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Israel's Prophetic Terminology

In the prior section we studied church history tracing the major doctrinal developments the last 2,000 years, issues like authority, the canon of Scripture, the Trinity, Christ, salvation and we pointed out that this particular progress of development is significant. There is a logical order to the Holy Spirit's teaching the church such that if piece A is not in place then piece B can't be clarified. So as He has taught understand there's a method, a plan to what comes next in the sequence. The two last things in the sequence are ecclesiology, the nature of the church, and eschatology, the destiny of the church. And those are linked; ecclesiology is the driving force behind eschatology. So if you're ecclesiology is discombobulated then your eschatology is going to be discombobulated. That's why it's critical to get the nature of the church correct.

Put another way, you really cannot understand eschatology unless you have a clear understanding of the distinctions between the three people groups of history: Gentiles, Israel and the Church. These are distinct in so far as their nature and purpose, they are not distinct in the way of salvation. There is only one way of salvation. That's not the issue. People from all three groups are saved the same way, by grace through faith. So the issue is not salvation but what is the nature of that saved group of people called Gentiles, called Israel, called the Church? And what destiny does God have for them in His overarching plan? There are prophecies about all three entities, but too often they are blended together by people. Then you've got prophecies for Israel that are being applied over to the Church and the NT begins to be read back into the OT and Israel and the Church become the same thing. We're trying to show that is not the case; that there are clear distinctions that must be maintained if you're ever going to get the proper eschatological image.

We've been working with Israel and briefly we've shown for two weeks now that there are several passages, many, many passages that show that Israel has a historical progress to go through to get to its destiny. First, the nation originates and is defined by the Abrahamic Covenant. God promised that nation a land, seed and worldwide blessing. Of course, only the believers in that nation will enjoy those promises. But they are guaranteed by this covenant to enjoy them finally. Second, the nation was given a law or standard in the Mosaic Covenant. God promised blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience. And they disobeyed so they faced a series of cursings that led ultimately to their Exile among all the nations. Third, the nation will be regenerated and will obey. Simultaneous to this all the nations that cursed Israel will be judged. And fourth, finally Israel will enter into her promised destiny of blessing in the Kingdom, enjoyment of the land. God is going to bring that about because God promised He was going to bring that about. That's a rough sketch but all that is prophesied from Moses' day on. The details of that prophetic scheme get amplified and clarified as God's revelation progresses. And that means that Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the later prophets are going to amplify and fill in all the details of that general outline.

Today we want to get into some Jewish vocabulary that is important to understand. There are terms like Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, Seventieth Week of Daniel, Jacob's trouble and Birth Pangs we want to understand. All this terminology has to do with Israel not the Church. It was with Israel that this terminology originated. If you turn to Deut 4 the first term we want to talk about is Tribulation. Now this is a general term, it's not a specific term that has a time element placed on it, it's just a general term used to characterize a period of history that is very difficult, very stressful. And you want to notice that very early on this Tribulation was forecast. Notice the language of verse 26, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today," we've seen that before and it's not just poetic metaphor, it's the angelic observers to Israel's history and he's calling them to the task of being witnesses, "that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷"The LORD will scatter you among the peoples," there's the Exile, so this is yet another passage that sketches Israel's historic progress, "and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you. ²⁸"There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹"But from there

you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. ³⁰“When you are in distress” and there’s the word for tribulation, difficulty, “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. ³¹“For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.” Notice the covenant with the fathers. Who were the “fathers” in Moses’ day? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So what covenant is in view? The Abrahamic Covenant, the unconditional, I will covenant.

But right there in verse 30 is the origination of the idea that after Israel went into Exile they would be among the nations and then a time of tribulation would come and then they would turn back to the Lord and the Lord would fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. So the trouble will come when Israel is in Exile, when they are being disciplined among the nations by God, that’s why they’re out there. To learn a lesson. All discipline is to learn a lesson. What lesson are they supposed to learn? That you can’t depend on gimmicks for survival. The nation Israel is the ultimate test case for whether gimmicks can provide everlasting geopolitical stability or not. Why do I say that? Because Israel has one of the world’s most elite intelligence agencies. Mossad is arguably more advanced technologically and knows more than our CIA. They have guys embedded in Iranian nuclear power plants working alongside Iranian scientists. And the Iranians don’t even know it; they speak the language, dress the dress, are part of the culture. I mean, these guys are really good. Israel also has tremendous military capability. Proportional to their size there is no nation on earth even close to Israel. They’re far stronger militarily than almost every country on earth and the whole country is the size of Delaware. And one of the reasons is they still require every citizen to have military training, every man and woman has to serve in the military, it’s not an option. They have a standing military and every citizen knows how to use weapons, detonate devices, knows military procedure, they know what’s going on when they get word of a military maneuver and they don’t freak out, it’s standard operating procedure. So they have tremendous assets, but ultimately, those are assets that the nation Israel cannot depend upon for final survival. And at some point in the future they are going to realize that Mossad and advanced weaponry are gimmicks. And that their only hope is to turn to the LORD their God. He alone will not fail, all the other things will

