



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 19:11-19

"The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is from Revelation chapter 19 verse 11 through verse 16, the familiar passage that has to do with the second coming of our Lord. Verse 11 of chapter 19 reads,

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him, which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, that with it He may smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty."

It's a very important text and what is so interesting about it is the fact that the components of this verse, the fifteenth verse, are derived from four passages in the Old Testament, three of them from the Book of Isaiah in various places, chapter 49, chapter

11, chapter 63, and the other from the second Psalm. And they're woven together in such a way that they give a very strong impression that our Lord is the fulfillment of the Messianic Scriptures. And finally, in verse 16, "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords!'" May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God and for this magnificent book that we have been studying which we have by no means plumbed the depths of, which is a constant challenge to us and at the same time a constant blessing to us. We ask again that we may have the understanding that comes from the Holy Spirit as he teaches us the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. May as we study, and may we study, we learn more and more of our Lord who has loved us and loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood. We are grateful for the day in which Thy hand placed us and for the sins that abound in every way that Thou art in control of the affairs of this earth and that we may look forward to the conclusion that is found in the word of God, written there plainly for us to read and ponder.

And we thank Thee for all of the blessings that are ours through the lamb who has come and who has purchased us. We are indeed grateful, Lord, that he has purchased some from every tribe, and kindred, and tongue, and nation, a universal salvation available for sinners. And we thank Thee, Lord for the privilege of making the message concerning him known.

We pray Thy blessing upon this country in which we live and work. And we ask that Thou would give wisdom and guidance to those who are the ministers of God above us, our president, others associated with him, our state and local governments, as well. We commit them to Thee, we pray that Thou wilt accomplish those purposes that pertain to them as well. Enable us, Lord, by Thy grace to live as good citizens in the community of which we are apart.

And Father we ask especially for the sick and for those who've requested our prayers as represented in our calendar of concern. Father, we pray that by Thy grace Thou wilt answer their prayers and answer our prayers, and in the process glorify Thyself. We are grateful for the promises of the word of God, and we know that Thou art well able to give healing to any who Thy dost wish to heal. And we pray that if it please Thee, that those who've requested our prayers may have affirmative answers according to Thy will. Help us to be submissive to Thy will in all of the experiences of life and to remember that at times Thou dost answer our prayers with divine "no's" and we know that we need those as well as those affirmatives. We pray now Thy blessing upon this meeting. May the things that are said renown to the glory of Lord Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we desire to serve. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

[Message] The subject for today is "The Second Advent of the Messiah". A fact that we sometimes forget is that the Second Advent of Christ is the historic faith of the church. If you read the Old Testament, and study it carefully you cannot help but see that the Old Testament not only prophecies the first coming of our Lord, but the second coming as well. Look at passages such as Zechariah chapter 14, Jeremiah chapter 23, Isaiah chapter 11, Micah and others, and you'll find many prophecies that do not refer to the first advent of our Lord, cannot refer to the first advent, must therefore refer to the Second Advent of our Lord.

The apostles, when they were upon the earth, confirmed that fact by prophesying of the second return of our Lord and using those passages in order to support their claims. Our Lord himself, in the promises that he gave to the disciples in the Upper Room, for example, promised that he would come again and receive them to himself. So we do not, when we talk about the Second Advent of Christ, we do not do anything more than proclaim the historic faith of the Christian church. We also note as we begin to read the church fathers that they as well believed in the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

Ignatius of Antioch wrote a number of letters to the churches, seven of them that we know of. And he wrote in one of them, "Christ was received up to the Father and sits on his right hand waiting till his enemies are put under his feet." And then Aranius, a 2nd and 3rd Century father wrote, "Appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father, to comprehend all things under one head," that expression referring to his Second Advent. Tertullian, a Latin father of the 2nd and 3rd Century wrote the simple words, "He will come with glory." The creeds of the church also underline this hope.

In the apostles creed, which we've often said the apostles did not know, but nevertheless represents some of the tradition of the earlier church. The apostle's creed has the well known expression, "From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Other confessions of the Christian church have recognized this fact. The Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran church says, "Also they, (the churches that is) teach that in the consummation of the world Christ shall appear to judge and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joy. But ungodly men and the devils shall he condemn into endless torments." The Belgic Confession, a reformed confession has, "Our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven with great glory and majesty." I shortened that expression a bit, but that's exactly what it affirms. The Heidelberg Catechism, "In all my sorrows and persecutions with uplifted head, I looked for the self same one who has before offered himself for me," the proper answer that one gives to the question that the catechism asks.

