

I grew up in a Bible church that spent a lot of time on biblical prophecy. In fact, one of the first authors to speak definitively on the subject was a man named Hal Lindsay. From what I remember, Hal Lindsay was a frequent visitor to our church. He wrote the bestseller *The Late Great Planet Earth*. His book was unique in many ways. Much of what I'll be teaching over the next 5 weeks is in line with his interpretation of scripture. His thinking and my thinking came out of the same "think tank" so to speak: Dallas Theological Seminary. An even greater impact on my thinking came by studying the writings of Dr. David Jeremiah. David Jeremiah grew up as a Baptist in Ohio, and he too was a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. During seminary I took a deep dive into his teachings on the rapture. I was preparing a study on a passage of scripture called the "Olivet discourse," and it was through Dr. Jeremiah's teaching that I formulated a more solid position of what I believe about the end of times. You might have noticed that during my six years of ministry at Union Grove, each time we have a baptism, we make sure that the candidate receives a David Jeremiah study bible. The doctrine is sound and the notes are fabulous.

The teaching which I will present is based on a dispensationalist interpretation of the Old and New Testament. That means that I believe that God has interacted with mankind in several specific ways throughout history, revealing himself to mankind in "stages" (dispensations) so to speak. During those time periods, God has "dispensed" to mankind knowledge about Himself. Sometimes this is spoken of in tandem with certain "covenants" that God has had with man. I do not ascribe to what has been called "hyper-dispensationalism" which says that faith alone was not sufficient for a relationship with God in times past. God's measure of righteousness has always been faith; faith in Him and in what He says.

The Bible is clear when it tells us that faith is what "justified" Abraham before God, ***"<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'*** ***"<sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, (Romans 4:3-5, NKJV).***

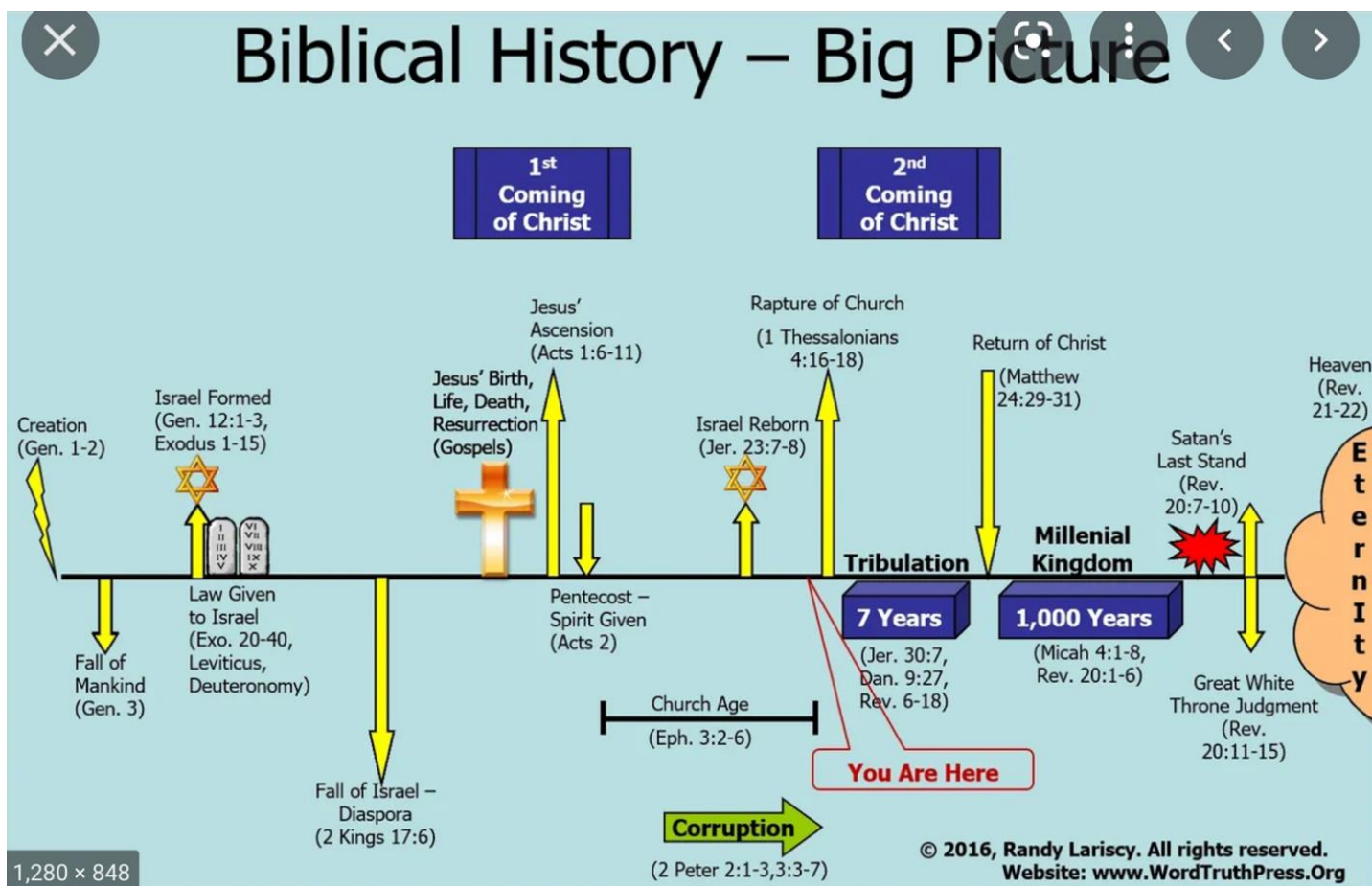
At the bottom line, a dispensationalist view of Bible prophecy claims that Jesus Christ will return to earth from heaven someday, and He will establish eternal peace among the peoples of the earth. This viewpoint maintains that the Bible contains numerous prophecies that specifically foretold the coming of Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah). Those prophecies were fulfilled in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And, the Bible foretells what is to come at the end of the ages. An integral part of what happens at "the end of the ages" is centered around Israel. Reformist theologians have tried to interpret away "Israel" as now being the Church, but this is not right. Israel is Israel and the Church is the Church. God made an everlasting covenant with the Jews and everlasting means forever. It is true that some of Israel are now part of the Church. That would be those Jews who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus/Yeshua as the promised Messiah.

