

**June 20, 2021**  
***Seven Huge Lies About Bible Prophecy***  
**Dr. Ed Hindson**

Welcome to Calvary Chapel Kaneohe online service. On behalf of Pastor JD Farag, we want to thank you for joining with us this Sunday, this Father's Day, in fact. Today we have a guest speaker, and I am so happy to introduce him. So before that, I want to let you know we do have two services. First service is normally reserved for our Prophecy Update and the Second Service will be the sermon. And today, I tell you what, I cannot wait to hear what our great speaker is going to speak about. And I would like to welcome the Dean and Professor of Liberty University. Yeah, that is right, y'all.

There's more titles I could spit out there too, but like he said, it would just scare you. But join me in welcoming Dr. Ed Hindson. Thank you Pastor. And there is nothing like a Hawaii welcome. You get hugged and loved and fed and then you get flowers around your neck and sneeze your way through the sermon. No, it is always a joy to be here. My wife Donna is with me. We will have been married 55 years this summer. But we're celebrating a little bit early.

And our first trip to Hawaii, 1978, we were young and had three little kids with us and fell in love with your beautiful state. And I have enjoyed coming here over the years. It's also a privilege to fill in for Pastor JD. He is such a good preacher and such a strong leader. For him to give up the pulpit to somebody else is a real vote of confidence. So I appreciate that very, very much. As was mentioned, I teach at Liberty University in Virginia.

We have 15,000 students residentially on campus at Liberty. It is the largest Christian university in the world and 100,000 online. You can do Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate online fully accredited. Now, we also have a law school and medical school. That you have to come in-person for. You probably don't want to be operated on by a doctor who studied online. But be that as it may, you can literally be a full-time student at Liberty and stay right here in Hawaii in paradise and do your studies. So if you're interested in that or one of the kids in the family is, just type in liberty.edu and the whole thing will come up. And then also I have the privilege of being the speaker on the King is Coming telecast.

We're seen here in Hawaii on DayStar Sunday afternoon at 6:00. And then we're also on a number of channels on Dish and DirecTV here in Hawaii this afternoon at 2:00. Otherwise, you can go to our website [TheKingsComing.com](http://TheKingsComing.com) and pull that up. All of my materials are available there and whole studies of books of the Bible, etc. So if you're interested take a look at that.

Now what I want to do this morning: two things. In our first service talk about Seven Huge Lies about Bible Prophecy. That may be a bit of a strong title. We could say seven misunderstandings or misrepresentations, but these may be the kind of things that when you say to somebody oh, I go to Calvary Chapel and our Pastor believes in the rapture and the coming of Christ, and people say I don't think so. And these will be the objections that are often raised.

So I want to answer those today for all of us. And then in the Second Service, I want to talk about when God comes down in power, in divine intervention in our lives. It will be a practical encouraging message, totally different message than the one in this hour. So we'll start with these. The question then is: What are these seven lies or misrepresentations or misunderstandings about Bible prophecy? You say Ed, our Pastor is an expert on Bible prophecy. He's viewed all over the world on this topic, and he is. And I want to thank you as a congregation for sharing him with the rest of us.

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I run into people all over America and all over the world that listen to JD all the time because you allow that to go forth from here, and he is touching the lives of literally of thousands of people. But in light of the fact that even though you're committed to those views, these are the challenges that you'll sometimes see raised.

Number 1, some people will say the rapture is not really in the Bible. Look at a Concordance. Look up the word "rapture." You can't find it. The word "rapture" is not in the Bible therefore how do you even know the rapture is taught in the Bible?

Number 2, they will say what you mean Satan is going to be bound in the abyss in the future? Satan is already bound by the power of the Cross, by the death of Christ on the Cross, He already bound Satan. Satan is already bound, the binding is not future, it's already occurred.

Number 3, there are those that actually teach we're already in the millennium. We don't look forward to a 1000-year kingdom in the future. We're already in the millennium. I talked to a young lady one time who had a lot of physical problems and she had been listening to somebody say that, and she came up to me after a service and said, "If we're already in the millennium and this is all the better it gets, you can keep it, whatever, etc." But there are churches that believe we're already in the millennium.

