

95-08-20bMark

Tonight, we're going to see the fulfillment of these things. We're going to take a look at Daniel's 70th week. We're going to see the end of the age of Israel.

We're going to see the outworking of God's plan for Israel with regard to these things. But remember the message of the fig tree. Jesus points it out to His disciples and He says, look, the lesson from that fig tree is have faith, trust God, familiarize yourself with His character and His promises, and operate on that basis.

Don't let human circumstances bewilder you. Don't let them scare you. Don't let them intimidate you.

God is in His heaven and there is a concrete floor under your board and you have nothing to fear. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank You for the greatness of Your grace toward us.

We thank You for revealing Your purpose and Your will to us in the person of Jesus Christ and His teaching and in the things that You've communicated to us through Your Word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make these things a reality in our soul. We pray that our perspective will be changed.

We pray that we can see our lives from Your point of view, that we can walk by faith and not by sight, and that we will be productive trees, that the fruit that we bear will remain for all eternity. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Father, we thank You again this evening for the privilege of studying Your Word. We pray that as we study Jesus' words concerning the time of the end that these things will become real to us, that they will be a part of our motivation and our hope. We pray that the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our souls.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's begin by turning to Mark 13.

We saw this morning that Jesus made a point of giving Peter, James, and John a preview of the coming kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration. We saw that this was given to them just prior to perhaps the most stressful time in their careers as disciples, which was just before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. This was designed to give them something in their own souls to cling to and to recognize that there is a purpose in God's plan to not be shaken in mind, to not be thrown off the track, to not be distracted and confused by the events that they are about to see take place.

And that hope that Jesus gives, that the crowned King of Israel, Jesus the Messiah, is a reality. It is coming. Whatever they may see in the meantime, the crucifixion, the body of Jesus Christ lying there in the tomb for those three days, not to let that shake them because they've got that vision in their soul.

They know that Jesus Christ Himself will stand with Moses and Elijah in His millennial kingdom glory. And hopefully this was a source of comfort to them during that three-day period after the crucifixion when Jesus lay in the tomb. What could they be thinking of? I'm sure so many things went through their minds.

There was such a great ministry and such great power manifested in Jesus Christ. And here He seemingly has fallen into the hands of men and has been crucified. What could this all mean? What a great source of comfort and strength that vision on the Mount of Transfiguration could be for them at that time.

We also notice that Jesus only revealed this preview to those three disciples. And why was that? We notice that they were the three who were apparently furthest along. They had the best understanding of Jesus' teaching.

Remember we saw earlier in Mark when Jesus said, To those who have, more will be given. To those who have not, even what they have will be taken away. Because Peter and James and John had been students of the Word of God.

Remember they were disciples of John the Baptist before Jesus ever showed up in His public ministry. And so they had a frame of reference to fit this transfiguration into. They had heard John talk about the axe being laid at the root of the tree.

And that there was the possibility of disaster before the crown in the millennial kingdom. So they were best equipped to fit this into a context in their soul and make use of it. The other disciples apparently had nothing to tie this to in their souls.

And so Jesus didn't take them to the Mount of Transfiguration. That's something to meditate on. Why is it that He didn't take them all? I would have expected that He would have thought, Well, if there's even a chance that it might comfort them, I'll bring them up.

But He didn't. He didn't take them into the upper room with Jairus' daughter. Peter, James, and John were in a separate category from the other disciples.

What separated them? I believe it was their faith. I think they had established a pattern of faith in their souls that went way back to before their calling as disciples. In the same way that Mary and Joseph, the human parents and family of Jesus Christ, weren't picked out of the blue.

I think that when you read the song of Mary, you recognize that she was a young lady that had an incredible faith. I think she stood out in her generation. And I think that she was someone who was prepared and was a fit vessel for God to use in that regard.

So, now we're going to see in Mark chapter 13 where we're skipping ahead a little bit. And Jesus is talking about what's coming up in the future. He went out of the temple and one of His disciples

said, Can the teacher see what manner of stones and what buildings are here? Jesus answered and said to him, Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.

And we saw this morning the basis for this. The presentation of the kingdom has been made. Israel wasn't ready.

They didn't catch it. They were looking for human solutions. They were looking for an earthly Messiah to solve their political problems and their financial problems.

