

Faithful Till He Comes

Titus 2:13-15

Pastor John Miller

I'm basically starting with a point we're going to use as a kickoff text, Titus 2:13-15. This is a classic passage that says, verse 13, "Looking for"—we ought to be looking for, especially as each year goes by—"that blessed hope,"—highlight that or underline, we are looking for the blessed hope—"and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us"—that's the Christmas story—"from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 15 These things"—Paul tells Pastor Titus—"speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." As each year comes and goes, guess what we have as Christians? Hope. Amen? In a world where there is no hope, we find that the hope shines brighter and brighter and brighter. We have a glorious future and a hope, and it's based on the promise of God found in the Bible, the Word of God. We love this passage in Titus, "Looking for that blessed hope."

I have to admit, I'm going to be real frank and honest, that I'm not sure, it's kind of funny that I'm starting my lesson with a verse that I'm not sure about, whether or not we're on a verse about the rapture or a verse about the Second Coming. One thing I am sure about is that it's looking for the Lord to appear. Now, if it's the Second Coming, and I'm going to break it all down for you, it's the glorious epiphany, the appearing; if it's the rapture, it's the appearing to us as the Church, which is very possible.

John Walvoord believes that Titus 2:13 is a reference to the rapture of the Church and that we should be looking for the Lord's glorious appearing for us as the Church. We'll " . . . be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air,"—we'll see Him as He is—"and so shall we ever be with the Lord," either way, and by the way, this doctrine is not something that we should divide with other Christians over. If they may not believe in the rapture, they may believe the rapture's in the middle of the tribulation or at the end of the tribulation, they may have a different view of the Millennium, and we don't want to fight over it, argue, or divide over it. But I think that if we have sound doctrine, it should have its right affect on how we live—sound living. Sound doctrine leads to sound living.

That word "sound," by the way in the pastoral epistles when referring to doctrine, is a medical term. It literally means life-giving or health-giving. Sound doctrine leads to healthy living; bad doctrine leads to bad living. But we're looking " . . . for that . . . glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity"—this is the faithful until He comes—"and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The Second Coming doctrine of Christ is a major doctrine in both the Old and New Testaments. The doctrine of the rapture of the Church, and again, already I'm getting ahead of myself, is a New Testament doctrine revealed by Jesus in John 14 and then made very clear to us in Paul's writings in the Thessalonian epistles and other places. History is His story, it's God

moving to bring about His grand climax. We just celebrated Christmas on First Advent. Dispensational theology makes very clear that there are two advents: The First Advent when Christ came to “ . . . redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;” the Second Advent when He returns in power and glory to judge sin and to reveal Himself to the world in power and glory and to restore Israel and sit upon the throne of David, the Davidic Covenant promise that on David’s throne Messiah would reign forever and ever.

How will it all unfold? The answer is in the Bible, “the B-I-B-L-E / Yes that’s the book,” not only for me, but for you as well, the Bible. Why should we study end-time doctrine? Well, first, all Scripture is profitable. Write down these verses, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God”—or woman of God as well—“may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” So, all Scripture is given by inspiration, the prophetic Scriptures as well as the doctrinal, historic Scriptures, or poetic Scriptures.

Secondly, we study Bible prophecy because it encourages us to holy living. Write down 1 John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” If you believe the Lord could come at any time, you’re going to be living a pure, godly, and holy life.

Thirdly, it encourages us to be steadfast in serving the Lord. One of my favorite verses at the end of the rapture passage in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “ . . . be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” I just limited it to those three reasons: Scripture is profitable, it encourages us to holy living, and it encourages us to steadfast in serving the Lord.

Now, as we study the doctrine, we must use plain or literal method of interpretation. That’s why I plugged that book on Dispensational Hermeneutics. Those most often that teach what is called postmillennialism or amillennialism, they don’t believe there is a literal, physical millennium on earth. When it comes to the doctrine of end times, they allegorize, they spiritualize, or they turn everything into a type or an analogy or they believe that it’s already fulfilled right now in the Church. I think that’s a great mistake, so we must use what is called a historical, grammatical method of interpreting Scripture or what is called literal.

