

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Church and Last Things, Session 15, Christ's Second Coming, Its Function to Promote Spiritual Readiness, Signs of the Times

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 15, Christ's Second Coming, Its Function to Promote Spiritual Readiness. Signs of the times, Showing Grace, Gospel to Nations, Salvation of Israel, Showing Opposition.

Father, we ask you to bless us as we study your word and seek to understand its teachings. Lead us according to your will, and we pray through Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant. Amen.

We're finishing up the second coming as a major topic, and we want to talk about its function. We did some real basic material concerning its manner. It is personable, personal, visible, and glorious.

Then we talked about the timing of the second coming and how we need to hold together imminence, interval, and ignorance passages at the same time. It creates attention, but I think that is exactly what the Lord wants. What is the function of second-coming passages? If I had to say in a word, I would say to promote spiritual readiness.

Matthew 24:42, keep watch, so you must also be ready. Mark 13:33, be on guard, be alert, keep watch, watch. Luke 21, 36, be always on the watch and pray.

In a word, the Lord wants us to be good spiritual Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The Boy Scout motto is, be prepared. The Girl Scouts motto is, would you like to buy another box of cookies? No, as a matter of fact, the Girl Scouts motto is the same as the Boy Scouts motto, be prepared.

The Lord wants us to be spiritual boys or Girl Scouts. There are other purposes. I would say if you look at the gospels, the major purpose is spiritual readiness.

This is so important. I am displeased when the main purpose that some believers seem to have concerning the study of last things is to prove themselves right and their fellow believers wrong in some of the details. I think they're missing the whole purpose.

Years ago, reading an essay by D. A. Carson in a book called Scripture and Truth, a publication of the International Congress on Biblical Inerrancy, they put a book out

called Inerrancy. Perhaps Scripture and Truth was their second one. In an article on the unity of the Bible and the possibility of systematic theology, Don Carson said certain things that have stuck with me ever since.

One is, and this is my words. These are my words, not his. We do want to know what the Bible teaches, but we don't want to stop there. It is not enough to know what the Bible teaches.

We want to ask the text and see either explicitly or implicitly the function of Scripture. I like this for both particular paragraphs, passages, chapters, and books of the Bible, as well as for doctrines. I want to know what is the function of the doctrine of original sin? What is the function of Galatians in chapter six? The main thing, the first thing, not the main thing, is what it teaches. The second thing is why it teaches what it teaches. That is an important question to ask in terms of ministering the word of God.

Why does Jesus teach about his second coming with imminence, interval, and ignorance themes in the Olivet discourse, the eschatological discourse? I would say the main function is to promote spiritual readiness, but there are other functions in other passages to be sure. 1 John 3 says everyone who has this hope in Christ's return purifies himself as he is pure. Purification should follow from a living hope in the return of the Lord Jesus.

We saw Titus 2:13, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory, or could be glorious appearing, of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. It's a blessed hope. That is, it produces joy in God's people.

At least, it should. That's one of the purposes of the doctrine of the second coming. Does your belief in the second coming make you spiritually ready for Christ's return? Does it purify your life as you think of what situation you want to be in when he comes back? Does it give you joy? If not, no matter how orthodox your doctrinal statement and beliefs, the purpose of scripture is not being fulfilled in your life or mine the way it should be.

Sometimes, the Bible explicitly tells us the function of scripture. Other times, we need to imply it from the biblical writings. 1 Thessalonians 4:18, the so-called rapture passage, I like to jokingly say, therefore, wrestle with each other from these words.

Therefore, fight each other with, no, comfort one another with these words, Paul says. Therefore, encourage one another with these words. Does your teaching of eschatology in your Sunday school class, in your ladies' Bible study, in your men's Bible study, does it produce encouragement? If not, you're not teaching it right.

You're not teaching it in line with the purpose for which God gave it. Understanding the function of scripture or of doctrines and teaching toward those ends is simply working in concert with the Holy Spirit who gave those doctrines and those texts in the first place. The function of the second coming of Christ in scripture and the gospels is to promote spiritual readiness.