They wanted to proclaim Jesus king, but for all the wrong reasons. We noted the application to our own lives. That we've got to be careful that we don't present the gospel this way.

That we don't present Jesus to people as an earthly king to solve their earthly problems. Jesus didn't allow Himself to be perceived that way. He said, I am not what you think I am.

I'm not the kind of king you're trying to make me. And to get that message across, He came back and cleansed the temple. We didn't look at that in detail, but that fulfills Old Testament prophecy.

Jesus quotes it to them. My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. And once again, anytime you see those Old Testament quotes, go back and check the context.

I leave that as a homework assignment for you. Go back and look at where those come from. Your reference Bible will take you there.

And look at what's being talked about. And look at what's in Jesus' mind when He cleanses the temple. You go back to those two passages and you'll see it.

So now, He's coming out of the temple and He proclaims the pending destruction of that temple. No two stones left one upon another. And now He sits down on that very significant spot, the Mount of Olives.

Anytime we see the Mount of Olives, we think about the glory of God and the path that it took when it departed and the path that it will take when it returns. It's interesting when you see there have been models constructed of Jerusalem at the time of Christ. And if you get behind the Mount of Olives in that model and try to imagine the perspective that Jesus and the disciples had at this moment.

Sitting on the Mount of Olives, you can see straight through the east gate of Jerusalem. And you can see the entryway into the holy place of the temple. And if your vision were good enough, you could see through there and see the veil and see the place where the Holy of Holies is.

It's a significant spot to be sitting. Because you're sitting right on the line of the path of the glory of

God and you're viewing through those gates and through those thresholds the very place where the presence of God is supposed to dwell. This is where they're sitting.

He sat down on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple. He tells us this for a reason. Notice, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately.

We have those same three disciples represented here as well as Peter's brother Andrew. Tell us, when will these things be fulfilled? What will the sign be when all these things will be fulfilled? Notice who is not there asking the question and who is there with interest, with question. Trying to put these things into perspective.

It's these men who have established a pattern of faith in their lives. Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed that no one deceives you, for many will come in My name saying, I am, or I am he, and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled, for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.

And then He goes forward. Now this is where our recent study on Tuesday nights will help. And I'd like to slip over here and review for you what Jesus is talking about.

I hope you'll be able to see this. Think of the timeline of human history. We have here the giving of the tablets of the law.

And this is where we see, more or less, the beginning of the age of Israel. And that extended forward to the cross. This was the Old Testament age in particular.

This is the age that much of the Old Testament deals with. Many of the promises and covenants were given during this period. Of course, you have King David here, and the promise of a crown and a throne and so forth, given in the Davidic covenant.

But at the time of Jesus Christ, at the time of the cross, and His resurrection and ascension, and then the day of Pentecost with the descent of the Spirit, we have the beginning of a new age, the age in which we live, which is the church age. Now these are not to relative scale because I want to fit everything on one sheet here. But this is our age, the church age.

Now, at some determined point, known only to God the Father, Jesus Christ is going to return and we are going to leave. The church will depart. The presence of the Holy Spirit with the church is going to depart.

And as we saw in Thessalonians, that which restrains the spirit of lawlessness that is already at work will be taken out of the way. And what's going to happen is this age of Israel has seven more years to run, and that's going to run right here. Seven years.

This is also called Daniel's 70th week. You may recall that Daniel, at a certain point in time, was given a revelation from the angel Gabriel, Daniel chapter 9, toward the end of the chapter. And

you recall that he said from the going forth of the decree to rebuild the temple till Messiah the Prince will be seven weeks and 62 weeks, which makes a total of 69 weeks.

Then Messiah the Prince shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And then it moves forward and it doesn't even see this intervening period. Daniel's prophecy goes forward and talks about the coming of the Prince of the people who destroyed the temple, and that's the Antichrist.

And so everything occurs in this 70th week of Daniel. This is what Jesus is talking about in Mark chapter 13. Now, we have some questions.

There are some people that say, well, maybe we don't leave at this point. Maybe we go on into this 70th week. Maybe some of us experience the first half of this seven-year period where you have the Antichrist.