Now, that literal approach to Scripture basically means, and let me say it as simply as I can, that what the original author meant it to mean, that’s what it means. Whoever wrote the Scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whatever his motive was or intention was or purpose in writing was, that is the meaning of the text. It’s called authorial intent. We are not to impose, we call that eisegesis, putting into the text what we want it to mean and interpret it how we want it to be interpreted; we’re to do exegesis, which means pull out of the text the author’s intended meaning whether it’s Old or New Testament, whether it’s doctrinal section or poetic section or historical section, the literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of Scripture. We don’t change our hermeneutics or our interpretation principles when we study the subject of Bible prophecy.

I've taught this before, let me mention it again, that when you're studying Bible prophecy, this is another mistake people make, you need to keep three groups in mind and distinguish them as separate. The first is the nation of Israel, and you want to read Romans 9, 10, and 11. I did a series and called the series, "God's Plan For Israel." It's on our website. You can check it out. A lot of questions that I'm getting about Israel and antisemitism, is God finished with the Jews, I'm just telling you to check out that series—Romans 9, 10, and 11 thoroughly covered here on Wednesday night.

The second group that we want to keep in its own category are Gentile nations, and Daniel 2 is a classic on this subject where Nebuchadnezzar had the vision of the great image with the head of gold being Babylon and all the kingdoms of the world down to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, so we keep those Gentile nations in their proper place.

Thirdly, very important again, is the Church. Keep these groups distinct and separate: Israel as a nation, Gentile nations and kingdoms, and the Church, the ecclesia, the body of Christ, the believers in the Church Age. Write down 1 Corinthians 10:32 where it makes the distinction between Israel and the Church. The Church is not spiritual Israel. The promises to God in the Old Testament are fulfilled in God's covenant promise and literally will be fulfilled yet future. They're not all fulfilled today in the Church. It's so very important.

I want to give you six future events in the chronological order that they appear. I know that sounds like a lot, and we're going to read some text tied in with them, but I wanted to do them all at once. Again, just a little teaser, I have done a series under the topical series in our website called, "The End Of Time - How Will It Unfold?" I did six studies covering each one of these points, one a week, so you can check that out. Here they are, let's rock and roll. First, what's the next thing to happen on God's prophetic calendar? You guessed it, the rapture of the Church.

Let's look at 1 Thessalonians 4. I can't read all the verses in the Bible on the rapture, but I'm going to take the classics, and I'm going to read them. I want you to follow with me in your Bibles. First Thessalonians 4:13, this is the classic text on the rapture of the Church. Paul says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep,"—and we know that is a word picture or metaphor for the death of a believer. It means that they have died and the body is "sleeping," the soul and spirit are with Christ. ". . . that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Remember, we have the blessed hope; those out of Christ, unbelievers, do not have hope. Verse 14, here's the pillars of the rapture, "For if we believe"—and we do—"that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus—or died—"will God bring with him." All those that die before the Lord returns for the Church will come with the Lord when He comes to rapture the Church.

Verse 15, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent"—the word 'prevent' in the King James Bible is unfortunate. It means to precede—"them which are asleep." Just real quick, again, I could take a lot of time giving the background. Paul's writing these words because the people in

Thessalonica had been taught the Lord was coming again, and I believe that he taught them about the rapture being an imminent return of Christ. But some of them were dying and the Lord had not raptured the Church, so the believers in Thessalonica were freaking out thinking that their loved ones, their Christian loved ones who died, weren't going to get to go to heaven, that they missed out on the rapture, that they're going to be at a disadvantage to us who are still alive. It was kind of like, "You've got to stay alive. You can't die because the Lord's going to come back. You don't want to miss that." Paul didn't want them to be ignorant about death of a believer, and he's basically writing to comfort them. He's not writing to doctrinally explain the rapture, he does that, but he's using this doctrinal teaching on the rapture to comfort their hearts. This is a comfort Scripture, "Wherefore comfort one another"—together—"with these words." The comfort that comes from that is practical. He's trying to clarify that those who died will not miss out when the Lord returns. They're going to come back with the Lord.