In the whole New Testament, to purify us, 1 John 3:3, to bring us joy, Titus 2:13, to bring us comfort or encouragement, 1 Thessalonians 4:18. The Thessalonians were confused. They were looking for Jesus to come. They had the imminence passages down, the imminence idea down well, and they weren't setting any dates.

But perhaps they needed to hear more about intervals, and that's why we have 2 Thessalonians 2. Certain things must happen first. But they were afraid those who died would miss out. No, not at all, Paul says.

They'll be raised, and we'll go up together to meet the air. From the second coming of Christ, we move to the signs of the times. Uh-oh, you say.

Fanaticism. I admit that this has been used to promote fanaticism and dogmatic teachers who claim to have all the answers to the last things. Nobody has all the answers to last things.

Remember my chart of degrees of error. We all have errors concerning the details of the second coming of Christ and the concomitant events. I would say in this regard, going back to that chart, truth, the Bible's clear teaching is the second coming, resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the eternal destinies of heaven and hell, or new heavens, new earth, eternal condemnation.

That's true. As we move to the left of that, toward error, we all have some errors. We don't understand everything perfectly.

So, my own approach is to emphasize the four verities that I just spoke of, the four truths, and to have views on other things, but not to make them the main things because they're not, and we simply don't have all the answers. But the signs of the times are revealed in the Bible, and they're designed to edify us. And if we get them right, if we get the right attitude about them, the right hermeneutical perspective, which basically is the already and the not yet, then their function can be fulfilled in our lives and ministries as well.

Let me explain with a series of questions. The signs of the times. Question number one, what are the signs of the times? As in many of these notes, I acknowledge two sources.

Anthony Hoekema's, *The Bible and the Future*, David Clyde Jones, *Systematic Theology Lectures*. The signs of the times are precursors of the second coming. Whether it's the proclamation of the gospel, the salvation of the fullness of Israel, tribulation, apostasy, antichrist, wars, or natural phenomena, the New Testament points to these to encourage us to look for Jesus to return.

They are precursors of the second coming. But immediately, we have to add; they are precursors of the second coming, characteristic of the whole inter-advent period. In other words, every major feature of last things is already and not yet.

The signs are not only not yet; they're not only futuristic, but they're also already. They are characteristic of the whole inter-advent period. I once saw a lecture by a seismologist, a guy with a PhD in earthquake studies.

He was asked, of course, if earthquakes have increased in recent years. His first answer was that the study of seismology is so recent that we don't have enough history. This is like 20 years ago now, so we have more, but we don't have enough history to answer that question intelligently. We need more history to give us a bigger perspective.

But secondly, he said, I don't think so. They've been pretty steady. Our ability to measure them has increased.

And every continent has people doing that now. And that fits my theology perfectly because they're characteristic of the whole inter-advent period. So, there's an earthquake somewhere.

Is that a sign of the times? Sure, it is. Does that mean Jesus is coming tomorrow? No, we don't know the date or the time of the hour, the day or the hour. But it is designed to make us long for Christ's return.

Could there be a great increase in those in the very last days? Sure, sure. That would be a not-yet aspect. Every sign of the times is characteristic of the entire time between Jesus' comings and to be fulfilled in a greater way toward the very second coming of Christ.

What are the signs of the times? Every one of them is a precursor of the second coming, designed to promote spiritual readiness and keep us on our toes. And every one of them is characteristic of the whole inter-advent period. Give me that already a not-yet view, and then signs don't become something bizarre or something esoteric or something I can use over other Christians to claim I know better.

It also helps us not to overemphasize the imminence of the neglect of interval and ignorance passages. In this context, what does imminence mean? Perhaps this

question came to people's minds before. It means that Jesus' second coming is impending.

It is sure to come, and we're to live in the light of it, understanding it may not come right away. It may be very far off. In other words, imminence means certain to come, to be hoped for, but not to be predicted.

Certain to come, but we do not know when. What did Jesus mean when he said, watch? We've already said Matthew 13:33, 35, 37. Be on guard, be alert, and keep watch.