Number 4, there are churches that teach that the church itself replaces Israel in the plan of God for the future. In other words, that God has no intention of blessing the nation and people of Israel and setting up a literal kingdom on earth in the future. The church is the kingdom; therefore, the church receives the blessings that were promised to Israel. The church is in fact the new Israel.

Number 5, there are those that teach that the church will go through the time of tribulation that's coming. All of you that believe the church is out in the rapture before the tribulation, no, no, no, no, they say. The church has always suffered persecution, trouble, difficulty, martyrdom. Certainly, the church will go through the time of tribulation and judgment.

And then Number 6, there are those that believe that you can identify the Antichrist today. And I've been in the ministry for over 50 years, so I've heard every possible crazy speculation about who the Antichrist is. Trust me; you don't want to know who the Antichrist is. If you figure out who the Antichrist is, that means you've been left behind. That's not a good thing.

And number 7, there are those that say we can predict the day of the rapture. We follow this pattern and add up these verses and do this mathematical calculation, we can figure out exactly when the rapture is going to occur.

Now, again, I've been at this a long time. I've heard all kinds of dates: 1972, 1975, 1988, 1992, 2000, whatever, 2011. Nobody knows the time when the rapture is going to occur. It could happen at any moment, at any time. So because nobody knows the time, don't waste your time trying to guess the time; be ready all the time because Jesus could come at any time. Well taught, people, bless you. Now, let's tackle each one of these in detail.

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Number 1, the objection; well, the word "rapture" is not in the English Bible. So if you look through the Bible, you're not going to find the word "rapture." So why do you guys believe the rapture is in the Bible? Well, I would remind us there are several words that are not in the Bible, but the concept is clearly there. For example, the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible. But we believe in the tri-unity of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with coequal attributes. We believe in the Trinity, but the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible. The word "Sunday" is not in the Bible, but we're assembling on a Sunday, on the Lord's day because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week and every church service on Sunday is a resurrection celebration.

But the word "Sunday" itself is not in the Bible. The term "Second Coming" is not in the Bible. But every Christian denomination believes in the Second Coming. Jesus, when He left His disciples said, I am going back to Heaven to the Father's house, and if I go, I will do what? Come again and receive you unto Myself. So everybody: Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Pentecostal, Charismatic, everybody says we believe in the Second Coming. Well, the Lord's Second Coming is not in the Bible. In fact, the word "Bible" is not in the Bible, but we believe the Bible, etc. So here's the point.

The issue is not the English word, but the concept. If the concept is taught in Scripture, the word that defines it or describes it is valid whether the English word is there or not. Now, you're all very familiar with one of the main rapture passages in the Bible in 1st Thessalonians 4:16. It says, "And the dead in Christ shall rise first." And then verse 17, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together." That's how the word "rapture" is defined or translated in the English Bible, caught up, caught away, snatched away.

We're caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. So the concept is clearly taught in that passage. In fact, the concept of the rapture runs all the way through the Bible. Back in the Old Testament Enoch in the Book of Genesis walked with God and was not because God took him alive, to Heaven, a rapture. Elijah was caught up alive in the chariot of fire, raptured away.

So you have at least two raptures in the Old Testament. And then you have references to the rapture throughout the New Testament in various places. The English phrase "caught up" translate the Greek word "harpazo." Now remember the New Testament was originally written in what language? Greek. Harpazo means caught away, snatched away. It's the idea of stealing something, taking it suddenly, quickly. Jesus said that he would come like a what? Thief in the night, a sudden instantaneous catching away of the bride of Christ.

And then in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, the idea of the rapture is translated "our gathering together unto Him." The English term "gathering together" translates the great phrase episunagoge. Now think about that word for a moment. Sunagoge sounds like the word what? Synagogue. We are synagogue together, caught up together as a group to meet the Lord in the air. So the real question is not whether there will be a rapture; there has to be a rapture.

