the year 2000 and Mayans and all the rest of it? He had predictions based on the upcoming year 1600, 424 years ago. He was a mathematician. He wrote extensively on biblical prophecy.

He had a book called *A Plain*, that's plain with an E on the end. P-L-A-I-N-A, so cool the old spelling. *A Plain Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John*, which he published in 1593, seven years before the big double O, 1600 year.

He linked various political and religious events of his time, including the conflict between Protestants and Catholics as fulfilling apocalyptic prophecy. And it was all going to converge in 1600. Now you think these guys might be outliers or fringe.

These were mainstream guys back in the 17th century. Thomas Goodwin, number four, lived from 1600 to 1680. He was another prominent Puritan preacher.

He interpreted the English Civil War as a sign that the Antichrist power was waning and Christ's return was imminent. In his writing, he suggested that the defeat of the monarchy and the rise of the Puritan Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, remember him? This was signaling the beginning of the millennium and the eventual second coming. If none of those guys ring a bell, this one will.

Cotton Mather's father, Increase Mather. There were three or four generations of preachers of Mather's. Increase Mather's father was a preacher.

He was a preacher. His son, Cotton, was a preacher. Increase Mather lived from 1639 to

1723.

He spent most of his life in New England, but he occasionally went back to the old country and there was the Great Fire of London in 1666. So Increase Mather wrote extensively about events in Europe, especially the Great Fire of London and like many of his contemporaries, he interpreted this event as a sign of the apocalypse. Great portions of London burnt to the ground.

It looked like a Holocaust. It looked like a catastrophe, which it was in many ways. He believed the combination of the fire, the plague and other calamities were an indication that the end times and Christ's return were imminent.

A sixth individual, Johann Heinrich Alsted. He was a German reformed theologian. He predicted the imminent arrival of the millennial kingdom.

Once again, looking at the 30 years war and the havoc that that caused, sword, famine, plague, all of these things could be observed and described in the scriptures. So he had a book called Theologia Prophetica, prophetic theology published in 1627. Again, 400th anniversary of that is coming up.

He argued that this war, 30 years war was a precursor to the final judgment and the establishment of Christ's earthly reign. Number seven, Samuel Rutherford. He was a Scottish Presbyterian minister.

He interpreted the bishops wars and the English civil war as signs of the end times. He believed these events were part of God's judgment and that they heralded the imminent return of Christ. These guys were prominent, published, respected, scattered around England and elsewhere in Europe.

And there was a choir of voices, all indicating the end is near 400 years ago right now. Number eight, William Aspinwall. He was the fifth monarchist.

And I don't have time to explain it, but it's real interesting. Google fifth monarchy or fifth monarchist. Basically, you remember the prophecies of Daniel.

There is the first great kingdom, head of gold, then the second kingdom, shoulders and chest of silver, then the third kingdom, belly and thighs of brass, and the fourth kingdom, the legs of iron and so on. Well, they thought the fifth kingdom, these are fifth monarchy, fifth monarchists. That's their nom de guerre, nom de plume.

Well, Aspinwall, William Aspinwall was a fifth monarchist and a radical Puritan, kind of on the fringes of the Puritanism of the day. He saw the Westminster Assembly, which occurred from 1643 to 1653, and the political upheavals of the English Civil War as indications that the millennium was about to begin. He believed Christ's return was imminent and that the fifth monarchy or the kingdom of Christ would soon be

established on earth.

He saw the completion, the rise, rain, and fall of these four previous kingdoms as ending in his day, and the time is ripe for the fifth monarch, Jesus himself. That's just the 17th century. I can give you the same for, and you can do it as well, the 18th century, the 19th century, and the 20th century.

There has been a continuous pattern of interpreting current events, matching them up to alleged correspondences in scripture, and getting excited, and in some cases, unbalanced and distracted. I'm not gonna go through, I've got notes for the other centuries. You get the drift here, right? And prior to the printing press, we don't know so much about what people were publishing.

Starting really in the 16th and 17th centuries, you start to have people who can publish books and distribute them, and people can read and share what they've read, and others can hear from those who are literate enough to read. But for at least four centuries, there has been just as much fervent sky-watching as there is today. We know a lot more about it because of our access to information.

But this is why we want to be careful about overexcitement when it comes to the pattern of current events. Let me give you something for the 20th century, the late 20th century, which is in living memory for many of us. So you may remember Y2K and the Y2K bug, computers as they existed at that time.

I spent months getting a Baptist Foundation through the transition from 1991 to the year 2000 because of computer issues and clocks and things that were gonna come unglued. But Jerry Falwell, the well-known evangelical leader out of Virginia, he's got Liberty University and so on, he warned that the Y2K bug would trigger global chaos, and he and others interpreted this as a precursor to the end times. It's all gonna fall apart.