Four times he says it. It means to be morally ready, to be spiritually prepared. I love David Jones' words.

I quote them. They're memorable to answer the next question. Will Christ's return be expected? It'll be unexpected by the careless and indifferent.

It'll be expected, comma, but not predicted, comma, by the watchful. That bears memorizing. Will Christ's return be expected? Sure, it should be expected, but it'll be unexpected because of carelessness and indifference.

Isn't that exactly what 1 Thessalonians 5 said? And also 2 Peter 3. Where's his appearing? He hasn't come back since the beginning of the world. The false teachers boast in their ignorance. Christ's return will be unexpected by the careless and indifferent.

David Jones chose his words carefully. It'll be expected, but not predicted, by the watchful. We are to be watchful.

Now, I want to divide signs up into different categories. This could be right from Hoekema. It's actually true.

You're reading in a preface to a book. I've read many books on this subject, and many people influenced me. I thank my teachers, and I take all the responsibility for errors. I once read a book that said that same kind of thing, and then he said, I'll share with them the responsibility for my errors.

The guy was being funny. I thought it was hilarious. He was not taking full responsibility for errors.

My notes are so dependent upon Anthony Heekema and David Jones. I don't even know what is original with me, probably not much. Here are the categories of the signs.

Signs showing the grace of God. Got to keep going, keep going. We answered that, we answered that.

Here we go. Signs showing God's grace. Overview.

Signs indicating opposition to God. Signs indicating divine judgment. All these categories are operative.

Some signs show the grace of God. How good of God to give in Matthew 24:14, as I said earlier, the outstanding and most characteristic sign of the times. The language is Tony Hoekema's language.

Matthew 24:14, Jesus is speaking, and this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. The proclamation of the gospel to all nations is an outstanding sign of the times. It is the most characteristic sign of the times.

Surely it is already. It is to be throughout the whole inter-advent period if the church does its job. Is there going to be a greater harvest toward the end? I believe so.

That would mean already and not yet, and we'll look at another passage that says that particularly. This doesn't say it particularly. Hoekema further adds that this sign of the proclamation of the gospel to the world is a great incentive for Christian missions.

How good, how gracious and merciful of God to make the greatest sign of the times, the proclamation of the gospel worldwide. That is the signs far from promoting cultic fashion and Christians fighting and people claiming to have all the answers. It's designed to promote the gospel.

Another sign showing the grace of God is the salvation of the fullness of Israel. We're back to Romans 11 again. Act 2 indicates that pilgrims from Rome were among those at the festival of Pentecost in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost.

Presumably, some of them were saved. Presumably, these Jewish Christians went back to Rome, and the early church in Rome presumably was a Hebrew Christian church, as all the churches were at the very beginning. And yet in Romans 11:13, earlier, Paul says, of course, the gospel is to go first to the Jews than to the that was the order.

But by the time this letter was written, Romans 11:13, I was speaking to you, Gentiles. The majority of the churches in Rome were not Jewish but Hebrew Christians.

As a matter of fact chapter 14 shows the problems that the Jews had in accepting the Gentiles ways. The Jerusalem council gave very minimal requirements for Gentiles to be saved to after being saved to live. Not eating things for him not avoiding idolatry, sexual immorality, and things with the blood meat with the blood in it.

That's pretty broad and general. 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14, Paul gives instructions concerning unclear matters and debatable things. And here, he gives the print he distinguishes adiaphora essential things from adiaphora unessential things.

And so as, as we read those chapters, the Jews turned out to be the weaker brothers and sisters. Because they had scruples about days of worship beyond Sunday. And it's understandable.

If your father and mother and their fathers and mothers and their fathers and mothers had kept Passover and so forth, and you were permitted as a Jewish Christian to do it, you probably would do it. If your home was such that that was the practice, and if your mother kept a kosher kitchen and her mother and so forth the same way. And so the Jews were a little uneasy because the Gentiles and Paul took them to task in Romans 14 because they were not respecting the Jewish brothers and sisters.