But when will the rapture occur? Unfortunate some people who do not believe in a pre-tribulational rapture will say things like they're never will be a rapture. The rapture is not in the Bible. No, the rapture is clearly in the Bible, just as clear as the promise of the Second Coming. It's not whether the church will be caught up, the dead raised, the living caught up, but rather when will that occur? That

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is a matter of debate and discussion. So when somebody says to you as a believer oh, the rapture's not in the Bible, absolutely it is.

You would have to take 1st Thessalonians 4, rip it out of the Bible and throw it away if that were the case. It's clearly taught in that passage. Now a person can be a real Christian, a real believer and differ in their opinion on that. I have a friend in the ministry who is more of what is called amillennial and he doesn't believe there will be a pre-tribulational rapture. I was actually attending a service once in his church, and he preached a whole sermon against the rapture. And when he came to the end of the sermon, his concluding remark was, "And so we see there never will be a rapture.

All we have to look forward to is trouble, trouble, and more trouble." And his own audience moaned out loud. Now, if you can get Presbyterians to moan, you've got to hit them real hard. They moaned. I was tempted to stand up in the back and shout, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." But I didn't. After the service I talked to him and I said, "Wilson, come on, you and I both believe there has to be a rapture. Dead in Christ have to be raised, living have to be caught up. We just differ on when that will occur.

You put it at the end of time. I put it before the time of tribulation, etc. At death, the believers' spirit goes to Heaven to be with the Lord, but the body goes to the grave. And in some cases, to the dust and ashes of time. But at the rapture, the Spirit returns, the body is resurrected, reunited with the Spirit, and those of us that are alive at that moment are translated up, body, soul, and spirit in a glorified body to meet the Lord, and those that have been raised, all at once. That is the blessed hope of the church and of the believer.

The timing of it may vary in people's thinking. Is it pre-tribulational, before the time of tribulation and wrath? Mid-tribulational, in the middle of it? Post-tribulational at the end of it? Or even a-tribulational, there is no tribulation? Or the whole church-age is tribulation? There are all kind of views about the timing, but not the fact. There must be a rapture and we're convinced that it is a pre-tribulational rapture because the church is not appointed unto to what? Wrath, but to obtain salvation. And the tribulation judgments are clearly defined in the Bible as the wrath of the Lamb, Christ, and the wrath of God the Father. The church is not the object of the wrath of God.

Jesus took the wrath of God for us on the Cross when He stands up on the nails and pulls Himself up on the spikes and shouts, "It is finished." He has borne the wrath of God against our sin. The sinless Savior died in our place, hallelujah! What a Savior! Nobody loves you like Jesus loves you. Nobody died for your sins like He did, and nobody rose from the dead like He did, and nobody is coming again for you like He is. In John 14, He told the disciples, "I'm going back to the Father's house, and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Seven times in that passage He uses that pronoun, you. When Jesus gave that promise in John 14, Judas, the one unbelieving disciple, had already left the room.

And the promise was given only to the 11 believers. The promise of the rapture is for every believer. Jesus is coming again and if you know Him as your Savior, He's coming for you. Now, I want you to help me with the sermon this morning. Turn to the person on your right and on your left, one of whom you probably came with, look them right in the eyes and say, "Jesus is coming again!" And then one more thing. I want you to turn and ask them a question. "Is He coming for you?" I can tell this is a good church. Several people shouted out, "Yes!" The answer needs to be "yes" with

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confidence. Not "I hope so." You hope so? That's not enough. I'm doing the best I can. The best you can is never good enough. God did the best He could when this sinless Savior went to the Cross and died for your sins. Nothing is going to improve on that.

Number 2, there are those that say Satan is already bound by the power of the crucifixion. This is the general view of amillennial and post-millennial teachers. Amillennial means anti-millennial. There is no literal thousand-year millennium coming in the future according to them. Post-millennial says there is a millennium coming, but Jesus is not going to return until the end of the millennium because the binding of Satan has already occurred.