The foundation for the rapture is crucifixion and resurrection, verse 14; and then verse 15, it's revelation, " . . . the word of the Lord." Notice in verse 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first,"—there's the people that they were worried about. They were worried about their loved ones, and he says, "They're going to rise," " . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"—this is their body that was buried or maybe incinerated or sprinkled in the ocean, their bodies will be resurrected first. Verse 17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be"—here's our word where we get the word 'rapture' from—"caught up,"—it's the Greek word *harpázō* It means to catch up or snatch up by force. We " . . . shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words." So, we have the return of Christ, we have the resurrection of the dead in Christ, we have the rapture of the living in Christ, we have the reunion of those who are in Christ, and we have the reassurance, verse 18, in Christ, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

The rapture is not the Second Coming. They are two separate events, and if you look at it very closely, they are greatly different. I can't go into all the contrasts, but when the rapture happens, Christians on earth will " . . . be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air," and then go to heaven with Him, " . . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord," and the dead in Christ will be resurrected and given new bodies and will be with us in heaven. At the Second Coming, which is going to be we'll see seven years later, Jesus returns with His Church. So, the Church " . . . caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air," the Church coming back, we're going to read Revelation 19, with Christ to establish His Kingdom on earth known as the Millennium, thousand-year reign of Christ which we will be part of for that period of time, and we'll be in our glorified body. Just note that the rapture is not the same as the Second Coming.

It's a New Testament mystery. It's very important to write this down, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. Paul says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep,"—or die—"but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" So, what it means there as a "mystery" is that it wasn't revealed in the Old Testament. The rapture's not in the Old Testament, and it wasn't invented by John Darby or Scofield. It is taught by Paul, revealed by

God to Paul, it's in the Bible. It's not the same event though, it is a New Testament mystery. You'll search in vain for the rapture in the Old Testament.

It was also promised by Jesus in John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled"—don't let it be afraid—"ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions"—abiding places—"if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself"—there's the rapture—"that where I am, there ye may be also." That's the rapture. Jesus disclosed it. He didn't say, "The sun's going to turn black." He didn't say, "The moon's going to turn to blood." He didn't talk about wars or famines or pestilence or abomination of desolation or any of those things. He just said, "I'm going to come back, and I'm going to take you with Me to the Father's house." That's why it's called the "blessed hope" of the Lord's coming for the Church.

Now, another thing about the rapture is that it involves only the Church, and it's Christ's imminent hope, talk about the Church Age, it's so important. Again, it's kind of turning Wednesday night into a classroom, but can you put the image on the screen for me, the chart? Do you see the cross and you're moving from left to right, the Church Age. Now, the length of the section doesn't have anything to do with timeframe, I just wanted to give you these, I believe, dispensations. So, we have the Old Testament up to the cross, which technically you... I've got to be careful, I've put too much information, is that Acts 2, forty days after His resurrection, would be the day of Pentecost. That's the birthday of the Church. That's the beginning of the Church Age. This is a dispensation of grace—Church Age. It's not about Jew or Gentile, it's all are one in Christ. Christ is building His Church. Jesus actually said, ". . . I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." We live right now in the Church Age.

The end of the Church Age, again, is the rapture of the Church. The rapture only involves the Church. It doesn't involve Old Testament saints. It doesn't involve Israel. It doesn't involve Gentile nations. It just involves the Church, the bride of Christ, the ecclesia, the body of true believers. So, they will ". . . be caught up . . . to meet the Lord . . ." The Church Age starts in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost and ends with the rapture of the Church.

I took my long list and limited it down to three quick bullet points on why I believe the rapture is before the tribulation. Notice before the tribulation period, after the Church Age, I have the rapture of the Church. This is what's called a pretribulational rapture. This position biblically is being abandoned a lot today. A lot of Christians are giving this position up, which I think is a big mistake. Let me give you three quick reasons why I hold to a pretribulational rapture. First, because Christians are not appointed to wrath, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Please write that down, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Right after the rapture passage, Paul says, ". . . we are not of the night," we're not sleeping during the day, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day," and he says, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath," and that whole section there is Paul teaching that we will not be here for the tribulation. I don't know how anyone can study that passage and not come to that conclusion.

Here's the second, the promise to the church in Philadelphia, Revelation 3:10, is a direct promise to the church at Philadelphia that they will not go through the time of tribulation, and if that is part of the Church, then the Church will be raptured.