They are flaunting their liberty. The Gentiles are the stronger brothers and sisters, and they don't feel a compulsion to eat kosher, and they don't feel a compulsion to add days to the Lord's day. And then maybe they think the Jews are kind of legalistic for doing so, and that's bad in that they weren't respecting the Jews.

They do not have to do those things. Paul is very clear on that. They have freedom in Christ, but they should also show love for their brothers and sisters and not deliberately stumble upon them.

Don't have their doggy roast hot dog roast on Friday night with shrimp. No, not a good idea. They should love one another, and so in chapter 15 of Romans, by the way, this is why in Romans you have the repetition of this refrain alongside many doctrines to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

What's he doing? He's seeking to promote unity. I love chapter 15. One, we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

You Gentile Christians, let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. Psalm 69:9. May the God of endurance verse 5 and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with

Christ Jesus that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After the words of correction in chapter 14, Jewish brothers and sisters in Rome, do not judge your Gentiles who are exercising their freedom. Gentiles in Rome, be more considerate of your Jewish brothers and sisters.

He says the goal is unity that glorifies God, and I love 15:7 of Romans. Therefore, welcome one another, receive one another, and accept one another as God has welcomed you as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God. That's what the Gentile believers are to do.

That's what the Jewish believers are to do. They are how Christ accepted them freely and unconditionally, with great love and open arms. All this gives background to the perplexity of the Jews that Paul addresses in chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Romans.

We're going to 11 of Romans here eventually soon. Here's the perplexity. We were at Pentecost.

We heard the gospel we believed. We became new covenant Jewish Christians. We came back to our town, Rome.

We planted house churches, and things were going really well, and then God saved Gentiles, and we welcomed them, and now their churches are overrun by them, and Paul has God's promises to Israel stopped. Have they failed? In Romans 9, 10, and 11, Paul answers in three complementary ways. This query is introduced in a form in 9:6 where he says but it is not as though the word of God has failed to make a long story short.

I'll repeat the question and give the answers for chapters 9, 10, and 11. Where I'm going is setting the salvation of the fullness of Israel in its context in Romans. Has the word of God failed? No, Paul says, and here's my first answer. No, it hasn't failed.

Just like in the history of Israel, God's only saved the remnant. God saved those whom he sovereignly chose to save. The accent in chapter 9 of Romans, the strongest predestinarian and even double predestinarian in a chapter in scripture, falls on the sovereign choice and freedom of God in salvation.

That is the starting point. He puts it first for a reason, but it's not the only point. Chapter 10 answers the question this way.

Has God's promises to Israel have God's promises to Israel failed? Has the word of God to Israel failed? Oh no, no, no. Unbelieving Israel got exactly what it deserved

from God. The Bible teaches human responsibility, accountability, and culpability, and the fact that the Jews stopped believing.

I'm not talking about how they were saved. They were lost, but after the original impulse of many Jews then, the lines were drawn, and fewer Jews believed, and the majority now aren't believing, and the church in Rome is becoming a gentile church with some Jews rather than a Jewish church with some gentiles. Hence, the problems that we addressed in chapter 14 involved their acceptance of one another. God did what he sovereignly ordained to do in chapter 9. God's promises didn't fail.

That's the first answer but not the only answer. Israel got what it deserved in Chapter 10 for its unbelief, and Chapter 11 then says has the word of God concerning Israel failed? Oh no. God is not done with ethnic Israel.

God will yet make up bring a harvest among Jewish Christians bringing them to faith in Christ. How does that work? It works through a principle of jealousy. At one time, you gentiles, he addresses them specifically, need to be more respectful and appreciate the root of the tree, the stock into which they, as wild olive branches, were grafted.

They're not the root, they're not the stock, they're not the tree, they're wild olive branches. Be careful and respectful, and you better keep believing and disciple your sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters, or you're going to be broken off, and your family will be cut off then. Not talking about the loss of individual salvation, but that line of faith and grace could be broken by apostasy, by the effect, the denying of the faith, by schism, by dividing, separating from the church, by the false teaching of a strong variety that we call that heresy.