The greatest compelling point that we are nearing the end of times is that Israel has been established as a nation. None of these future events could possibly happen without Israel being

Israel and without Israel being physically located in their ancient homeland. In addition, we see a coming together of the nations towards a one world government like we've never seen before. That is a requirement for the nations to line up under the Antichrist's rule. He will be one man carrying out Satan's complete desires. We will be doing this study for several reasons:

- 1) Looking at past prophecies that have been fulfilled provides proof of Who Jesus was, Who He is, and what His role is in the salvation of the world.
- 2) It brings great comfort to the believer to understand that God is ultimately in control and is working His purposes out for mankind.
- 3) It gives us peace as we understand the future of the world and our ultimate destiny as believers.

I ask those of you who have studied prophecy for many years to be patient. This course is meant to introduce people to prophecy. You have the advantage of having thought about, studied, and/or taught these events for decades. You are not the focus of this teaching, but maybe it will be a good review for you, and you'll be able to explain to others what I have taught. The conversation last Wednesday covered the following topics which we will repeat in greater detail this morning.



- **Israel was formed** with unilateral promises given by God to her.



12 Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. **21 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.** **3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” (Genesis 12:1-3, NKJV).

This blessing of Abraham is key to understanding how and why Israel and the Jewish people are center stage in God’s plan for humanity. It makes a person wonder why God would choose the Jewish people. Could it be because they are so scholarly? Could it be because they are so stubborn? Moses tells us in the last days of his life why God chose Israel.

***7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers... (Deuteronomy 7:7-8a, NKJV).***

To understand Bible prophecy, a person must understand that God gave His chosen people the real estate which we call the Holy Land.

In [Genesis 12:7](#), God promises Abram, who had just arrived in Canaan: “To your descendants I will give this land.” (NASB). Later, in [Genesis 15:18](#), God expands on that unconditional promise: “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.” (NASB). Then, in [Genesis 17:8](#), God reiterates the promise to Abraham, adding that the land gift is irrevocable: “The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you.” (NASB). God later repeats the promise to Abraham’s son Isaac ([Genesis 26:3-4](#)) and Isaac’s son Jacob ([Genesis 28:13](#)), whose name God later changed to Israel.<sup>1</sup>