And they will point to a verse like 2 Peter 2:4, "That angels had been put in chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment already." Or that Jesus said in Luke 10:18, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven." That Satan has already fallen. Now, if you read through the Bible, yes, Satan fell from his position in Heaven originally as the angel of light or the worship leader, whatever. Satan fell, but he is not yet bound in the abyss. That does not yet occur until after the return of Christ. The issue is not if Christ can bind Satan, but when will he bind him? Now, Jesus did say in Matthew 12:28, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

And in the next verse, He said, "Or else a can one enter into a strong man's house and a spoil his goods except he first bind the strong man? Then he will spoil his house." And they will look at that verse and say Jesus came in the First Coming to die for our sins, to die in our place, to defeat the power of Satan so therefore Satan is already bound according to their thinking. And there are lot of churches that believe that and teach that.

Problem is I think they fail to distinguish between the First Coming of Christ, and the Second Coming of Christ. What was He accomplishing in the First Coming? The spiritual defeat of Satan, yes, but not a final, physical defeat of binding him. Because in Revelation 19 it says that when Jesus returns to the Battle of Armageddon, the beast was taken, the Antichrist, and with him the false prophet, and these were both cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And then He cast Satan into the bottomless pit or the abyss, your translation may say, same idea.

And shut him up, set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years were fulfilled. So if you read Revelation 19 and Chapter 20 in sequence, Jesus returns first, wins the Battle of Armageddon, defeats the beast and the false prophet, they are cast alive into the lake of fire, and then Satan is bound in the abyss where he is locked down, lid sealed, and cannot get out. When does this occur? After the Battle of Armageddon when the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire and Satan is bound in the abyss for a thousand years.

And when he is locked in there - we'll go to the next slide to show that - he cannot get out and cannot deceive the nations any longer until he is released at the end of the thousand years. So if that sequence of events of when the binding takes place must follow in that order sequentially, then it's obvious Jesus has not already returned, the beast and the false prophet have not already been defeated, the Battle of Armageddon has not already occurred, and Satan is not yet already bound in the abyss.

And then Gail, if you'll just run through all of those that are in that list, and you can take a look at the list yourself and realize all right if I look at this list, the Battle of Armageddon has not happened, the beast and the false prophet are not yet in the lake of fire, therefore Satan is not yet in the abyss. The thousand years has not yet begun. We're not already in the millennium. The question then is: If

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Satan were already bound today, why are people still deceived? If the binding of Satan during the millennium prevents him from deceiving the nations, why are the nations deceived? Why is there still deception? Why is there still Satanic activity? I have actually had pastors, well-meaning, say to me, "Satan is bound and I've never seen any evidence of real satanic activity," they'll say.

You never met my relatives. I did not grow up in a Christian home. I grew up in a totally non-believing home of a bunch of wild people. And I can remember my mother saying when I was a kid, "Your aunt and uncle are coming over this weekend." And I said, "That will not end well. They'll get drunk and wreck the place. That always gets out of control, etc." No, I think there is plenty of evidence that Satan is alive and well today on planet Earth. You say yeah, it's my mother-in-law. Yes, but whatever. Well, think about Biblical examples of the activity of Satan today. 1 Peter 5:8, "Satan wanders about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

And people say he is already bound, you show them that verse and they say, well, he is on a long chain. I guess so; it goes all over the world. Paul said in 1st Thessalonians 2, "Satan hinders his ministry of the Gospel." So Satan was alive and well in Paul's time after the crucifixion. And then that "he battles against God's people," 2 Corinthians 12:7. Paul also called him, "The Prince of the power of the air who now works in the children of disobedience," Ephesians 2:2.

But here's a verse I think it really clinches it from Jesus' own brother. James 4:7, James the brother of Christ said what? "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." He was writing to believers. Well, why would you have to say resist the devil if the devil is already bound? No, the devil is alive and well on planet Earth. We see evidence of his activity unfortunately all the time.

Number 3, and the objection that we're already in the millennium. And you say who actually believes that? Amillennial and post-millennial teachers actually believe the church age is the millennium. That the millennial blessings have already begun. The lion and the Lamb are lying down together quietly? The world is at peace? And there is no deception? The problem is they equate the church with an earthly, theocratic kingdom. A theocracy is the rule of God.