God has saved you now, you gentiles, after saving only Jews primarily in the Old Testament since Israel was not a light to the nations as it should have been, and now he has saved you, and you're in the majority, and now it is God's good plan to bring the chosen people, the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the people of the Father back to himself as they are jealous of the grace of God and the salvation shown even to the gentiles. Think of it. Verse 25, lest you be wise of chapter 11, lest you be wise in your own sight.

I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel. Oh, there are some believers but the number of new converts is dwindling, way more gentiles than Jews until a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the gentiles has come in and in this way all Israel will be saved.

All Israel will be saved. Every last Israelite? Of course not. But the sum total of all Jews who believe the gospel in between the comings of Christ, the already, and apparently a big harvest near the time of the second coming, the not yet.

The deliverer will come from Zion. He will banish ungodliness from Jacob and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins. From Isaiah 59, as regards the gospel, they, the Jews, are enemies for your sake.

First-century Israel and 21st-century Israel stand in a very anomalous situation before the Lord. Concerning the gospel, they're God's enemies for your sake because God has opened the floodgates to the Gentiles, and there are more Gentiles being saved than Jews. Ah, but his plan is to provoke the Jews to jealousy at gentile salvation to move them by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus as their Lord and Messiah and Savior.

As regards election, as regards the gospel, they're enemies for your sake. However, in terms of election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. Israel is still his chosen people.

Define Israel. Blood descendants of Abraham and Sarah. That's why I keep using the expression ethnic Israel.

Could it not be true that the nation of Israel would be converted? Sure, it might be true. Do I think it teaches it here? No. Do I think it teaches it anywhere in the New Testament? No.

I respect those who disagree with me, of course. I always respect, especially believers who disagree with me. But give me this.

At least there'll be a great conversion of ethnic Israel, of racial Israelites. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. It is the sovereignty of God that stands behind our hope for a future large-scale conversion of ethnic Jews.

For just as you Gentiles were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy from God. For God has consigned all to disobedience that he may have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable are his ways? For who has known the mind of the Lord? No human being. Who has been his counselor? Are you joking? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? The rhetorical questions are so ludicrous that they need no answer.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

God's word to Israel has not failed. He did what he sovereignly ordained to do in saving many Jewish Christians in the first century and Gentiles Romans 9. God's word to Israel has not failed. The reason many Israelites are not saved is that they have not believed the gospel.

They are culpable, Romans 10. And yet, putting it in a bigger perspective, God is not done with Israel altogether. Oh, they're enemies of the gospel.

They don't believe it. But because God's gifts and calling are irrevocable, they're loved because of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Because of them personally? No.

Because of God's covenant with them. His choice of Abraham. That's a permanent choice.

And God will yet bring Abraham's many sons and daughters of Abraham to salvation. As a matter of fact, all through the time between Jesus' first and second advents, who believe become part of the church. And apparently, there'll be a big harvest toward the time of the second coming.

I should say, good people disagree with me. A scholar no less than O. Palmer Robertson wrote a book for PNR called *The Israel of God*. And he interprets in this way all Israel will be saved to mean not ethnic Israel, but the church.

I really love and respect him so much. But I disagree. I agree with Anthony Hoekema.

Israel, in chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Romans, means Jews. It means exactly ethnic Israel. There are two big views held by evangelical Christians concerning the expression.

And so, all Israel will be saved, Romans 11:26, in the light of the following verses which I have explained. Number one, it means spiritual Israel, all the elect. That's Palmer Robertson's view.

Is it not true that sometimes, the New Testament speaks of the church as spiritual Israel? Yes. Is it true here? I think not. But in fairness, I'm acknowledging some take it to mean spiritual Israel.

The second view has subsets, but it is ethnic Israel. Physical descendants of Abraham and Sarah. Three subsets.

So, spiritual Israel, not Israel ethnically, but the church. The dominant view is ethnic Israel. Hoekema's view is the sum total of remnants saved between the comings of Christ.

I call that the already. And I agree with that in part. B, a totality climaxing the inter-advent period.