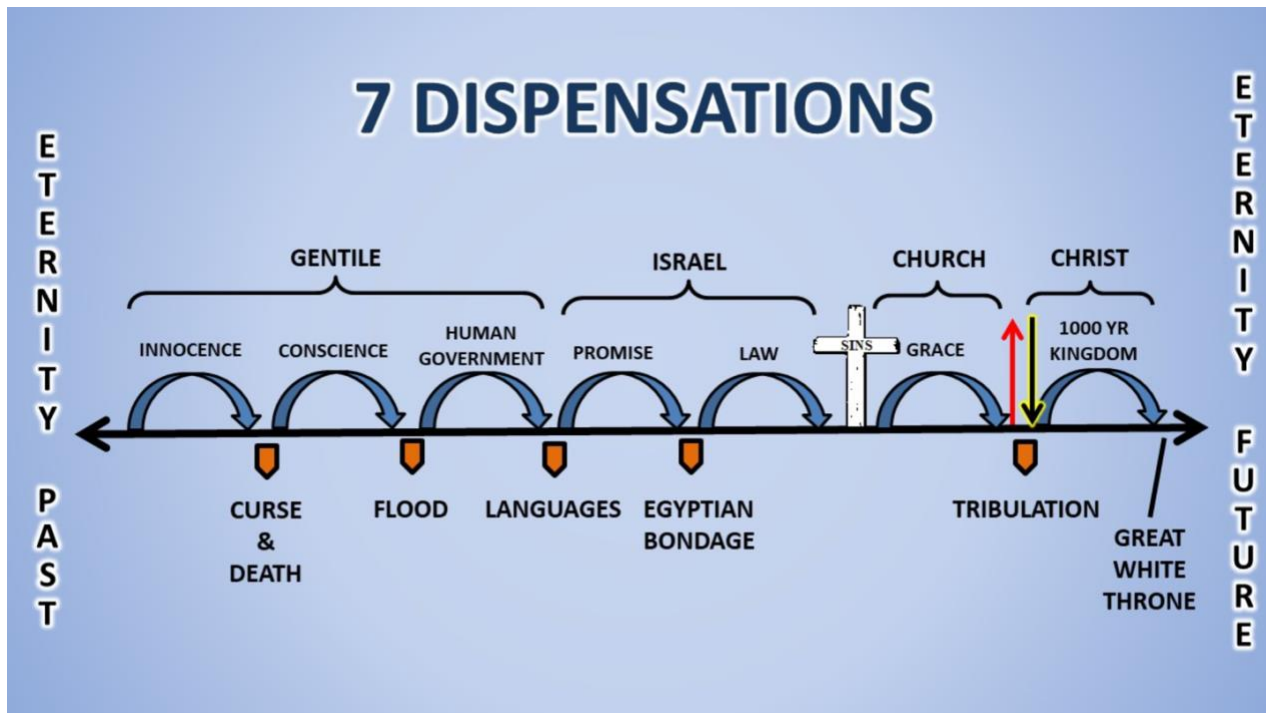
- **The Fall of Jerusalem** – the fall of Israel was prophesied so many times by so many prophets that it is hard to list them all. The most significant prophecies concerning the fall of Israel and Jerusalem were by Jesus Himself. When He prophesied the same, it enraged the Jewish leaders.

***41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment***

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Israel-land.html>

around you, surround you and close you in on every side,<sup>44</sup> and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:41-44, NKJV).

- Jesus’ life, ministry, death/crucifixion, burial, and raising from the dead. [including Palm Sunday prophecy]. These will be covered in detail Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. (I do not call it Easter because my belief is that the name comes from pagan origins involving goddesses and fertility cults).
- **The Church Age** started when the Holy Spirit came into believers, and the Church Age will exist for an unspecified time until an event called the “rapture” happens. This term “Church Age” means the “time of the Church.” It is a label created by dispensationalists (like me) who have tried to describe the time period that we’ve just discussed. At this point it would be good to look at a chart of dispensations.



An “age” is an historical period of time or an era. We have all heard of historical “ages” like the “bronze age” or the “iron age.” These are divisions based on technological advancement. When divisions focus on God’s interaction with mankind, they have been called “dispensations.” Biblical history can be divided roughly between the “Age of the Law” and the “Church Age” (also called the “Age of Grace”). This Church Age is between Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Rapture as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The Church Age in prophecy falls between the 69th and 70th weeks as recorded in Daniel 9:24-27. Jesus also predicted the Church Age in Matthew 16 when He said, “I will build my Church.” Jesus has kept His promise and the Church has not only survived but prospered for 2,000 years.