fail, missiles will fail, intelligence will fail. No matter how many agents you have out there they can't uncover every plot. No matter how many weapons you have you can't foil every attack. The only thing that can save them from the future distress that is coming for Israel is the Lord. And that was forecast as early as Moses. It's not something that Jesus or Paul or John invented, or worse, like some people think, the dispensationalists just invented it. This is entirely independent of the Church, it has nothing to do with the Church; the Church doesn't even exist yet and it's not going to exist for another 15 centuries. All this is vocabulary that has been set up prior to the origin of the Church. And what's the purpose of all the trouble? Not to erase Israel from history but to stimulate repentance. So a great goal of the Tribulation is to get Israel to respond. That's one of the great purposes of the Tribulation, people hit the NT, don't read the OT, haven't got a clue what the Tribulation is all about and throw the church in the Tribulation. The Tribulation is part of an OT schema of history to produce an effect on the nation Israel.

Now we come to another term used in prophetic texts and again we want to be careful we understand it, and that's the day of The Lord. If you'll turn to Joel 2, it's the best place to show the several facets to this term but the basic idea grows out of Genesis 1 because that's where the Hebrew day begins. How did each day begin in Genesis? With evening and then morning, it was a dark-light cycle. It's funny because Christians in the West on occasion will make the New Years resolution, I'm going to start every day with Bible study this year, start off on the right foot. Meaning they're going to struggle to get out of bed at 5:30am and have a big yawn session studying this book. The interesting thing is that the day doesn't begin in the morning does it? It begins in the evening, so if you really want to start the day off right you'd have a bible study in the evening. And the day of the Lord begins the same way, with darkness followed by light.

And since darkness in the Bible came to symbolize judgment and light came to signify blessing then the day of the Lord referred to a period of darkness, judgment followed by a period of light, blessing. That's the general idea. And it's important to recognize this dark-light sequence because there are certain eschatological views like postmillennialism that have the light before the darkness - how do they do that? Because they have the kingdom before the final judgment, but the Scriptures put the judgment before the kingdom.

Now as to the darkness phase it is a judgment of God and God has hosts or armies at His disposal. He's the Lord of hosts meaning He has everything in creation at His disposal to judge His enemies. So when you read these texts you find God using human armies, you find God using upheavals in nature. Notice in Joel 2:2. Verse 1 is talking about the day of the LORD coming, verse 2 describes it, "A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness." That's atmospheric disruption. "As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people;" that's human armies, "There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations." The point is that God uses this indirect approach. He doesn't always just miraculously blast people, He often uses human armies and nature forces in these judgments as indirect means of judging. I mention this because later on we're going to cover a particular eschatological view that's rampant around Christian circles that thinks that whenever there's a human army or earthquake is predicted that's not the day of the Lord. Well, sorry, we just read a passage about the day of the Lord and the instruments God uses are human armies, are atmospheric... There are several days of the Lord in the OT where God uses man and nature to judge. But also the instruments can be what we call direct instruments, i.e. miraculous judgments. So both direct and indirect are used and both are called upon in the Day of the Lord.

The future day of the Lord will involve a complex of judgments following the model of earlier occurrences: human armies, upheavals of nature and miraculous judgments will be used. And at the end of this judgment phase will come a single day of judgment that we call the Second Coming but which the OT prophets called "the great and awesome day of the Lord." Notice verse 30: "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹"The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes." So you have the upheavals in nature prior to the great and awesome day of the LORD. And when you see those two adjectives modifying day of the LORD that's the day of the Second Coming, sometimes called the narrow day of the LORD. Narrow in that it is a literal 24 hour period day in contrast to the longer period of judgment leading up to it which is called the broad day of the Lord. So the term can refer to a broader period of judgment leading up to the Second Coming or it can refer to the day of the Second Coming but they are both part of the dark, judgment phase of the day of the Lord.