People always ask me every time there is an election for a president or a leader. Well, if Jesus were here, who would Jesus vote for? And the answer is simple: Nobody. Jesus would be the king and He would be in charge and that would be wonderful, but we're not there yet. That is why we're still in a democracy not a theocracy. Now the idea that the church is already in the millennium was begun by Saint Augustine back in the 400s A.D. You see, in Augustine's time, Israel no longer existed as a real nation. They had been destroyed and scattered and eliminated. And to Augustine it looked like they'd never come back to the Promised Land.

The Roman Empire that had been the enemy of the church had been converted to some degree under Constantine and had become Christianized. So it was no longer the enemy. And so Augustine said this pre-millennial idea that Jesus is going to come back, destroy world kingdoms, and set up a kingdom of his own on earth, the pre-millennial idea is really the wrong idea. We're already in the kingdom and the kingdom is essentially piritual in nature. The Council of Ephesus in 451 A.D. condemned premillennialism and that is why you do not find it very often in Catholic theology throughout the Middle Ages because it was condemned as a heresy by a misunderstanding group of theologians.

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They argued the thousand years are symbolic and that what we call the dark ages of churches history were really the glory years of the church when the church politically was in control of most of Europe and part of the Middle East. They would have said that is the millennial blessing. The Church's goal then is to bring in the kingdom of Christ on Earth. The issue is that the church must bring in the kingdom according to amillennial and post-millennial theology. In amillennialism, you bring in the church spiritually. In post-millennialism, you bring in the kingdom literally on Earth.

There are lots of ways of going at this. When Constantine converted to Christianity and legalized Christianity in 325 A.D., they set up what will become known eventually as the Holy Roman Empire that historians have often remarked was neither holy, Roman, nor an empire. But nevertheless, that was the name of it centered mostly in Central Europe. In Catholic theology, the Pope has the keys of the kingdom and he is to bring in the kingdom on Earth literally through his influence.

In the Middle Ages, that was often done with armies. That was often done militarily, etc. In more current times it is done at times by negotiation, etc. In Reform Theology, the idea is that Christians have to reconstruct the legal system of society and put in a Christian series of laws and enforce that on the world and then you'll have the kingdom of Christ on Earth, to which we might ask so how well are we doing with that?

And then in charismatic post-millennialism, you bring in the kingdom by declaring dominion over the world. We're in charge and you're not, etc. And in Evangelical circles, people are trying to bring in the kingdom by a great revival in the last days. Now, influencing law is important. Influencing society as Christians is important. Praying for revival and working for a revival, all of that is important, but we realize in our pre-millennial, pre-tribulational eschatology, we're not going to bring in a literal kingdom on Earth until who comes? The King. When the King returns, you get the kingdom.

In the meantime, we're here to have a spiritual influence in the world. We're not trying to force anybody to be a Christian. We're trying to persuade people mentally, intellectually, spiritually, morally that Christianity tells a better story of what the world is like, what life is like, and what life can be like when you're saved and born-again, redeemed and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The challenges are Satan has to be bound first, then you get a literal kingdom on Earth. That doesn't occur until Jesus returns.

Daniel 2, the passage about the statute with the various metals that represent the kingdoms of man destroyed by the stone, the kingdom of God. That's not the First Coming; that's the Second Coming because the whole thing collapses in the dust and is blown away. Well, that has not happened. Human governments still exist and still have divine authority to exist. Why do we still have world governments if the kingdom is already here?

And then Acts 1, even the disciples when Jesus was ascending to Heaven ask him, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that are in the Father's hand." In other words, He did not say Israel never gets the kingdom. His point was not now. So the key is there is no literal kingdom on Earth without the King. A spiritual kingdom, yes. We're citizens of the kingdom of Heaven. We have a heavenly citizenship that binds all of us together.

One of the things I love about being here in Hawaii is that in the churches where people have come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have an automatic bond through Christ no matter what your racial,

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social, ethnic background is. There is a wonderful diversity of people here who love each other, who minister together, who serve together, who understand one another, why? Because in the heavenly kingdom, we're all going to be part of the family of God. We're already part of that family spiritually here on Earth.

We take our marching orders, so to speak, from the King of Heaven. But He is not literally on Earth in Jerusalem sitting on David's throne literally ruling the world today with a rod of iron. That is yet to come in the future.