Thirdly, the Church is not seen on earth in Revelation 6-18, the very chronology of the book of Revelation. What happens in the book of Revelation 2 is there are parenthetical chapters. If you don't note them and understand them, it's going to throw everything all out of whack. But if you just take the book of Revelation, John was told, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter," so what he had seen he wrote down the vision, Revelation 1, of Christ, and what he heard, the seven letters to the churches, Revelation 2, 3. Revelation 4 starts with, ". . . Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be"—*metá taûta*—"hereafter." I believe the rapture of the Church happens in Revelation 4. Revelation 4, 5, the Church is in heaven, and then in Revelation 6, the Antichrist shows up riding on a white horse. From Revelation 6-19 you have no reference to the Church on earth. When it refers to the saints, they are tribulation saints, not the Church. You need to keep that distinction clear. That's just three quick fast bullet points that I believe is indicating the pretribulation rapture.

Let me turn to the next event after the rapture of the Church; that is, the emergence of the Antichrist. I could've left this out because it's not in my little chart or graph, but the second thing that happens is after the Church is raptured, we don't know the timeframe, that it will allow the emergence of the revelation of this man of sin called the son of perdition, we commonly call him the Antichrist, to come on the world stage.

Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10, what I just mentioned to you. Paul says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Again, you can consult other translations, and it's pretty clear that a better translation is ". . . the day of the Lord is at hand," not ". . . the day of Christ." The "day of the Lord" is a term used for the tribulation, and Paul is saying the tribulation is not now, it's not here, it's not happening. They were confused about what happens to their loved ones who died before the rapture. They were confused about thinking they were in the tribulation. A lot of Christians think the same thing today.

He says, verse 3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day"—what day? The day of the tribulation, the day of the Lord—"shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and"—here he is—"that man of sin be revealed,"—He's not called the Antichrist, he's called the—"man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"—and here's the description—"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth"—or what is hindering, what is keeping him back—"that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now"—hinders will hinder—"until he be taken out of the way." Again, the unfortunate translation "letteth" should be hinder.

Verse 8, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed,”—when the hindering force is taken out of the way, which I believe is the Church raptured—“whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him,”—referring to this Antichrist—“whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Again, I’ve done exposition in preaching through this book of the Bible. You can go find it on our website, but I believe that the rapture of the Church is necessary for the Antichrist to be revealed, that it’s restraining evil.

Can you imagine when the Church is taken out of the world, how dark the world is going to be? You think the world’s dark right now. It’s dark right now. It’s really dark, and it’s going to get darker. The minute the Church is taken out...the Church is the light of the world. It’s gone, it’s dark. The minute the Church is taken out—you are the salt of the earth—the world gets very corrupt. So, the tribulation period will happen as the Antichrist first is revealed.

I’m giving you these events as I believe they happen sequentially. Again, we don’t know how much time lapsed between the rapture and the coming of the Antichrist. I believe that it is vain and futile to speculate as to who the Antichrist is. Some people think Donald Trump’s the Antichrist. Some people thought Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist, all kinds of crazy ideas about who the Antichrist is. We don’t know. We won’t be here. We shouldn’t really...I don’t really care who the Antichrist is. I’m looking for Jesus Christ, and so should you be looking for Jesus Christ. Again, we call him the Antichrist, it means that he is instead of Christ and that he will oppose Christians and Christ. Other verses on this man of sin, this son of perdition, the Antichrist: Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 we just read, and Revelation 13 he’s called the beast.

Now, he comes into power through a revived Roman Empire. He makes a covenant with Israel for seven years. Now, I’m going to look at the chart in just a minute (if I can have the chart back up on the screen), he breaks the covenant after three-and-a-half years, and then he commits what’s called the abomination of desolation and actually has great satanic power, we saw that in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, he deceives many, verse 10, and he comes to an end at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

I cannot teach now or talk a lot about what is hinted at in this chart what’s called the “Seventy Weeks of Daniel.” Do you see that 70 sevens, 490 years? It’s taken from Daniel 9:24-27. It’s called the “Seventy Weeks of Daniel.” The word “weeks” is heptad, and what it means is a unit or set of seven, the number seven. Again, if you want to go to my teaching on the book of Daniel, you can get the whole scoop, but the reason I throw it on the screen there is that the date it begins is 445 B.C. when Artaxerxes gave the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, Nehemiah 2:7-8. That began the overarching total time of 490 years—70 seven-year periods, 490 years. There are more divisions in this timeframe, there are actually three. There’s $70 \times 7 = 490$ years, which actually goes from Nehemiah 2 to the end of the tribulation. Then, there’s seven sevens, which is 49 years; and then there’s 62 sevens, which is 432 years.