Maybe we experience the second half where you have the terrible wrath and the bowl judgments and the trumpet judgments and the vials and so forth. And maybe we go through that. Well, here's something here in Mark chapter 13 that should reassure us, just like Thessalonians does, that we are not a part of that time.

Notice what Jesus says. He says, take heed that no one deceives you. And He's now going to talk about this 70th week.

We've already established that this is a re... What am I trying to think of? Not restarting. It is a resumption. That's the word I'm looking for.

It is a resumption of the age of Israel. Who is Jesus talking to here? Peter, Andrew, James and John. At this point in time, Jesus has not died on the cross.

The day of Pentecost has not taken place. What age are they in? They're in the Old Testament age. At this point in time, Peter and Andrew and James and John are still Israelites in the age of Israel.

So when Jesus speaks to them, He is speaking to the believers that they represent. And that's Israel. He says, take heed that no one deceives you.

Israel is going to be in this age. This is a time of Israel. It's not the time of the church.

When He says, take heed that no one deceives you, and all of the you's in this passage are talking about Old Testament Israelite saints. When you were saved in the Old Testament days, you became a part of Israel. Even if you were a Gentile, if you were Naaman the Syrian, if you were Rahab the harlot, if you were any person on the earth, you took part in Israel.

You participated in the covenants to Israel, the promises to Israel. You will go into the land with Israel to have the fulfillment of those promises. That's who's being addressed here.

And that's important because this passage and its parallels in the other Gospels are often misapplied as being a part of the end times for the church in anticipation of the rapture. And that's not what Jesus Christ is talking about. Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry never addressed the church age.

And that's important. Now, you'll see people make application of the principles that He taught in the parables, and that's perfectly legitimate. We are to do that.

But the parables do not talk about the church age. Jesus Christ was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He stated that specifically.

That's who He ministered to. That's who He prophesied to. Jesus Christ did not reveal the mystery until shortly before He departed this life.

His earthly ministry, the parables, everything deals with Israel. And that's critically important to understand. So now when He says, when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled, for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.

Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, famines, troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows. But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues.

Now how many of us have the possibility of being beaten in a synagogue? We're not Israelites, are we? We don't worship in the synagogue. This is addressed to Israel. There will be synagogues in the tribulation, and believers in Jesus Christ who recognize Him as the Messiah will be beaten in the synagogues.

You will be brought before rulers and kings for my sake for a testimony to them, and the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. This is a prophecy of the ministry of the 144,000 witnesses who will redistribute the gospel throughout the earth to those nations in the tribulation period. When they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand or premeditate what you will speak.

Whatever is given you in that hour, speak that, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. If you want to know what the ministry of the Holy Spirit is in the tribulation, this is it. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death.

And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be delivered. And the proper translation here is delivered.

This is not eternal salvation. This is delivered. We know that there are survivors of the 144,000 who will live all the way through the tribulation period.

And if they endure to the end, they will be delivered. Now he's going to recap, starting in verse 14. So, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, we will not see the abomination of desolation.

We won't be here. If we see it at all, we will see it from heaven the way John does in the book of Revelation. This isn't addressed to us.

This is addressed to Israel. Those in Israel who come to faith in Jesus Christ during the 70th week of Daniel are going to turn back to this passage and find comfort because Jesus Christ is giving them instructions for that period. Now there are some great principles in here.

We look at the Old Testament and draw principles and apply them to ourselves, don't we? Even though we're not a part of Israel. And we can study this passage and we can derive principles for our operation in this life that are valid and proper. But we have to understand the distinction.

The principles may apply to us, but these specific prophecies do not any more than the Mosaic Law specifically applies to us. When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where it ought not, let the reader understand, let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Why would they be in Judea? Because they're Israelites.

They are located in the land. That's where the bulk of the Jews are going to be. That's where they're going to be attacked by the armies of the king of the north and the king of the east and so forth in Israel.

Flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house nor enter to take anything out of the house. Let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Woe to those who are pregnant and those who are nursing babies in those days. And pray that your flight may not be in winter. A lot of interpretation has been made of this passage.

