






Overview of Major Prophetic Passages

 Various
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Today we will continue with our series, Major Prophetic Passages, and since we have been out of it for 12 weeks, all we will do is review. Prophecy is extremely complex and this series doesn't try to deal with every prophecy. For a series like that you would need to work through a book like John Walvoord's *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, where he compiled 1,000 passages that contain prophecies. That's too overwhelming and so what we tried to do was pick up with Daniel, when his generation went into Exile to Babylon, in 586BC, and try to trace from there the development of the prophetic program in the sequence in which the pieces were revealed so that we can get the big picture. Starting with Daniel we said he is the key to prophetic revelation. He just gives us so much. And virtually everyone recognizes that Daniel gives us so much and that his revelation is the basis for understanding the Olivet Discourse in Matt 24-25 and then both combine to form a basis for understanding the Book of Revelation, especially 4-19. So they should be studied in the order in which they were revealed because each builds on the prior. Of course, there are other prophetic passages that enhance our understanding, but what we're doing here is basic. Daniel is also key because he shows us how to interpret prophecy. He prophesied of things using ordinary-literal language and figurative-literal language, and we know how to interpret them because prophecies of both types have already been fulfilled. So we have a confirmation that whether the language used was just ordinary language or the more symbolic figurative language, there is a literal referent.

Daniel 2 taught us that four Gentile kingdoms were represented by the four metal statue, and that these four Gentile kingdoms would rule successively throughout history until they were replaced by the stone cut out without hands, which represented Messiah in His kingdom. There are so many details about these kingdoms that we have clearly identified them as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. What's so interesting is that when you come to the Gospels the fourth kingdom of Rome was already in power. Looking from that standpoint Messiah's kingdom was on the verge of breaking into history. That's why the gospels open with John the Baptist and Jesus preaching to the nation Israel, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." The kingdom was near, but the condition for the kingdom coming was Israel's repentance. But Israel did not repent, they rejected, and so there is a break in the fourth kingdom of Rome. Some things that Daniel prophesied about Rome were fulfilled

and other things remain unfulfilled. The things that remain to be fulfilled involve ten kings coming to rule, then an eleventh king rising to power and putting down three kings and trying to rule the world.

Daniel 9 taught us that prophecy can even be confusing for a prophet. Daniel had been reading Jeremiah, and on the basis of Jeremiah 25 and 29 he concluded that the kingdom of God would be restored after being in exile to Babylon for seventy years. But how could that be if the other three kingdoms hadn't taken place? The answer that the angel Gabriel revealed was that the restoration after seventy years was only a partial restoration, involving the southern kingdom of Judah, but that the total restoration and arrival of the kingdom of God would not take place until seventy sevens or 490 years took place. Daniel was told that the 490 years would begin with a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This decree was made by the Persian ruler Artaxerxes Longimanus IV in 444BC. Daniel was also told that after the 483rd year the Messiah would be crucified and the people of the ruler at that time, which turned out to be Rome, would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Finally, Daniel was told that a Roman would come who would force a seven-year treaty upon the Jewish people allowing them to rebuild the temple and offer sacrifice. But after three and a half years he would break the treaty and commit the abomination of desolation in the temple. What's interesting here is that when you come to the Gospels the 490 year calendar is ticking down, and when you get to the Triumphal Entry you are right at the completion of the 483rd year. Then the Messiah is crucified, just like the prophecy said, and a few decades later Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed, just like the prophecy said. But what never happened is a Roman ruler forcing a treaty on the Jews allowing them to rebuild the temple and sacrifice, who then comes along three and a half years later and breaks the treaty committing the abomination of desolation. So the first 483 years Daniel prophesied have been fulfilled, but the 484-490th year have not been fulfilled, and that number of years is seven years, and that seven years is initiated by the anti-Christ forcing that treaty.