Hal Lindsey, well-known in this regard, late great planet Earth, Satan is alive and well on planet Earth. He interpreted the Gulf War as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. He had an ongoing TV show that was widely watched during those years.

Fulfillment of biblical prophecy, particularly regarding the Middle East, which he saw as a trigger for the fulfillment of end times prophecy. Pat Robertson, well-known for, is it CBN, I believe, at the 700 Club? Pat Robertson saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism as signs that biblical prophecies about the end times were coming to pass. Do you see sort of a symmetry here? James Dobson, the focus on the family guy, tough, love parenting guy, he interpreted the AIDS epidemic of the late 80s and into the 90s as a divine judgment and associated that with the end times, the special form of pestilence that was viewed as a fulfillment of prophecy.

John Hagee, Texans are familiar with him. He's out of San Antonio. He's got Cornerstone

Church down there.

Hagee interpreted the 9-11 attacks as a sign of the end times. He was all over TV. Those of us in Texas, you couldn't flip a Christian channel without seeing him.

He fit them into a broader narrative of Middle Eastern conflict leading to Armageddon. 9-11 was how long ago? We'll be coming up on the 25th anniversary of that here pretty soon. Michael Brown, evangelical leader and radio host.

I personally can't put a face with that name, but he is suggesting or suggested that Hurricane Katrina was a form of divine judgment and a sign of the end times. He and many others. The tsunami that hit in the Indian Ocean back in 2004 was interpreted by a number of evangelical leaders in the light of end time prophecies about natural disasters, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and so on.

Come up to 2007, 2008, the great implosion, the financial reset, everybody losing their retirement savings and so on. David Wilkerson, founder of the Times Square Church, warned that the financial crisis was a sign of impending judgment and a precursor to the end times. You can imagine, and I skipped over the 20th century, but the stock market crash in 28 did a similar thing in many circles.

The Japan earthquake and tsunami in 2011, as well known a personage as Franklin Graham suggested that that earthquake and tsunami were signs that the end times were near and a reflection of the increase frequency of natural disasters. The Syrian civil war, which started in 2011 and is continuing into the present. Joel Rosenberg is an evangelical author and has written extensively on how this conflict and the rise of ISIS fit into end times prophecy.

Now they're saying the same thing about Hamas and Hezbollah, harbingers of the apocalypse. You'll remember this beginning especially in 2014 and 2015. Once again, John Hagee and Mark Biltz, B-I-L-T-Z, B-I-L-T-Z were foremost of any number of people promoting the idea that a series of lunar eclipses known as blood moons.

Remember the whole blood moon thing we had about 10 years ago? These were signs of the end times and connected them to biblical prophecy. Do you find stuff about moons and new moons and so on throughout scripture? Of course, but you start with what you see in the sky and go back to your Bible instead of starting with your Bible and remaining calm about what you see in the sky. It's just backwards.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, numerous Christian leaders and groups. What did I say? Yeah, 2020, two O two O. Sorry. Numerous Christian leaders and groups, including Franklin Graham and Jonathan Cahn have interpreted the COVID-19 pandemic as a sign of the end times, suggesting that it fulfills biblical predictions about global plagues.

How many global plagues have we had? Do you remember the flu? Back in around the time of the end of World War I, we had the Russian flu. I got the Russian flu. I was on TV, interviewed about the Russian flu back in, I think it was 1977.

I've got the footage if you want to see it. It's kind of fun to see myself. I ordered it from a news archive and you can see the NBC medical reporter flagging me down in T court at Annapolis and asking me questions about the Russian flu.

That was a very widespread problem. Back in the late seventies. The Russia-Ukraine war that began in 2022, Pat Robertson came out of retirement briefly to suggest that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was part of a larger plan foretold in the Bible that would lead to the end times.

Everything associated with Roche in scripture, Robertson is just emblematic of many who are going back and rereading those prophecies and trying to interpret what Russia is currently doing. You can go on and on, wildfires, climate change. These are signs of the end times as foretold in the book of Revelation.

The rise of artificial intelligence, which is genuinely something to watch, as we have suggested. I've talked extensively about AI, both the good and the bad. It's like any other tool that has great potential for good and great potential for harm.

But Chuck Missler, many of you are familiar with Missler. I listened to him sporadically in days past. He passed away, I didn't really mark this, but he passed away in 2018.

But even then, AI was already on the horizon. Missler and others have suggested that the rapid development of artificial intelligence can be tied to end times prophecy, particularly in relation to the Antichrist and global control systems. And I certainly am in that number.

I think that this technology certainly makes it possible for these to be fulfilled. But one has to be cautious. And to his credit, Jonathan Cahn, in the introduction to his Mr. Trump bloody ear video says one has to be cautious.

And I applaud him for that. I'll quote him here in a moment. But Cahn is ready to see these things.