I just wanted to give you, as you look at the bottom of that yellow section, that we have already had the 483 years of Daniel's prophecy. There remains for it to be fulfilled a seven-year period. We're missing seven years, so that last seven years will be the tribulation period. The Church is taken out, the Church is removed, and God begins to deal with Israel again as a nation and pouring out His wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world bringing Israel to repentance, so notice underneath the tribulation period I have seven years. That is also known as the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. That is the most mind-blowing prophecy in the Bible, and it's called the ABCs of Bible prophecy. This is why I believe in a dispensational approach that all fits together. Again, go into your Bible. Study Daniel 9, Daniel 2:7-8, and you'll understand this period known as the seventieth week of Daniel.

For the tribulation to start, and that's going to be the third on the list, the Antichrist has to be here to make a covenant with Israel for seven years. You've got to have Israel in the land. If they're wiped out from the river to the sea, how's God going to keep His Word? How's God going to keep His promises? It's very, very important. So, the Antichrist comes on the scene.

Here's the third, the tribulation. Now, you can see I have it on the chart, seven years with two periods of three-and-a-half years. Here's the verse, just one little short verse, Matthew 24:21. Jesus speaking in the famous Olivet Discourse. He said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." It's mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:21. It's the seventieth week of Daniel.

What's the purpose of that tribulation period, seven years? To punish sinful world, Christ-rejecting world, to punish sinners; to prepare Israel for the coming of Messiah, to prepare Israel for Second Advent. Jeremiah 30:7 says, " . . . it is even the time of Jacob's trouble," so its primary purpose, not exclusively but primarily, is for Israel, to bring them to repentance so they can trust and believe in Jesus as their Messiah. The source of the tribulation is God Himself, Isaiah 24:1, "The LORD maketh the earth empty" Joel 1:15, it comes " . . . from the Almighty" Revelation 14:7, it's an " . . . hour of his judgment," Revelation 14:10, it's " . . . the wine of the wrath of God," God's wrath being poured out upon the world. It's not for the Church. It's not found in Revelation 6-19, it comes to an end when Jesus Christ returns in His Second Coming during which will be the Battle of Armageddon, Revelation 19:17-21, and it will be the darkest time in human history. The darkest time in human history is still future. It's not past, it's still future. But for us, the future's bright.

Here's the fourth, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—number four sequentially, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This is a major theme about the Old and New Testaments. In Hebrews 9:28 it says, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." I'm not going to read it to save time, Revelation 19:11-16. That is a classic reference when Christ comes back, Revelation 19:11-16.

Listen to what Jesus said about this event. He said, Matthew 24:29-30, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." We used to say, "Power and Greg Laurie." I think he'll be there, too. That's not what it says. ". . . power and great glory," Jesus Christ is coming again. This is sequentially how it all goes down. Now, He'll come visibly, He'll come gloriously, He'll come personally, and He'll come literally in the Second Advent.

Here's the fifth in the order of events, the Millennium, Revelation 20. I do want you to turn in your Bible to Revelation 20. I'm just going to read three verses, verses 1-3, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven,"—remember, Jesus just came back, Revelation 19—"having the key of the bottomless pit"—the abyssos, the abyss—"and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,"—that's a millennium—"And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Those who believe that we are right now in the Millennium have to spiritualize or allegorize this text. They say that Satan is bound. Do you think Satan's bound right now? If he is, he's got a long chain, he's wreaking a lot of havoc. You call Satan bound, that's crazy. For one thousand years the devil will be put out of commission—praise God! At the end of the thousand years, he'll be loosed for just a little short season to tempt those who were born during that thousand years to follow Christ or to follow the devil, and then he'll be destroyed and be thrown into the lake of fire where he'll be for all eternity and those who follow him. So, the Millennium period comes after the tribulation.