Number 4, the idea that the church replaces Israel. Sometimes referred to as Replacement Theology. Once you take the view that the church is the literal kingdom of God on Earth, then the church becomes the new Israel. That thinking says we're the Israel of God, the special, chosen people of God and this has nothing to do with the ethnic Jewish people. God has no future plan for ethnic Israel at all. The fact that they're back in the Promised Land today that half the Jews in all the world are back in Israel, they would say that is nothing to do with Bible prophecy.

Now, there are always two extremes Bible prophecy. There is the extreme that wants to find prophetic fulfillment in everything that happens, every problem that comes along, every crisis that comes along, Bible prophecy, Bible prophecy, Bible prophecy. The other extreme is blind yourself to the obvious.

I don't see anything happening today that would indicate we're moving any closer to the time of the end. Israel is back in the land. That doesn't matter; that's not the Israel God's going to bless. And the Middle East is in crisis? Well, maybe they will get it fixed. They haven't in all these years and probably aren't. And weapons of mass destruction have already been invented that could blow up the whole world, hopefully, not today, and whatever, that kind of stuff. So the one extreme is I don't see anything.

The other extreme is we want to find everything. You don't start with the newspaper and try to force it into the Bible. You start with the Bible. What does the Bible say and teach about these things and then do I find a connection in the news? Well, I think we found a lot of connections that become very obvious. The fact that certain nations keep moving to a more extreme position against Israel, etc. ought to tell us we are getting closer to the time of the end. But Replacement Theology changes the identity of Israel into a symbol for the church which I don't think the New Testament writers ever intended.

The problem is they confuse the unconditional prophecies that God gave Israel with the conditional prophecies. You say what's the difference? Well, in Genesis 12 and 15 God told Abraham unconditionally, "I will give this land to your descendants." That was an unconditional promise, that this is the Promised Land. But in Deuteronomy 11, Moses told them that if you're going to be blessed in the land, you need to obey the law of God. So these are the blessings you'll receive in the land if you're obedient, but these are the curses that will come on you if you're disobedient including the fact you can be displaced from the land temporarily.

Then when you repent and come back, you can be restored. So the real question then is: Has God abandoned Israel? Is He finished with them, through with them forever because they rejected Christ, etc.? Well, that's not the view of the Apostle Paul who was Jewish, who became a Christian, who had persecuted Christians, and then took that energy and began to promote the Gospel because he was convinced he had met the risen Christ. In Romans 11:1-11 Paul raised the question,



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"Has God cast away His people," talking about Israel, and his answer was what? "God forbid!" It is very strong in the Greek text. Like no, absolutely not!

There's always a remnant of Jews that come to faith according to the election of grace. Have they stumbled? Yes, he would say, but stumbled that they should fall forever and be abandoned? And again, he says, "No, God forbid!" Paul holds out every hope that ultimately all Israel one day will be saved. There will come a time of salvation for them when the Savior returns. When you read the New Testament, it's obvious that the church and Israel are not the same thing. The church is described in the New Testament as the bride of Christ, whereas Israel is the mother of Christ the Messiah.

The church was founded by Christ. Israel was led by Moses. The church was born at Pentecost. Israel was born at the Exodus. The emphasis in the Church Age is on grace. The emphasis in Old Testament Israel was on what? The law. The church has a heavenly citizenship. It's not dependent on our geography. It's not dependent on ethnicity. Israel has an earthly citizenship that's tied to the Promised Land. For New Testament believers, we're all citizens of the kingdom of Heaven. We all belong to the King and all of us are brothers and sisters in the same family.

Now, if you read through the entire Bible, one of my challenges at Liberty this fall is I will teach in Old Testament survey to 400 students in one class at one time, 18-year-olds. You try that. And by the way, the freshman class entering college this fall will have been born in the year 2003. They were born after 9/11. 9/11 to them is ancient history. It is like somebody talking to you about World War II or whatever. This generation doesn't know what a toaster is. This generation doesn't know that there was a time when you had to dial a phone, etc. They never saw anything like that at all. And they're smart, they're technological, but they tend to be critical, cynical.