I'll offer you my thoughts on it, which is that when you're fleeing in this manner and you haven't been able to pack a knapsack, you haven't been able to grab any clothes, how are you going to live? You have to live off the land. If it's wintertime, are you going to be able to do like the disciples and pull a handful of grain off the stalks and subsist on it? You're not. Pray that your flight not be in winter because you're going to have to live off the land.

And there's more available in the summer than there is in the winter. Woe to those who are pregnant and those who are nursing babies. Why? They're going to be living like David and his band of men in the cave of Adullam.

There's not going to be access to services. There's not going to be access to commerce and trade because in order to get those things, you have to take the mark of the beast. Verse 19, In those days there will be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

That is a strong statement because that includes the flood. That includes Sodom and Gomorrah. That includes every disaster you can imagine.

These times will be worse. That last three and a half years, and of course this is something that we often kind of slip up on technically because the great tribulation is the last three and a half years of this 70th week. That is officially the great tribulation.

This entire seven year period we sometimes loosely refer to as the tribulation, but it is in fact the 70th week of Daniel. Yes sir? Yes. The principle applies to us, but the specific prophecy is for that seven year period.

The rising up of the witnesses and so forth. And some of this overlaps. You recall in the book of Revelation you have a run through of that seven years and then he goes back and recaps it again.

The same thing is happening here. Jesus gives a picture because these earthquakes and famines and troubles and so forth happen in this last three and a half years. And then Jesus backs up and says, but first the Gospel must be preached to all nations.

And then He goes back into the woes again. And so then He says in verse 20, Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

I don't think this refers to the shortening of the 24 hour day. There have been people who have speculated that the earth is going to spin faster or some cosmic disaster is going to change the length of a day. I think what this means is that if Jesus Christ did not step in by means of the second advent and put these days to an end, it would obliterate.

It would be the fulfillment of a lot of these doomsday prophets that talk about nuclear holocaust and wiping out all life on the planet and so forth. Jesus Christ is going to shorten this period of time. He's going to bring it to an end before humanity destroys itself and everything else on the planet.

He is going to intervene, in other words. So, if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or look, He is there, do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

But take heed. See, I have told you all things beforehand. And notice, Jesus is talking to people here that He anticipates will go through this period.

We established in great detail in our Tuesday night studies that this is not for us. This is aimed at Israel. And we might just review that passage over in Thessalonians where Paul comforts them because someone tried to tell them that they were already in this period of time.

Someone came to Thessalonica and said the day of the Lord is already here. The persecution that you're enduring as church-age believers is a part of the end times. And Paul said, don't let anyone tell you that.

That is not true. Look over in 2 Thessalonians 2. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. This time of terrible tribulation followed by the shortening that Jesus accomplishes by His coming.

Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the departure comes first. Apostasia. Apost, away.

Stasis, to stand. To stand away. I believe this is a reference to the rapture.

He's saying, look, that day won't come until the departure of the church happens first. And the man of sin is revealed. The man of sin cannot be revealed until we depart.

The son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. That's the abomination of desolation when he sets himself up as the object of worship halfway through Daniel's 70th week. Paul says, Do you not remember when I was still with you? I told you these things.

And now you know what is restraining that he may be revealed in his own time. He's not going to be revealed in our time. The man of sin will not be revealed in the church age.

He's going to be revealed in his time. What is the time of the Antichrist? Daniel's 70th week. That's his time.

We will depart and the seven-year clock will begin ticking again for the nation of Israel to finish that age. The Mosaic Law will once again be in effect. The promises to Israel will be in effect.

Those who come to faith in this period will inherit the Old Testament covenants, the Old Testament promises, just like every other believer, Moses, Elijah, and so forth. The body of Christ is up with Christ at this time. And that's important.

So we are not here. The mystery of lawlessness is already at work, however. And Paul says that mystery of lawlessness, the spirit of lawlessness, is already here.

The type of heresy that he's going to promote is already here. The type of deception he's going to use is already present now. And Paul says, he who restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

It's our presence and the presence of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit through us that restrains this deception. It can't come to full flower because we are here. Question? Yes, and we're going to look at a passage that will confirm that.

The one that we've just seen in Mark 13 when he says, to you, and he's talking in the Old Testament age to Old Testament saints, and he talks about synagogues and so forth is clearly addressed to Israel and we are not Israel. So that time, that whole period, we're not here. In terms of an abiding presence.