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England has these words, "He ascended into heaven and there sitteth until he return." The Westminster Confession, another of the great confessions of the Christian church said, "As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment both to deter all from sin and for the greater consolation of the godly and their adversity. So he will have that day unknown to men that they may shake off carnal security and be always watchful because they know not at what hour the Lord will come and may be every prepared to say, 'Come Lord Jesus,

come quickly. Amen." The Confession of the Congregational Union of England and Wales has these words, "They believe that Christ will finally come to judge the whole human race according to their works." And let no one say that I have left out the Baptists. The Baptists in the New Hampshire Baptist Confession affirm these things, "We believe that the end of the world is approaching, that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution, that a solemn separation will then take place."

So what we have is really a untied testimony of the prophets the apostles, our Lord, the creeds of the Christian church, it surely is not saying anything more than should be said, that the Second Advent is the historic faith of the church. It's remarkable that when Richard Nixon was elected president in 1968 by an extremely large plurality. I have forgotten how many millions. I did not look it up, but let's say thirty to forty million people voted for Richard Nixon in that election. After that election, George Gallup took a poll regarding the Second Advent, over three times as any people as voted for Nixon in the United States of America affirmed that they believed in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a remarkable thing that in this country fundamentally, at least at that time twenty years ago, that there was that feeling of so many citizens that Christ would come. Not that they are believers necessarily in the event, it's evident that they were not, but nevertheless they affirmed that conviction.

Paul's Christianity as has often been said, revolves around two facts and two moments, one in the past that Christ has come and one in the future that Christ will come. All of this means simply that the preaching of the Second Advent is not only permitted, it's necessary, not only for doctrine but also for comfort and for the Christian life. "The test of orthodoxy," someone has said, "is the first coming of Christ."

The church's belief regarding the first coming is a test of how sound she is in the faith. That is if they do believe in the first coming of our Lord and they believe the things that our Lord accomplished then, then those individuals and the church must not believe

in our own self-justification. We have to believe. If we believe he came and offered an atoning sacrifice that we cannot save ourselves, otherwise there was no real point in him coming and offering the propitiatory sacrifice. But when the church says that it believes in the second coming of the Lord Jesus, it's affirming not simply the impossibility of our self justification, it's also saying that the fact that he comes again is the conviction that it is impossible for us to have any hope of appreciable improvement in this world until he does come. In other words, his coming at his first coming is the ground of our faith in the sacrifice that he offered in his second coming. We confess that we need him to come in order to straighten out the affairs of this human existence in which we live.

Man remains an incurable optimist, and so for that reason the vast numbers of people over this globe do not believe in the first coming nor do they believe in the second coming. But Scripture sets those two events forth as the heart of the Christian faith. It's sometimes thought that to preach on the Second Advent of Christ is simply to preach on something that is sensational, desired by many people to tickle the fancies of our imaginations and speculation. But when we turn to the Bible and look at the context in which the Second Advent is set forth we discover that it is perhaps, someone has said, perhaps the most practical truth in the Bible. When we say even so, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus," we cannot say that without saying within, "I would like my life to be the kind of life in which I will not be ashamed at his coming." And as you know, both our Lord and the apostles warn us that that is a distinct possibility. It's possible for us to be ashamed when he comes.

Overall, of course, the fact of the Second Advent indicates to us that the future belongs to the triune God. I have a little book in my library, it's written by a man who I think conservative basically but stood within the general liberal camp of British theologians. In this little commentary which has a number of suggestive comments, he says that one of the book's main messages is represented by James Russell Lowell lines, with which many of you are familiar, "Though the cause of evil prosper yet tis truth alone is

strong, though her portion be the scaffold and upon the throne be wrong, yet the scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above his own." He went on to say, "We know that the future belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ," contrary to those who believe that God is not in control of things. But then he made this comment which I thought was rather interesting, "If Nero could return today to Rome and look for the Vatican gardens where he burned Christians, he would find in their place an enormous church named after Peter, who was probably one of his victims. When the Roman Empire fell in the 5th Century the Christian church remained indestructible, thus the main theme of Revelation," he says, "has been proved right by history." Down through the years the Christian church exists and in this audience today, a small number, but nevertheless you yourselves are a testimony to the fact that the affairs of this earth are in the hands of one who is well able to move things along to glorify his name.

Well, Babylon has been overthrown in the text of Scripture. The body of believers looks on to the marriage supper of the lamb that we looked at last Sunday. But as I mentioned in the exposition, the marriage supper of the lamb is presented prolifically, that is it as presented as coming to pass before it does. There are seven last things that must be accomplished in order for the event to be realized. And now this is the first of what has been called the seven last things of this book.

Now, we look at the text then, the eleventh verse is the introduction, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war." We do not have to be told, I know that this is symbolic picture. The context indicates it. But though it's a symbolic picture, it's a symbolic picture of an historic event that lies in the future. John says he said heaven opened. Two other times he's made similar references. This is one in which we are to expect a fuller development of the apocalypses or the apocalypse, the unfolding, and that's what we do get. He saw heaven opened and there is a further

revelation. Well, that's what we've been talking about all along, revelation. And this time he says, "Behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True."