Then, following the dark judgment phase comes the light, blessing phase, come down to 3:18, “And in that day” that’s a shortened expression for the day of the Lord, “in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim.” That’s a description of millennial blessing, what we know as the kingdom. So those are the two phases and it’s broken up into various uses but understand the great idea - the Lord is going to intervene and judge His enemies catastrophically, indirectly and directly and the result is the millennial blessing, particularly upon Israel. So again, when you read this in the NT, understand that the meaning and shape of that term is in the OT, that it relates to Israel, it doesn’t relate to the Church. It has nothing to do with the Church. Where do you read of the Church being punished in the day of the Lord? I never read that in the NT.

The thing to remember about day of the Lord that will help you see the fallacy of some of the end times views prevalent in our day is that it involves the indirect things like geophysical events in nature as well as human armies. One of the errors that is now on the scene is that the day of the Lord doesn’t begin until God directly and miraculously intervenes. So when earthquakes and meteor showers come on the earth that’s not the day of the Lord. Sorry, it doesn’t work out that way when you check the background of this term. So that’s one thing to remember about day of the Lord.

The second thing to remember about day of the Lord is it can be one specific event or it can refer to a period where you have a lot of stuff going on. That’s what’s so frustrating about this term. Day of the Lord can mean a literal day, or it can mean a period of time and the prophets flip back and forth between using it this way. So there’s a certain, what we’ll call a latitude of usage of the term. It can be narrow and it can be broad, it can be judgment, it can be blessing. There are many, many passages that we could refer to.

Alright, we’ve talked about the general time of tribulation; we talked about the day of the Lord, and now we want to talk about a third idea that occurs in the prophetic text and that is the birth pains. That’s a metaphor that comes from childbirth in a fallen world; there was no concept of birth pains in the unfallen original creation, no pain, no suffering. How would you like that

ladies? Well, thanks to Adam you don't know anything about that. You'll never know anything about painless childbirth, but that was the original design. Now it's marred and the human race has a lot of experience with this concept of birth pangs, no culture has escaped this revelation.

Here's the deal with birth pangs, let's make three points generally and I want to use a quote to do this. This is Randall Price. Price is an archaeologist foremost, he's involved in searching for the Ark but he's also well known for his work at Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. He is well trained believer, he attended the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, so he's fluent in Hebrew, went to Dallas Theological Seminary, he's a very interesting guy, I've talked to him on numerous occasions. He says about birth pangs. "...the involuntary and uncontrollable nature of birth pangs, as well as their intensification leading ultimately to a time of deliverance, well pictured the concept of a time of divine judgment that must run its course until the promise of new life could be experienced." There are three things in this quote we want to look at. First of all, once birth pangs start, I mean, you can have false labor, lots of women have had false labor, but once true labor gets started you are going to have a baby, you can't stop it, it's going to happen, a baby will come. But second, to get to the baby there's an increase in the intensification of the contractions, it's not steady-state contractions, they get more intense and closer together until the third thing and that's the actual deliverance, the baby is born and the birth pangs go away, that's the joy on the other side that is so tremendous by comparison that women often forget the intensity of the anguish (John 16:21). Price says, "So frightening was the prospect of encountering this time of tribulation preceding the messianic arrival that some sages hoped it would not come in their lifetimes. Among them was Rabbi Yochanan who exclaimed, "Let [the Messiah] come, but may I not see it!" (*Sanhedrin* 98b)."

How's that for prophecy! This is different and you want to grab this because this tells you how an OT person would have looked at it. When you see in the NT, oh boy, the Lord is going to come back, comfort one another with these words, that's something's a little different than this; the OT looked to His arrival as frightening. And it gets back to the difference we're trying to highlight. Israel and the Church are not the same thing, and you cannot go into these passages and just plop the Church in here. It doesn't fit because the attitude toward the coming of the Lord for the Church is utterly different

than the coming of the Messiah to Israel. And here's a case in point. Look at Rabbi Yochanan "Let [the Messiah] come, but may I not see it!" That's the attitude of a person living in the OT who understands the power and the awesomeness of this coming time of trouble on earth. They don't want to see it, you know, let me die before that day comes. That's different than the comforting message you read in 1 Thessalonians of Christ coming for the Church.