Jesus must come before the Kingdom can come. How can you have the Kingdom Age, that's the Millennium, one thousand years, how do you have the Kingdom Age without the King? Amillennialists would say that He's here now reigning through the Church. Listen to me very carefully. This is why you see a lot of emphasis with Christians today wanting to take over the government, wanting to buy things, be wealthy, take over the government. I'm not against it, I'm not opposed to it. Even their political involvement is sometimes motivated by their eschatology. They believe we will bring in the Kingdom Age, we will bring in the Kingdom. No, we will not. So, they want to buy up banks, they want to buy up businesses, they want to be politically powerful, and some of them may be known as Christian nationalists, and they come in all shapes and sizes. Again, bad doctrine can lead to bad living.

We're not going to bring the Kingdom in, it's going to get darker before the Lord returns. Jesus is going to come back. He's going to bring in the Kingdom. He's our blessed hope. He's the One we're looking for. Now, is that a cop-out to say, "I shouldn't get involved in politics?" No. Is that a cop-out to say, "I shouldn't speak up against abortion?" No. We are salt. We are to be light. We are to be evangelistically involved, but we're not going to bring in the Kingdom. Jesus

is the King. He's going to bring in the Kingdom, that's why we need to preach the gospel to all the world until the Lord comes to take us home.

One of the most greatly misunderstood topics in the Bible is the Millennium. This is why I highly recommend Dwight Pentecost's book, *Things To Come*. He has page after page after page of detailed instruction on all about the Kingdom Age, all about the Millennial reign of Christ. When Jesus comes back He'll destroy the Antichrist, the false prophet, and He puts the end of war. That's pretty good. He binds Satan for a thousand years. He's the King who will sit on the throne of David. He will reverse the curse—I can dig that. He will judge all the unsaved dead on His Great White Throne, cast Satan into the lake of fire, Gehenna, and judge the wicked at His Great White Throne. He's the answer to our prayers, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Here's the sixth. We're almost done, number six, the new heaven and new earth. This is one of those, "Can you dig it!" verses. The new heaven and the new earth, and I want you to turn in your Bible to Revelation 21. You know as I'm teaching, I can tell...sometimes when I do a lot of verses and just go through stuff, I can tell people are kind of like, Da da da da, when's he going to shut up, when's he going to shut up. Obviously, there hasn't been a lot of jokes or humor or illustrations, but this is information that is so valuable. Don't be ignorant about end times. Don't be ignorant about what the Bible teaches. Know what's going on in the world. The end there it's called, see the little chart, the new heaven and new earth after the Great White Throne Judgment, Revelation 21:1-8. John says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." I'm actually not surfing anymore, but everyone used to rib me about that verse, "John, what're you going to do? There's no surfing in heaven." I'd say, "I know, but what option do you have, there's no surfing in hell either, so I'd rather be in heaven."

Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh"—by the way, that's all Christians. All Christians are overcomers in Christ through faith in Christ—"shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

There's a lot of buzz right now about, "Is hell real? Is there literally a hell?" And the Bible is very clear that there is indeed a hell to be shunned. They "shall have their part in the lake

which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” So, there’ll be a new heaven and a new earth. This is why every year as we start a new year I’m looking for a new heaven and a new earth, aren’t you? I know some of you, “I’m looking for lower taxes. I’m looking for a great return. I want more housing. I want more oil.” I’m looking for Jesus Christ. He’s our hope. He’s who we’re looking for. What a day that will be—no more tears, no more death, no more crying. God with us. Everything will be made brand new, complete satisfaction. If you’re thirsty, you’ll have the fountain of the water of life to drink of freely. As an overcomer, you will inherit all things, and there will be nothing, verse 8, unholy to defile that eternal state.

John Newton wrote in his famous hymn “Amazing Grace,” “When we’ve been there ten thousand years / Bright shining as the sun / We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise / Than when we first begun.” Amen?

If you’re a Christian, you are not your own, 1 Corinthians 6, “. . . ye are not your own . . . ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body . . . which are God’s.” If you’re a Christian, this world is not your home, Philippians 3:20, our citizenship is in heaven. If you’re a Christian, 1 John 2:15, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” If you’re a Christian, “. . . be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord . . . as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Just as sure as Jesus came the first time to fulfill Bible prophecy, He’s going to come the second time and keep His Word. Amen? Let’s pray.