And again, you can survey his available videos. To his credit, much of his material is available for free. And I really appreciate that if you wanna know what he thinks, you can generally Google it and find it online without finding it all hidden behind a paywall.

And that's another thing I will give him a thumbs up on. I like that if you wanna know what he thinks, you can find it online for free. And that's as it should be.

If you want details, get his books and you'll get that in exhausting detail. But you can get

the heart of it. And he goes and does seminars at churches and things and videos it and lets people put them up online.

And I say, that's good. If you purport to be presenting the word of God, it ought to be at no cost. That's my strong belief from the word of God.

You don't make merchandise of the word of God. But he was another one who took the 9-11 attacks and connected them to ancient prophecies in the book of Isaiah and arguing that these are a harbinger of greater judgment on the United States unless we repent and turn to God. You can completely skip any mention of 9-11 and say that if we as Americans and if our nation as a whole ignores God and the things of God, we're not gonna last long.

You don't have to use 9-11 for that. You can just go to scripture. Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord.

Talking about Israel and that is a historical pattern. But he had a book called the Harbinger where he talked about all of the things that are national crises recently in the US to include the financial crisis in 2008, the 9-11 attacks. And then in 2014, he has the mystery of the Shemitah, S-H-E-M-I-T-A-H, Shemitah, claiming the ancient biblical principle of the Shemitah, a year of rest and release observed every seven years.

We just call this the Sabbath year. That this is connected to modern financial collapses. He finds things that are seven years apart and says this is something special.

I can't do anything about US financial policy. I can't do anything about the economy. I can only manage my own personal economy.

Then I'm not gonna examine my past financial expenditures or decisions or income and try to find a seven-year pattern. I'm much more interested in being a good steward of everything God puts under my control. He that is faithful in that which is least and most of what I control is that which is least can learn the principles of responsibility, management, stewardship of time, of resources, material opportunities, whatever they may be.

This is our responsibility and you can go straight to the word of God to see this emphasized and taught. It is the word of God, not strange coincidences of history that drive us to the scripture to learn how we can please God in our walk, in our stewardship, in our expression of faith and hope and love, our associations with one another, our dealings with our neighbors and our treatment of those who are outside. To the extent that it is up to me and there's so much in the world that isn't up to me, but to the extent that it is up to us, we live peaceably with all men.

We don't pick fights. We don't create controversy. We don't rock boats.

We don't charge in where angels know better than to tread and wise believers know better than to charge into battles that we have not been assigned by God. We have our hands full in our personal lives, our personal opportunities and ensuring that we are pleasing God in our priorities and our goals and our values, our words, our actions. This is our calling.

So you don't have to watch for blood moons. You don't have to count the number of years between financial crises or tsunamis or outbreaks of disease. You don't have to worry about when did the Supreme Court legalize abortion or same-sex marriage.

Khan has not only called attention to Roe v. Wade in this regard, but also 2015, when same-sex marriage was legalized in our country and is counting years from that. And he's doing a lot of work and trying to find significances and correspondences. In his book, *The Paradigm*, Khan compares Donald Trump to the biblical figure of Jehu.

He's doing that again currently. A leader who brought temporary halt to Israel's decline. Do you recall that Israel still fell apart despite Jehu? And Jehu kind of went off the rails and exceeded his mandate.

He reminds you in many ways of Samson. God used him to get some things done, but he couldn't keep his wheels on the road and ended up skidding into the ditch personally. But Khan suggests that Trump's presidency could be part of a divine pattern leading to either repentance or further judgment.

Listen, any behavior, and the only behavior we have control over is our own, can either reflect repentance and obedience and faith, or it can lead to personal divine discipline and or judgment. It can lead to blessing in time and reward in eternity, or it can lead to a loss of those things. Loss of opportunity, loss of capability, loss of the potential that the Lord Jesus Christ died to give us.

He didn't just die to get us a ticket out of the lake of fire but that we might have life and have it more abundantly now and in the ages to come, the kingdoms to come. And I don't have to watch history and get a calendar and a calculator to know these things are true. I've got the living, powerful word of God to communicate to me via the Holy Spirit directly, personally, on the issues that I am able to decide, the priorities I am able to pursue, the love for God and love for one another that I am enabled to practice by God's direct intervention.

Hopefully His presence, if we have the Lord's words and keep them, we have the presence and power of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. I don't need a calendar to enjoy that and to appreciate it and to desire it and to cultivate it. This is the problem with distraction, with deflection.

And you can incorporate the word of God the way Satan did when he was talking to Eve

from the tree through the serpent. Hath God not said? And that deflection and distraction, instead of focus on one's personal priorities, personal opportunities, personal responsibilities, has to come first. Anything that turns that sequence around is fraught with danger.

So it's fun to listen to people talk and find these symmetries. It's intriguing. I love going back to my Bible and checking on how many places are bloody ears mentioned and why, which we will look at when we come back from the break.