Turn to Matthew 24 because Jesus brings up the birth pangs, and the Israeli's who heard this knew what he was talking about because they knew this OT theme. Notice what He was saying to Israel in verse 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs," what things? What are the beginning of birth pangs? The things described in verse 5, "For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will mislead many." So you have multiple, multiple claims of Messiahship during this time. Verse 6, "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars." Global wars. "See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famine and earthquakes." These are the beginning of birth pangs. And you could try and say, like many prophecy people do, well, these things are all happening today. And they'll start citing increases in volcanic eruptions and earthquakes and all the rest of it to prove we're in the birth pangs. One of the problems with that analysis is the data doesn't support these increases they keep talking about. As far as the data is concerned, for example with earthquakes, there's actually been a slight decrease in earthquake size and intensity in the 20th century. Actually, the one decade in the 20th century that had the largest and most intense earthquakes was the 1940's. So it's not true there's been an increase in earthquakes. Neither is it true that we've had an increase in volcanoes, Mt St Helens exploded but actually Mt St Helens is a relatively small volcano and if you lived through the eruption you know what kind of damage it did. But did you know that Yellowstone National Park is a volcano? It's a dormant volcano but it was once active. How would you like to be living in America when that one went off? We know of periods of history far greater in volcanic activity than the 20th century. There's no increase, actually there's a decrease and it's been decreasing since the Flood. So we know these verses are not being fulfilled today. And we also know, simply from the metaphor of birth pangs, that these are not being fulfilled today because birth pangs increase rather

quickly, once you start having birth pangs, you are going to have a baby in a relatively short period of time, it's going to intensify and intensify until your whole body is convulsing and then you're going to give birth, that's the imagery. So you want to catch the idea that once this gets started it is not a long, drawn out process, it is very short, quick, intense period of time, just like having a baby. When the first birth pang comes it's short, it's quick, it's an escalation and in just a few hours there's a baby.

After the world goes through the birth pangs then will come the birth. What's going to be born into the world? The Kingdom. The idea here is that in order for the Kingdom to come this planet and its inhabitants are going to have to go through something like a woman goes through when she gives birth to her child. It is a short, very intense period of turmoil that results in the birth of the kingdom into history. But the beginning of birth pangs you see there in Matt 24:5-8 and they actually correspond to the first six seals in Rev 6, and you can do a parallel study on that. But the point is these early birth pangs occur in the early stages of the future distress, the more intense birth pangs will come in the second half of the future distress and the result will be the birth of the kingdom.

That's the third term we wanted to deal with. Now we've dealt with Tribulation; we've dealt with the day of the Lord, and we've dealt with birth pangs. There are a couple of others, let's go to Daniel 9 again and here's the term the Seventieth Week of Daniel. Remember, Daniel was the foreign minister, or he's a high person in the nation of Iraq and the nation of Iran. And Daniel was a dedicated Jew who read his prophets and knew it well and during his lifetime he realized that the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah were going to come up. So when he is in the Medo-Persian Empire, verse 2, "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely seventy years." And on the basis of what he was reading verse 3, "So I gave my attention to the LORD God to seek him" and he began to pray. And he prayed, and he prayed, a big long prayer of confession of his nation's sin. Why do you think he confessed on behalf of the nation? Because he knew from the OT that Israel could never get to the blessing apart from confessing. He knew that his country was the key to world peace. That's the whole

purpose of the distress the nation would be put through, to stimulate repentance on the part of Israel. So you see this mentality, it's coming through, right here it is. So he sees we've been out of the land for seventy years, the Lord is disciplining us, the Lord wants us to turn to Him, so he prays repentance, now we're going to get restored, now our Messiah is going to come rescue us and the kingdom is going to come in all its glory. But oops, wait a minute. He goes on in his prayer but let's come all the way down to verse 20, "Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me, in my extreme weariness," by the way, this prayer obviously took a lot of strength, notice in verse 21 he's totally weary by this time. He tells us in verse 21 when this angel showed up, it was at evening, "about the time of the evening offering." Verse 22, "And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.'" Verse 24 is the clarification, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin," see, when he says seventy weeks, actually it means seventy sevens, here's that 490 year thing again. Calendar time, 490 years to do what, verse 24 "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place." Verse 25, "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," so here's the beginning of the 490 years, this is when you'd start counting, when there is a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, from there you can count "until Messiah the Prince" and "there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks," so there's seven sevens, 49 years, and then sixty two sevens, 434 years, in the first 49 years "it will be built again," so what he's saying is Daniel, the temple will be built again, that's the first 49 year period, then there's a 434 year period that brings you up to Messiah the Prince. "Then," verse 26, "after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing," so there's the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ with no kingdom. And notice the crucifixion occurs after the sixty-two weeks. So you have the 49, you have 434, if you add those together you get 483 years, then after that you have