Well, depending on the identity of the two witnesses, there's been a lot of speculation about that because the Bible doesn't tell us about their origin. There are some who think that this will in fact be Moses and Elijah and that that's one of the reasons that they show up on the Mount of Transfiguration, that they are going to come back and perform that ministry. The things that those two witnesses do during the 70th week are consistent with the ministries that Elijah and Moses had on this earth.

And so there are some who believe that it will be them. Of course, they are slain, their bodies lie in the streets, and then they are resurrected once again. If that is the case, Moses and Elijah spend a lot of time jumping back and forth from their current state to participating in human history and back to that state and coming back and so on.

I do think that that's a good point. I think it's likely, in fact it's obviously true, that Antichrist will probably be alive and an adult at the time that the rapture of the church takes place because he's got to be in position to take charge of the entire world shortly after we leave. In the same way that there was a gap of some days between Jesus' ascension and the day of Pentecost, it may be that there's a little interim period between the rapture and the coming of Antichrist and his making of the covenant that establishes this three and a half years of false peace that takes place at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week.

But it's very likely that he will be alive and well and living on planet earth before we depart. And there has been some speculation as to who he is. I don't think there's any way of knowing.

And we have to ask ourselves the question, what does Scripture talk about being taken out of the way at any point in this part of history? We know for sure that the church leaves. What other prophecy do we have that God says, I will remove my spirit in the day of the Lord or anything else? The only thing that we have a sure prophecy of is that the church will be taken out. And so it's pretty clear that that's the only thing we can match this up with.

He doesn't come right out and say it because he's already communicated this verbally. The other assurance that we have is in 1 Thessalonians 5. Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. And the day of the Lord encompasses this last

three and a half years and includes the second advent of Jesus Christ when He returns to shorten this period of time and to purge the earth and to set up the millennial kingdom.

And He says that day will come like a thief in the night. What is the night? The night is this period when the Spirit, in terms of an abiding presence, has departed. The church has departed.

The body of Christ is not here. And all you have are the witnesses. And of course, the Holy Spirit will minister in and through them, but the abiding presence of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Spirit is gone.

This is a period of darkness. This is the Antichrist's day. And this is the night.

When they say, peace and safety, that's the first three and a half years, the false peace, the false Christ, the false millennium. They say, peace and safety. We've got world peace, one world government.

Everything is wonderful. Sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they shall not escape. And that's the last half.

You, brethren, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you like a thief. We're not going to be in this period of darkness. You are all sons of light and sons of day.

We are not of the night or of the darkness. This is not our time. This is Israel's time.

I'll give you another thought in this regard because there are some scholars, I think Gleason Archer is one of them, who believes in the mid-70th week rapture of the church. They call it the mid-tribulation rapture, but technically it would be right before the day of wrath here. The difficulty with that is we know that this is Daniel's 70th week.

We know that this entire seven-year period is a part of the age of Israel. So I'll ask you a question. If the church is still here, then that's an overlap of the age of the church and the age of Israel.

If someone comes to Christ in this period, whose promises do they inherit? Are they an Old Testament saint or a church-age saint? It doesn't really make any sense, does it? Nowhere else in history has God overlapped the ages. And this is clearly, clearly from Daniel 9 and many other passages the last seven years of the age of Israel. We can't be here.

It's not our age. We can't function under the law. Temple sacrifices will be resumed in this period and rightfully so.

It's not our age. It's not our time. We're not of this period of night.

We're not of this dark period. And this is what Paul points out in chapter 5 of Thessalonians. Okay, so we've reviewed that.

Let's go back to Mark chapter 13 and pick up... I hope I've kind of put this in context a little bit. These are instructions specifically for Jewish believers who will live in this seven-year period. Jesus says, I have warned you ahead of time.

This should not surprise you. This should not catch you unawares. And so in verse 23, He says, Take heed.

Now, this is not addressed to us. We don't need to take heed for these specific things because we won't be here. But He says to Israel, He says to the believers in that day, Take heed.

See, I have told you all things beforehand. Notice in verse 24, In those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars of heaven will fall and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven. This is a reference to the resurrection of Old Testament saints.