They want to know that what you're telling them is really the truth. They want to see Jesus on display in your life, not just in your words, etc. Now, I think it's clear the church and Israel are two different things in the New Testament. God has a plan for Israel. God has a plan for the church. And God has a plan eventually to bring Israel to conversion, to understand that Jesus, Yeshua is Ha-Mashiach, the Messiah. And there are a lot of people coming to faith today in Israel at an unbelievable rate. It's exciting to see what's happening.

The beginning of the 20th century it was estimated there was only about four messianic Jewish families that believed Jesus was Messiah. Today there are about 20 to 30,000 of them. God is moving there. Lots have to be done yet, but lots that's happening.

Number 5, the argument of well, I think the church will go through the tribulation, people say. Post-tribulationism; sometimes it is called historic premillennialism. They say well, the church has always suffered persecution and martyrdom. Why should the church be exempt from the tribulation? Well, I think the answer is that the question really should be why should the church suffer the wrath of God? 1st Thessalonians 5:9, "For God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation." We deserve the wrath of God, but we will not receive the wrath of God.

You don't beat up the bride of Christ during the tribulation and then take the bride to the marriage in Heaven. I don't think that makes any sense. That sounds like Protestant purgatory to me. Beat the sin out of her, then we can let her into Heaven. Why do you think the tribulation is wrath? Because the seal judgments in Revelation are called the wrath of the Lamb. The bowl judgments are the wrath of God.

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Where is the church during all this time? She is at the marriage in Heaven. The church, the bride of Christ has to go up in the rapture first to go to the marriage before we return with Jesus in His triumphal return. The woman symbolically in Revelation is a symbol of the Nation of Israel, the mother of Christ. The woman is not the bride of Christ. She is the mother of Christ.

You don't marry your mother hopefully. That is a whole different symbolism. And the remnant that survived are the tribulation saints. But I especially believe the church will not go through the tribulation because God loved you so much. He took all of our sin and placed it on His son and poured out His wrath on Him instead of us. Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. And the commands that Jesus gives the believer are: Keep watching for Me to come, Matthew 24:42. Be ready for Me to come. He didn't say keep watching for the Antichrist to come. Keep watching for the tribulation to begin.

Keep watching for Me to come. Be ready for Me to come. Keep serving until I come. There's the balance of the Christian life. Live with an eye on the sky, watching for Jesus to come. It could be today. But in the meantime, I better have my heart right with God because prophecy's not just about what is going to happen in the future. It is all about who is coming in the future. Jesus is coming, and I need to have the assurance that He is coming for me and then in the meantime, I have my feet on the ground, I have a job to do to serve the Lord and keep serving Him until He comes.

Luke 21:36 Jesus said, "Pray that you escape the time of trouble that is coming on the whole world." And then in Revelation 3:10, He promised the church that they would be kept from, out from, the hour of trial that was coming on the whole world. And in 1 Corinthians 15, "We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed," the living and the dead at the time of the rapture. And quickly we'll do the last two points.

Number 6, I think we can identify the Antichrist today. Yeah, really? Lots of luck with that. People have been doing that for centuries. I had a guy follow me around for months insisting Prince Charles of England was going to be the Antichrist. This was like 25 years ago.

And I said no, you mean the King of England? Not the King of England, that guy. He's going to become the King of England and be the Antichrist. I said he can't be. Why? His mother won't die. The old lady is still alive. The guy's never going to get to be the king, and if he does he is too old. There has been all kinds of speculation about the Antichrist. It is Nero, but it wasn't Nero. Charlemagne; but it wasn't Charlemagne. Napoleon, Mussolini. Hitler: Hitler would have made a good one, but it wasn't him. Stalin, Gorbachev: Remember him, the Russian leader with the birthmark on his forehead, the mark of the beast people said. Prince Charles, Bill Clinton, Hillary is the false prophet.