three things; you have the crucifixion of the Messiah and no kingdom. When did that happen? AD33. Then you have “the people of the prince who is to come destroying the city and the sanctuary,” who were the people who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple? The Romans. That’s the Romans destroying Jerusalem and the Temple. When did that happen? AD70. And then you have a period of war and desolation, ongoing war, a depiction of general instability in the world and we could go into that but notice there’s a gap in here between the end of the sixty ninth and seventieth week. And things are going to happen in this gap. This is argued about and we’re going to deal with this. A lot of people say there’s no gap in here. But there is a gap in here. You see in verse 25, “there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” Seven and sixty-two are sixty nine. That leaves one seven left over and he doesn’t go straight into the last seven. He mentions three things that happen in this gap. And the gap is indicated by the grammar of the passage. It says “after the sixty-two weeks,” it doesn’t say in the sixty two weeks or in the seventieth week, it says “after.” So now the calendar is interrupted here for these vents that are off the calendar to take place. We’ve covered those three things. Then verse 27, “And he,” pronoun in verse 27, and the rule in pronouns and grammar is that when you have a pronoun in a sentence it refers back to the antecedent noun. The pronoun has to have an antecedent. And who’s the nearest person in the text to the pronoun in verse 27? “The prince who is to come,” not the Messiah, the Messiah is the first part of verse 26. The prince who is to come is nearest the pronoun to “he” in verse 27. So he is the prince who is to come who comes from the Roman people who destroyed Jerusalem. “he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week,” so for one seven year period, the treaty is for seven years,” if you look at the way “the many” is used it’s the Jewish leadership here, who would be making treaties? Every Jew or the Jewish leadership? The Jewish leadership, the leaders in the nation. So what’s presupposed? That there is a Jewish nation with Jewish leaders who had the right to make treaties! So “he will make a treaty with the leadership of Israel for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” There’s an abomination here that’s going to happen halfway through that seven year period. At that point he is going to stop sacrificing grain offerings; he’s going to interfere with the Temple, which implies some other things have to be in place.

Turn to Matt 24 for Jesus' amplification of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. So we're just referring to that last group of seven, the first sixty-nine sevens have already been fulfilled, only the seventieth seven remains. All Jesus is doing here is amplifying the seventieth week of Daniel. We've already been through the beginning explanation of birth pangs, vv 5-8, so that's all in the first half of the seventieth week, if we look at verse 15 we see what happens in the middle of the week. Jesus knew the book of Daniel. And this is why you need to know the OT before you get into these NT passages or you'll make a mess out of them. "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains," is that the Church or is that Israel? That's Israel, get out of the city when you see that thing happen. Verse 21, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22 Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." Elect of the Church or Israel? This is all Israel. It has nothing to do with the Church. The Church is not the issue, the nation Israel is the issue. What about Israel? Well, they have to go through this terribly distressing time! It goes on to describe the glorious coming of the Son of Man.

Then guess what comes later through the apostle John on the isle of Patmos? You guessed it, an even greater amplification of Daniel's Seventieth Week. When you work through the book of Revelation you find there's a very careful structure, there has been some very careful research on this and it turns out that from Rev 6 on through Rev 19 you have a great expansion of Daniel's Seventieth Week; it's got everything and much more in there. You can look at it as a great example of progressive revelation. Progressive revelation just means the whole of what God wanted to say didn't come in the same conversation; it took a series of conversations. The first conversation is Dan 9:27, one verse, the second conversation is the exact same topic, but it's Matt 24 and it's, say one chapter, and finally the book of Revelation and it's the third conversation, again, same topic, but it's practically the whole book. If that's the case, then you already know what Matt 24 and the Book of Revelation are going to be about, without knowing any NT, throw your NT away for a minute, all you have is the OT. What would you already know is going to be the subject of Matt 24 and the Revelation? It's going to be about