So, what is the Church? The Church is comprised of all people who have, by faith, put their trust in Jesus the Christ as their Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10, John 1:12). Remember the word “Church” is not a building or a place. It means a “called out assembly.” Those who are Spanish speakers know the word is Iglesia coming from the Greek word Ekklesia meaning the called out.

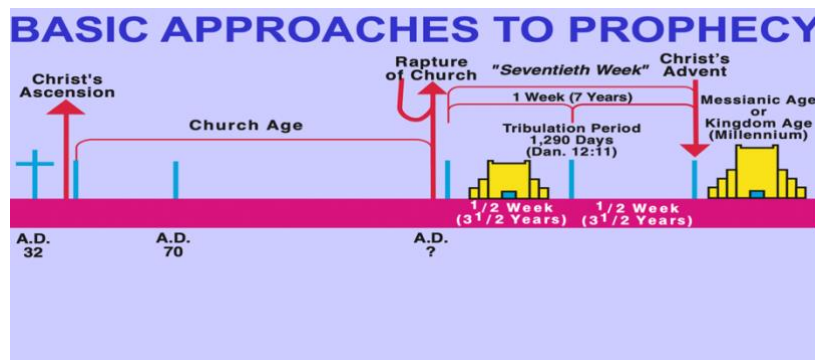
The Church Age is the time of the dispensation of Grace. *“The Law was given through Moses: grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17, NASB).* For the first time in human history God has dispensed Himself (the Holy Spirit) to actually take up permanent residence in His creations (us). In other dispensations the Holy Spirit would come temporarily and work within people (1 Samuel 16:14). The key difference in the Church Age is the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit within all believers, the Church (John 14:16).

I am bringing all of this up and explaining it so all will understand the distinction that exists between the Church and Israel. They are not the same (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). There is, of course, some overlap with the existence of some so-called “Messianic Christians”, but God’s covenants with Israel have not been revoked in any way, and they have not been fully fulfilled. Those promises to Israel will come to fruition in full at the end of the Church Age. That will be the promises related to the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 34; 37; 45; Jeremiah 30; 33; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 19). The Church Age will come to an end at the event of the Rapture.

- **The Rapture** - The rapture as described in scripture is an event in which Jesus will come back in the air and all believers (dead and alive) will join Him in the air.

The Rapture is an event that will occur at the the end of the Church Age. We are waiting on that even right now. All things have lined up prophetically to make such an event possible. This is when all of God’s people will be removed from the earth.

Let’s take a look at our own Dr. House’s graphic which shows the time-line of this event.<sup>2</sup>



So, Where do we find the “rapture” in the Bible? Some people argue that there is no such word as “rapture” in the Bible. Well, there is no such word as “Bible” or “Trinity” in the Bible either. We find descriptions of the event in scripture. The main scriptural reference is found in the first

letter that the Apostle Paul sent to the Church in Thessaloniki. In this event, God will literally “snatch” away all believers from the earth. I believe this will be before the Tribulation starts. We’ll talk about the Tribulation next time. There is no incidence of God bringing judgment on believers. The Tribulation is judgment that is reserved for the unbeliever.

<sup>2</sup> Chart by Dr Wayne House, Tommy Ice, and Randall Price 2021

Let's look at the scriptures that describe this event.

***<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, NKJV).***

This is pretty descriptive. It tells us that there will be an instantaneous transformation that takes place on planet earth. Those who are "asleep" (have already died) but who died as believers will rise up from their graves. In some way, their bodies will be reconstituted in a nano-second and they'll meet the Lord in the air. We who are believers that are alive on the earth at that time will instantaneously join them in the air. This is differentiated from the second coming of Christ when He will come to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

The doctrine of the rapture wasn't taught in the Old Testament. Paul calls it a "mystery." That means a truth that wasn't before revealed. He describes this in his first letter to the Corinthian Church. ***<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, NKJV).***

This is an event that I long for. All believers should long for this. We will finally be free from sin and sorrow, and we will be with the Lord in His presence forever. We don't need to be arguing over details of how this will all happen or when it will all happen. We are told this for what reason? So that ***"we can comfort each other with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18b, NKJV).***

My message today is if you are a believer, take comfort from what I've said today. If you're not a believer, consider these things. If you are wrong, there are horrific consequences. If believers are wrong, we have no horrific consequences. But we can live and die with total comfort in knowing that this is not all that there is. This is not the end. It is only the beginning of something spectacular.

**Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at [uniongrove362@gmail.com](mailto:uniongrove362@gmail.com) or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) Corporation**