We talked about this in our Tuesday night study. At the second advent, let me give us a fresh picture here and enlarge this a little bit. Here is our timeline.

Here's the departure of the church at the rapture. Here is that seven year period, the 70th week. Here is the return of Jesus Christ.

We come with Him. We accompany Him. I think that this is what Scripture talks about when it says He cometh with clouds.

I think He's going to be coming with clouds of saints. That's us. We're coming back as His body and as His bride.

So this is what we call the second advent or the second coming. This is what Jesus is now talking about here in Mark 13. Verse 26, They will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

And then He will send His angels and gather together His elect, His chosen. These are the same elect that He was talking about in the earlier part of the chapter. It's the elect that has the possibility of being deceived in this period when Antichrist is on the earth.

It's the elect who endure unto the end who will be delivered. These are the elect of Israel. Now, we can't change the meaning of elect halfway through the chapter.

If these are the elect of Israel, if these are the elect that have lived through this terrible seven-

year period, then it is also this kind of elect that is going to be gathered by the angels. Now, we don't need to be gathered. We're with Jesus Christ.

We've already had the wedding ceremony, as it were. We've been reunited and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We don't need to be gathered again.

Paul tells us that at the rapture, the dead in Christ rise, we who are alive and remain join them in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We will never leave the Lord's side again. So, we don't need to be gathered.

So, who is it that's gathered here? These are the elect of Israel. And what this constitutes is the third resurrection. This is the third resurrection.

Of course, the obvious question is if this is the third resurrection, what were the first two? Who is the firstfruits of them that sleep? Jesus Christ. Way back here after the cross, His resurrection, that's resurrection number one. Am I off the thing here? The first resurrection is Jesus Christ.

The second resurrection is our resurrection. The dead in Christ shall rise. So, what Jesus is talking about here is sending His angels and gathering together His elect from the four winds.

What has happened to Israel at many points in their history? They were scattered. They were taken into captivity. They died in Babylon.

They died in Assyria. They're going to die all over the earth in the tribulation period. Those who do not survive, who are believers, but who are martyred for the faith, they will be gathered and they will be raised.

And that is so important because this is the means by which God will fulfill all of His promises to Israel. Recall on Tuesday night we reviewed Hebrews 11. All these died in faith, not having received the promise.

But they're going to receive it, and this is how. This is how God's going to fulfill the new covenant to Israel that's recorded over in Jeremiah 31, I believe it is, when He says, I will take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. How can you do that? You can't do that with an individual without taking away their responsibility to choose for themselves.

God doesn't go to an individual that is rejecting Him and cut out their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. But He can do it with a nation, can't He? He can take the nation of Israel and by constituting the nation of Israel out of all of the elect of every part of that age, these are all believers in God. Israel will have a heart of flesh, a heart that's responsive to the Lord because it's going to be all the believers of every part of that age of Israel.

So they're resurrected here in the third resurrection and they will enjoy the blessings of the millennial kingdom, all of the promises that God made to them in the Old Testament. So He says

He will gather His elect from the four winds, the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven. Those who survive the tribulation are Old Testament saints.

They are Israelite believers and they'll be gathered. And the farthest parts of heaven, all of those who died in every other part of that age will be gathered. Now look in verse 28.

Learn this parable from the fig tree. Once again, we see the fig tree that we saw this morning. The picture of Israel.

This is all Israel. That's so important to understand. This doesn't pertain to us directly.

Learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and put forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near at the door.

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Lots of dead seas of ink have been spilled on this statement by the Lord as well.

This generation shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled. Was He talking about the men to whom He spoke? A biblical generation, an Old Testament generation, was 40 years. Should all these things have been fulfilled within 40 years of the time that Jesus spoke? Obviously not.

But remember again, Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. God did not reveal the mystery until after the cross, until after the resurrection. Jesus communicated it to His disciples.

He said, stay in Jerusalem, you will receive power, not many days hence, and so forth. Paul the Apostle was the one that really revealed all of our mystery doctrines. But there are two ways you can take this.

If you subtract out the church age, then it's well within 40 years of Jesus speaking. When the age of Israel resumes, it's going to be within seven or eight years that these things take place, right? So that's within that time frame. You can also talk about the fact that this generation that He described, all of these things will take place within that generation.