Hoekema doesn't adopt it, but he seems open to it. I prefer, because of my principle, which I hope comes out of the New Testament, that every major eschatological theme is already a not yet. I favor a combine of views, A and B, under this notion of ethnic Israel being the Israel referred to when he says, and so all Israel will be saved.

It is both the sum total saved in between the testaments, the comings of Christ, by believing the gospel, and a totality climaxing that period between the comings of Christ. A third view I respectfully set forth, but reject. A political entity following the rapture of the church, a dispensational view.

I respect and love my dispensational brothers and sisters. I disagree with that. I am happy to see them.

Every theology grows and develops. The history of dispensationalism, as shown by the articles of Craig Blazing in Dallas Seminary's Bibliotheca Sacra, is wonderful and remarkable and has led to the so-called progressive dispensationalism, which I agree with in so many ways. But he shows how there's been progress from J.N. Darby, Lewis Barry Chaffer, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, and then now especially Blazing and Darrell Bock and Craig Blazing, who have led the way in the progressive dispensationalism.

Behind the scenes, their professor, Lanier Burns, told me in personal dialogue that he helped to do it through them. Lanier Burns, you haven't probably heard of him. Godly man.

He was their teacher. I'm thankful that based upon the olive tree imagery of Romans 11:11, most progressive dispensationalists now teach there's no separate destiny for the Jews. Ultimately, there will be one church of God in the new heavens and on the new earth.

They do hold to a Jewish millennium preceding that new heavens and new earth, and that's another matter that we will tackle in another lecture. Signs indicating opposition to God. Tribulation.

Matthew 24, verses 15 through 25, underscore this idea. The problem becomes, and it too is reflective of the already and not yet. Matthew and Luke combine both the

destruction of Jerusalem in the first century and apparently the great tribulation of the end times together.

They're thematically put together to use Huckabee's expression. There's prophetic foreshortening. The near destruction of Jerusalem is given as a type, if you will, of what's going to happen in the end with the great tribulation.

It looks to me like they're both there. D. A. Carson agrees. It is sometimes difficult to sort out exactly when the shift occurs from one to the other, but both Luke 21 and Matthew 24:25 speak of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the great tribulation, which is not yet.

Matthew 24:15 and following. So, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand. Then, let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let the one who was on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house. Let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas, for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days, pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

For then, there will be great tribulation. Such has not been from the beginning of the world until now. No, and never will be.

And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. Here's where he says: if anybody says Christ is here or there, don't believe him because it'll be like a lightning bolt.

It'll be very evident. Immediately after those, after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened. The moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the son of man and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. That has not happened yet.

That is not yet in my estimation. With power and great glory, he will send out his angels with a trumpet call. They'll gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

So, there is a tribulation between both already AD 70 and the great tribulation of the future combined thematically. That's a characteristic of Matthew's gospel by virtue of prophetic foreshortening. I recently read Darrell Bach's wonderful book on

pictures of Jesus or profile of Jesus from the first week of the synoptic gospels and John.

And it is a mature work of a mature scholar and very edifying. He does take a premillennial and dispensational stance, but it is fair and minimal. It is very, very well done.

Signs indicating opposition to God, tribulation, apostasy, Matthew 24:10 through 11. And many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

We saw already 2 Thessalonians 2:1 to 3 speak of the rebellion must happen first. It was one of our interval sayings. The rebellion must happen first before the great day of the Lord and the return of Christ.

1 John 2:19, you have heard that antichrist is coming. Verse 18: already, many antichrists have come. This is apostasy.

This is turning from a faith once professed antichrist. We read 2 Thessalonians 2:3 to 12, the man of lawlessness. 1 John 2:18, you have heard that antichrist singular is coming.

Antichrist is also a sign indicating opposition to God. 1 John 2:18 and 19 said many antichrists have already come. Already, the antichrist is still yet to come.

1 John 2:18, 2 Thessalonians 2:3 through 12. Antichrist is both already and not yet, as every other major prophetic theme is, in my estimation. We will tackle signs indicating divine judgment in our next lecture.

So far, we've done signs showing the grace of God and opposition to God.

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