I had somebody tell me Ronald Reagan is the Antichrist. Good old Ronald Reagan? Why? Because he has six letters in each of his three names, Ronald Wilson Reagan 666. No. It is George Bush and he just doesn't know any better. It is Barack Obama. Nobody has yet said it is Biden. I haven't had anybody say I think it's Biden. It is always the guy you did not vote for that you think is the Antichrist. And it's always an American president. Pick on Brazil. Find somebody else. No, we're not going to know who the Antichrist is until after the rapture. Say why do you believe that? I'm sure Pastor JD has taught you this. 2nd Thessalonians 2. We know what is withholding that he, the Antichrist, might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work.

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There is an anti-Christian spirit in society already; that's true. Only He who now restrains will continue to restrain until he is taken out of the way. Then the wicked one will be revealed. The restrainer is identified as both a "what" which is neutral and a "he" which is masculine. It's got to be the Holy Spirit working through the Spirit-baptized, Spirit-indwelled church of the living God. Now some people criticize the church and say the church isn't strong enough to withhold Satan.

Well, what else do you think is strong enough to withhold Satan? The law? Human government? Whatever? Good intentions? No, the only one powerful enough to restrain Satan is God Himself. The power of the Holy Spirit at work in the church as difficult as it is right now to stand up against evil, what do you think it will be like five minutes after the rapture? When all the believers are gone and all hell breaks loose on planet Earth? No, I think the rapture of the church removes the restraints so the progression of events is 2nd Thessalonians 2 are the falling away, the apostasy comes first or the departure, if you determine it that way comes first, then the removal of the Restrainer.

Then the rise of the Antichrist before the day of Christ when Jesus comes to win the battle of Armageddon. The Antichrist cannot come on the scene until after the rapture, until after the Restrainer is removed. There may be anti-Christian people, anti-Christian leaders, anti-Christian influences in society that believers need to stand against, but the big guy is not here yet. So the questions are: Is the Antichrist alive today? And the answer is not necessarily. Could he be alive today? Yes. If the rapture were to occur in the next a few minutes, moments, months, years, he could already be alive; we just don't know who he is.

Does he have to be alive right now? No. And does anybody know for sure who he is? No. Don't fall for people on the radio, on TV telling you I know who the Antichrist is. No, you don't. That is for the people who have been left behind to figure out. You don't want to know who the Antichrist is. That means you have been left behind.

And obviously, number 7, can we predict the date of the rapture? People will try to argue believers have a special knowledge of these things, etc. Jesus will come like a thief in the night. But Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:36, "No one knows the day or hour of My coming, not even the angels." That means Satan doesn't know the date of the rapture. Satan is a fallen what? Angel. He doesn't know.

His hands are tied by the sovereignty of God. He cannot make his move to indwell somebody to become the Antichrist until after the Restrainer is removed. Therefore what are we to do? Keep watching for Jesus to come, keep waiting for the Son of God from Heaven. Because if nobody knows the time and we're to be ready all the time, we're to live in anticipation that Jesus could come at any time.

Now, I realize that I'm preaching to the choir, as they say, this morning. You're a church of vibrant believers that love the Lord and love the idea of His coming. And the Apostle Paul said, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness in Heaven and for all those who love His appearing." That whatever your view of the coming of Christ is, it ought to make you love that coming, love Him, look forward to His coming. Jesus is coming again! But when He comes, He needs to find us what? Faithful, ready, waiting, watching, serving.

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What is it God wants you to be doing to make a difference in the world in which you live? You realize there are more people in this room right now than were in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and the church was launched? And eventually their testimony changed the world. God could do amazing things through your lives collectively right now if we're all committed 100% to keep serving with anticipation that Jesus is coming again. And all of God's people said. Amen.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, this morning we would bow before You and ask You to give us a reassurance of our understanding of Your coming, a patience with those who don't understand and yet are believers, and a real heart of evangelism for those that are not believers that need to come to faith before Jesus comes in the rapture. Bless us where we need to be blessed today. Encourage us where we need to be encouraged. Convict us what we need to be convicted. Challenge us where we need to be challenged. And then we want to pray today a special blessing on all the fathers that are here today.

May each one of them realize they have a wonderful privilege knowing You, serving You, and their ministry begins at home with their wife, with their children, and I pray that one day they too would hear their children rise up and call them blessed because they gave them the influence of a real Christian home. And we pray in Jesus' name Amen. God bless you.