So those two prophecies in Daniel, concerning the four successive Gentile kingdoms and the 490 year calendar, are very interesting because most of them have been fulfilled, but both have the tail end portion remaining unfulfilled. The other really fascinating prophecies in Daniel deal with the character of the anti-Christ. The anti-Christ has a forerunner who has already come in history. He was a Greek ruler described in Dan 8 and 11 as coming from the Seleucid branch of that kingdom. When he came his name was Antiochus Epiphanes IV. He was insolent, skilled in intrigue, a military man, very deceptive, and he sets the mold for what the anti-Christ will be like during that final form of Rome and the final seven years of the 490 year calendar.

Now all that being said, when you come to the Gospels, the break in the prophecies about Rome and the break in the 490-year calendar both relate to the nation Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The reason those prophecies could not just run on to completion is because the nation Israel must repent for the Messiah's kingdom to come, and that generation was going to judgment, a judgment which came in AD70. Therefore, Jesus announced to His disciples the mysteries of the kingdom in Matthew 13. A mystery is something unrevealed, now revealed. These were truths about the kingdom that had been unrevealed but were now being

revealed. Essentially the new truth about the kingdom is that it was going to be postponed. The parable of the sower shows that there were four responses to the kingdom offer by Israel. Only one of those responses was appropriate. That was the response of the disciples to follow the Messiah. As a result, only they would gain understanding of the kingdom's postponement and the characteristics of the age preceding the kingdom's arrival. During this intervening age the parable of the wheat and the tares teaches that good and evil will grow up alongside of one another but at the time of harvest He will send forth His angels to judge the evil and bring the good into the kingdom. The parable of the mustard seed teaches that the number of believers would begin small, with just Jesus' followers, but would grow large during this intervening age. The parable of the leaven teaches that evil would grow to corrupt the world during this intervening age. The parable of the treasure teaches the inestimable value of the kingdom to one who stumbles and finds it. The parable of the pearl teaches the inestimable value of the kingdom to one who seeks for it. And so forth and so on. The essence of the Matt 13 parables is that only Jesus' disciples would understand the new truths about the kingdom being postponed and the characteristics of the intervening age, the rest of Israel would be blinded to these truths and while hearing would not understand. Jesus then began to prepare His disciples for a new program during the intervening age. He revealed this new program in Matt 16:18 when He told them, "I will build My church." The church was also a mystery, something that had previously been unrevealed, but was now revealed. So the disciples were to know that there was a new thing called the church coming before the kingdom. That makes the church age preparatory for the kingdom. And it is the reason that we are called "sons of the kingdom" and our inheritance is something we will enjoy in the kingdom. The church then began during this intervening age in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit baptized Jewish believers, placing them in the body of Christ. Since the body of Christ is not Jewish only, in Acts 8 Samaritans who believed were also baptized by the Spirit placing them in the same body of Christ as Jewish believers. Finally, in Acts 10, Gentiles who believed were baptized by the Spirit placing them in the same body of Christ. So the NT refers to the Church as Jewish and Gentile believers baptized in the one body of Christ. And our purpose in this age is to go unto all nations and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them all that Christ commanded. What He commanded was that we prepare for kingdom greatness. The way we do this is through suffering well (Matt 16:21-27), learning humility (Matt 18:1-14), giving unto Caesar that which is due to Caesar (Matt 17:14-27), dealing honestly (Matt 18:15-20), learning to forgive others (Matt 18:21-35), having a soft heart (Matt 19:1-12) and he who will be greatest in the kingdom will be he who is the slave of all (Matt 20:17-28). So our lives now, as part of the Church, are preparatory for life in the kingdom. Clearly then, the Church is not the kingdom, but precedes it. Now with the new revelation that Christ would build His Church, new prophetic truths related to the Church began to be revealed. One of these is found in 1 and 2 Timothy, that is the truth that the church would trend toward apostasy. That means that the Church over time would depart from sound doctrine and turn to fanciful interesting ideas that tickle the ears, to myths and carnality and all the rest of it. Another new prophetic truth revealed for the Church is the rapture. Jesus revealed in John 14:1-3 that He was going from earth to heaven, His followers would be left behind, and after some undefined time He would return for believers and