that time of distress for Israel. It's going to be about the day of the Lord. It's going to be about the birth pangs that occur. And what was the purpose of all that? To bring Israel to repentance so that the kingdom can come. What else is going to happen for that kingdom to come? The earth has to be cleansed of the nations. So the nations have to be judged. How are they going to be judged? Day of the Lord types of judgments: human armies, nations rising against nation, nature convulsing, great geophysical catastrophes, atmospheric disruptions and all before the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it's not an attractive time to look forward to in the OT perspective; it's a horrible time, it's unprecedented destruction, unbridled suffering. Never in the history of mankind will there ever be a global, this is not just one country here having an earthquake, this is the whole world convulsing, every island drowned. I frankly think that is why the depictions of the battle of Armageddon have people lining up with pitchforks and riding on horses. It's simply because the catastrophes that have occurred by that time are so great that the technological infrastructure is a wreck. Satellites have been destroyed, GPS technology is out, computers are down, and you have to fight with something so you resort to primitive implements of war.

How else do you explain the fact that Armageddon sounds so primitive? I think the answer is right in the context. If you have the world subject to geophysical catastrophes what's going to happen to all the technological sophistication that is necessary to modern advanced weaponry? It's no good to have a smart bomb if you don't have a satellite. What's going to happen to oil? What do earthquakes do to pipelines? Rupture them. Where are you going to get gas to operate from? People don't think about these things.

But the Bible is very consistent if you just take the text the way it was written and stop trying to imagine what it will be like from our present world and saying, well, it's all primitive metaphors, it won't literally be that way. Oh yes it will literally be that way. Was Jesus literally born of a virgin or was that poetic metaphor because we know that can't happen? Yeah it was literal.

With all that said, we've been through some of these prophecies, a time of tribulation for Israel to induce national repentance, a time of birth pangs on the earth that gives birth to the kingdom, a day of the Lord judgment involving human armies and nature convulsions resulting in a time of

blessing, a seventieth week of Daniel to account for a future treaty between Israel and a Roman prince who breaks the treaty in the middle of the week by committing an abomination of desolation stopping sacrifice.

What does all this tell you has to happen first? First there has to be a nation Israel. How is the leadership of Israel going to enter into a treaty if there is no nation Israel? So Israel has to exist as a national entity. Do they exist? Since 1948. That's in place now. Second, there has to be control of the eastern section of Jerusalem. They didn't have control of that in 1948, they just had the western section. Why do they need to have the eastern section? Because that's where the temple mount is located. And if the Jews are going to offer sacrifice they have to have a temple. Do they have the temple mount? Since 1967, the six day war. So right now they do have legal control of the temple mount, they just don't exercise it because there's a sensitive thing built right on the temple mount called the Mosque of Omar or the Dome of the Rock. So the temple mount is in place in one sense, legally, but architecturally is it prepared? No, that mosque has to be removed. Well, how is that going to happen? I don't know; nobody knows for sure. But we do know it has got to be removed so they can build a temple and start sacrificing because the Roman prince who is to come is going to stop the sacrificing.

So all these things are what we call stage setting. Things that by inference have to be in place before prophecy can be fulfilled. There is a historical necessity to God's program for history; these things don't just drop out of the clear blue. They're usually are set up step by step, piece by piece and then the whole thing comes together in preparation for the fulfillment of prophecy. But prophecy is not being fulfilled. I know of no prophecy being fulfilled today. What I do know about is the stage being set for prophecy to be fulfilled literally, that's what we're watching in our day. And that's exciting. Think of all the generations of Christians that have lived for 1900 years that never saw Israel in the land. It's been our privilege to see Israel come back. Think of all the generation of Christians that never have seen the Jews control the eastern half of Jerusalem. We have seen that. We may be the generation who will see the Dome of the Rock destroyed. You can say it's sensitive to the Arabs and they'll never nuke Israel, but what is the goal of Islam, what's their eschatology? To protect a little mosque on the temple mount? No, it's to exterminate Israel from the planet, they can re-build the mosque afterward, the Jews have rebuilt their temple several times. I don't think the mosque is

going to stop Ahmadinejad from nuking Israel. God may, but Ahmadinejad isn't too concerned about it. There are a number of ways it could get removed. But our point is to get these terms down and make sure we are clear that they all relate to Israel, not a one of these terms relates to the church. They are all Israel, Israel, Israel.

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