It's not going to span over many years. These things don't span the church age as some have taught. Of the day and the hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but only the Father.

And I pointed out to some of you on Tuesday night last that there's a wonderful picture in the marriage rituals of Israel. Back in the time of Christ, the groom, once he was betrothed, would go and prepare a place for he and his bride to live. And this might take however many funds he had at his disposal.

It might take a little while. It might take a long time. But he could not consummate the marriage until this place that he and his bride would live was prepared.

How did he know when it was sufficiently prepared? The groom's father would go and inspect. And when the father was satisfied that the place was prepared, he would then give permission for the groom to go and collect his bride. And there would be some warning given.

A servant would run ahead and say the groom is coming. And there would be a shout and a voice announcing his coming for the bride. And he would then come and collect his bride and take the bride to that place that he had prepared.

And of course, we have a beautiful statement of this fact by Jesus Christ when He talks to the disciples in the upper room. He says, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also.

And so, the father is the one that determines the time that place is ready. Jesus has gone to prepare that place. The father will tell him when that place is prepared.

I think that that's the reason that He says no man knows the time, not even the Son, but the Father only. The Father will decide when all of this will take place. So, He says, Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is.

Like a man going to a far country who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to each his work, commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. In the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.

Lest, coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all. Watch.

And that's where we get the authority to take this principle and apply it to ourselves. He's talking to Israel. He's talking about those who don't know when the Lord is coming to consummate the age of Israel and the Old Testament promises.

But what He says to them, He says to us all. Watch. That's a part of our hope.

It's a part of our confidence to understand what God has prepared for us and our place in God's plan. And we see the distinction between the plan of God for Israel and the plan of God for the church. Let me close by telling you that this past Saturday, I had the privilege of attending a prayer breakfast at which Dr. Robert Leitner from the Systematic Theology Department of Dallas Seminary came and spoke.

I've mentioned to you before that there is a movement afoot called progressive dispensationalism that actually was birthed at the seminary. I think if it had been developed anywhere else, the seminary would have risen up and opposed it in a unified way, but it was kind of like a Trojan

horse. It sprung up within the seminary.

And the picture in my mind is like a doctor who discovers that he's got cancer and has to try to operate on himself. It was very difficult for the seminary to eradicate this from their own midst. And it has basically taken over the seminary at this point.

Chuck Swindoll, our president there, has said the debate is over. There is no debate. The two will coexist side by side.

Classic dispensationalism, progressive dispensationalism. What Dr. Leitner pointed out for us in a very helpful way was exactly what this is composed of. Without going into the details, let me tell you that the primary feature of progressive dispensationalism is a blurring of the lines between Israel and the church.

If you've studied heavily in theology, the closest thing to identify it with is covenant premillennialism, which the great exponent of that was George Ladd maybe 30 years ago. But the bottom line is this distinction that we've just studied tonight, understanding the place that we have in God's plan as the body and bride of Christ and the place that Israel has is completely confused and blurred in this view of Scripture. It's something to watch for.

Right now it's at the seminary level, but each new year, there's a generation of pastors who are sent forth and this will affect the way they teach. And you may not hear clear teaching in the future that distinguishes what God has promised you and I from what God has promised Israel. People will come and will tell you that you will inherit the promises to Abraham and the promises to David and that we're a branch that's been grafted into the tree and it's the same tree, the same promises and so forth.

So, I urge you, these things are important. Keep in mind our hope, our confidence, the program that God has developed for us. It is a wonderful hope.

It is a great deliverance that we are not a part of that day of wrath. Don't let anyone take that peace of mind from you. That was Paul's warning to the Thessalonians and it's my encouragement to you.

Don't let anyone take your hope away. These things are true. It's rightly dividing the word of truth.

You will see it if you live much longer. It is coming. And classic Schofield type dispensationalism is an anachronism.

It's not taught. Dallas was the last seminary to teach it that I know of and it's fading away. There's only one man in the systematic theology department that believes in classic dispensationalism and that's Dr. Leitner.

And there are moves afoot to ease him out. So I encourage you to pray for the seminary. Pray for

the clear presentation of the truth that pastors will be trained in the truth of the Word of God and communicate it to others.