receive them to Himself, taking them to heaven. This is not what will happen at the Second Coming because at that time all believers will not go to heaven but into the kingdom on earth. Therefore, the rapture is distinct from the Second Coming. In 1 Thess 4:13-18 Jesus revealed through Paul that some believers would die before the Lord came, but that they were already with the Lord and will be raised to descend with Him on the day of the rapture when those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to then go on to the Father's house. And in 1 Cor 15:50-58 Jesus revealed that those who were alive when He came for them would be instantly transformed into resurrection bodies without having to die. These are all truths that are distinct from the truths at the Second Coming. Therefore, the Rapture is distinct from the Second Coming. We further showed that because none of the clear rapture passages occur in contexts that include tribulation events, like the ten kings, global wars, famines, the abomination of desolation, the mark of the beast, etc. and that we are said to be exempt from the wrath to come, that the most logical timing is before the tribulation. And a most interesting and difficult passage is 2 Thess 2 because it seems that this passage teaches that there will be a time on earth when there is complete apostasy, no sound doctrine on the earth, and yet the only time this could possibly be is immediately after the rapture, because that would be the only time when there was not one believer on the earth.

Then we went to the Revelation, and we focused our attention on Rev 4ff, since this begins the major prophetic section of the book. In Rev 4 we see the throne room of God, with flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and a burning fire, and we are to know that the judgments that come in Rev 6ff are issuing forth from His throne. In Rev 5 we see a scroll in the right hand of the Father and no one is able to take the scroll and break the seals except the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who is seen standing as a Lamb, slain, and we are to know that the judgments that come in Rev 6ff are coming from Him and are directly related to the establishment of His kingdom on earth. In Rev 6 we find the first four seals broken by the Lamb. These appear to be natural phenomena so that the world is still under the delusion that they are not under the wrath of God. But the release of the anti-Christ is the wrath of God. I see all four horsemen as the anti-Christ. The first seal is a move of the anti-Christ to establish peace established through global disarmament. The second seal is a move by the anti-Christ to remove peace from the earth by mass war and carnage. The third seal is a move by the anti-Christ to bring about economic recession in preparation for his later economic sanctions requiring the taking of the mark. The fourth seal is a move by the anti-Christ to take over the world by defeating the armies of the world. In this campaign he either kills a fourth of the world's population or takes over a fourth of the world. The fifth seal is distinct from the prior four and the most difficult to handle. It is, as far as I can tell, the prayers of the saints calling for the vengeance upon those on the earth who spilled their blood that seals the doom of their slayers. That doom occurs later in the Revelation, but this prayer at this time seals it. The sixth seal is the first cosmic disturbance that leaves the world with no explanation other than the wrath of God and the Lamb have come. The previous seals are the wrath of God, but because they took the natural form of peace, war, economic recession and death, the world could explain them away. But the world cannot explain away the sixth seal. It is a

great cosmic shaking that affects everyone on the planet and causes every mountain and island to move. The people are hiding in caves and under rocks because their homes have been decimated. They will rebuild, but the pummeling judgments will continue. These all take place in the first half of Daniel's 70th week. Rev 7:1-8 introduces us to the 144,000 who are sealed. They are not sealed to become believers. They are already believers who are sealed at this point in time during the first half of Daniel's 70th week. They are sealed to survive the coming trumpet judgments and there is no indication in the Revelation that they ever die. They are numbered 144,000, 12,000 from each of the tribes of the sons of Israel. Their purpose is to witness to those who are on earth during that time so that they put their trust in the Lamb who paid the penalty for their sin on the cross. The results of their witnessing are described in 7:9-17 as a great multitude from every people group on earth who are killed during the second half of the Tribulation but stand victorious in the kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth forevermore with no more tears. Rev 8 begins with a silence in heaven for 30 minutes, as heaven stands in awe of the realization that there are more judgments to come. I place these seven trumpets in the first half of the tribulation as I've shown reasons before. The first four trumpets are distinct, just as the first four seals. These first four trumpets all affect nature directly, which man depends upon, and so affect man indirectly. The first affects the earth, trees and vegetation, the second the seas and life in them, the third the rivers and fresh waters, the fourth the sun, moon and stars. Man depends upon all these but God has created them and can destroy them. His purpose is so that they will turn to Him by believing in His Son. The last three trumpets are distinct in that they are called the three woes, and they affect man directly. They are judgments directly upon man. The first woe is the fifth trumpet. It is in Rev 9:1-12. It is the release of demonic, locust like creatures that torment men for five months with their stings but are not permitted to kill anyone. They are not permitted to damage the earth or the 144,000 who will be witnessing to the lost during this time. The second woe is the sixth trumpet. It is Rev 9:13-21 and it is the release of four demons who transform into a two hundred million strong army that appear as horses with heads of lions and tails with serpent heads, and these are permitted to kill men. They kill one third of remaining mankind. So by this time, which is almost the mid-point of the 70th week, more than half of the world's population is dead. And note is made that even this did not bring those who remained alive to repent of worshipping demons. So they clearly remain in unbelief, though others who were killed may well have believed. The third woe is not mentioned until Rev 11, and it is the seventh trumpet, which will open up the seven bowls. But Rev 10 intervenes and reveals the most enigmatic chapter in the Revelation. The seven peals of thunder and the little book, and mention of the seventh angel, whose judgment contains the finality of the mystery of God. As for the seven peals of thunder, John heard what they spoke, but he was told not to write them, so we do not know what they spoke. We only know that they spoke of judgments. The seventh angel contains the finality of the mystery of God because in it is the seven bowls which spells out the completion of God's wrath and removal of evil-doers so that His kingdom can come on the earth. The little book John was told to take and eat. Eating a book is commonly used of the prophets who were forced to accept both the nice wonderful things in the word of God, as well as the difficult and disgusting things. There were a lot of disgusting things John still had to prophesy, and he needed to accept both as the word of God and not just the nice

pleasant things. In Rev 11:1-14 we meet the two witnesses, who evidently stand in the temple of God, which is operational during the first half of the tribulation, and they are able to kill anyone who tries to harm them as they testify to the finished work of Christ and the importance of putting your faith in Him. They bring many plagues on the earth like Moses and Elijah and I consider them to be two who come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah, much as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. They will be killed by the anti-Christ at the mid-point of the 70th week so he can take over the temple. Their bodies will lie in the street for three and a half days and then they will be resurrected and taken up into heaven. We finally come to the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:15, at this point we have the third woe, the seventh angel sounds and an announcement is made that "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." And that "You have taken your great power and have begun to reign." The reason this is stated here at the mid-point is because in the seventh trumpet is contained all seven bowls and these constitute the entire second half of Daniel's 70th week and will destroy the evildoers in preparation for Christ to come in His kingdom. So the seventh trumpet actually blasts for the entire final three and a half years and it is the bowls. In them the final form of the kingdom of Rome seen by Daniel will be destroyed by the stone cut out without hands and the kingdom of the Son of Man will come in its place and fill the earth. Amos 5:24 says, "justice will cascade down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." At last, the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Also, the 490-year calendar of Daniel will have come to its completion. Dan 9:24 says, "everlasting righteousness will be brought in, vision and prophecy will have been fulfilled and the holy temple will be anointed for operation in the millennial kingdom.

Alright, next week Rev 12. Here we'll get to see who is behind the scenes, the angelic conflict that is waging behind the human players in the 70th week of Daniel. But the lesson remains. A major point of Bible prophecy is to show that God controls history and is going to establish His purpose of establishing a kingdom ruled by a genuine member of humanity, Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. The kingdom was offered to Israel in the first century. But they rejected Jesus as King and therefore the kingdom was postponed, from the human standpoint. Those who responded with faith to the finished work of Christ received His perfect righteousness imputed to their account and became sons of the kingdom, re-designed to be perfected to rule and reign with the resurrected Christ in the coming kingdom. After the Church is complete it will be removed and the final seven years of Daniel's 70 sevens will take place, bringing Israel to repentance and then the kingdom will come. In the meantime, the message is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. There is no need to bring money, works, church attendance to the table. Bring nothing at all. Jesus came to give you something, not to receive something from you. Salvation is a free gift, not of works, lest any man should boast.