Now, it doesn't take much, I think, to realize why our Lord is presented as faithful and true in this context because in the chapters 17, 18 and the first few verses of chapter 19, the leading figure outside of our Lord has been the beast, the antichrist. And if anyone could be called unfaithful and untrue, it is the antichrist. And so when our Lord is called "faithful and true" then it's obviously in contrast to the beast who is not those two adjectives, faithful and genuine.

Does he come literally on a horse? Well there no doubt are interpreters who might suggest that, but the vast majority of the students of this book would acknowledge, "No, he will not come literally on a horse." Well let me put it this way, he will come on a horse that could be entered in the Kentucky Derby, like Man of War or Seattle Slew or something like that. Nor is he a mighty Bellerophon riding upon a Pegasus, but this is a symbolic picture, and so that one upon the white horse is representative symbolically of the Lord Jesus, perhaps represented as a horse in this way from heaven to contrast the way in which he's presented from Old Testament prophecy. In that in the Book of Zechariah it is said that he should come upon a colt, upon the foal of an ass. So the lowliness of our Lord suggested by Zechariah's reference and here the exalted nature of our Lord represented by the horse, the white horse from heaven.

And we read here, "In righteousness he doth make war and judges." Is this the death nail of pacifism? Our Lord himself makes war? Well, we don't have time to answer any question like that one way or the other, that's still a debated point among orthodox Christians. To sum it up, as one of the better commentators on the Greek text has put it, what we have here is a royal commander followed by dazzling retinue. Our Lord on a white horse, and then followed with the armies of heaven clothed in linen, white, and clean. The description that is given of the Messiah in verse 12 through verse 15 is very similar in many ways to the description that is given in chapter 1 when John had his

vision of the Messiah in the very first chapter. So we'll have to repeat some of the things that were said then and I'll try to make some additions and some subtractions as well so it won't be totally repetitious.

We read in verse 12, "His eyes are a flame of fire." We suggested that that represented penetrating judgment, "eyes as a flame of fire." Whenever I read that I think of two events in our Lord's ministry. I think of the time when he went in the temple and cleansed the temple. He walked in, the temple area was filled with the money changers, for after all if an individual came from someplace outside the land and came to buy an animal he could only buy animals with the particular money that they approved, so he had to change his money. And then the only animals that could be offered for sacrifice were those that were approved by the priestly authorities. And so the moneychangers and the sellers of the animals crowded the temple and consequently, as our Lord said, made his Father's house a house of merchandise.

Now, if I know anything about people who are money changers and who, in this case, would be selling animals in order that they may be offered religiously you probably have as big a group of hypocrites and materialists as could possibly be gathered in one religious or so called sacred place. And as far as I'm concerned, I would imagine that they were about as hard as individuals could be. And to imagine that one lone Jewish man could walk into that temple area and drive the whole crowd out with a scourge made of small cords is a minor miracle, maybe a major miracle. And I can just imagine that no one could ever have accomplished that if there were not something supernatural about him. They must have sensed in the eyes of our Lord, with the vigor of the spiritual impact of the things that he said, something that convinced them that this was greater than they could handle. I would suggest that something of the glory of his person must have shown forth that he, one lone man and incidentally from Nazareth and Galilee, could cleanse the temple, but he did.

Now later on, even more impressive, when our Lord was in the garden with the disciples and Judas is now in the process of betraying him. The soldiers and Judas enter the garden and they come to our Lord Jesus Christ, Judas knew that the often resorted there and he took the men there to take him. And when they arrived the Lord Jesus said, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." He said, "I am he." And the soldiers went back and fell to the ground. Isn't that amazing? "I am he." And they went back and fell to the ground.

Now, lots of things about that are most interesting. One of them is, of course, that what he said was literally, literally, "I am." I'm not denying that the sense is, "I am he." But if you will read the Old Testament from the time in which in the third chapter of the Book of Exodus, the Lord God told Moses, "I am who I am." Throughout the rest of the Old Testament and particularly in that highlighting book of it, the book of Isaiah, that expression, "I am he," became the expression that referred to the essential nature of the triune God. "I am," God's name, he cannot be defined. You cannot define him by anything. Define means to limit. That's why when Moses said, "Whom shall I tell sent me?" "Say, I am. I am who I am."

Now, of course, he went on to say, you can define me in accordance with the covenant that I made. You can say the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, but that is something that flows out of my indefinable nature, the essential being of the eternal God that you and I will never have comprehension of in any full way. So when Jesus said, "I am he." It was almost as if God had opened the blind just a bit and the soldiers sensed in some unearthly way, the glory of the second person of the trinity and fell to the ground. What we will see in his Second Advent in much greater public demonstration.

So his eyes are a flame of fire, his head filled with many diadems. He says, "And on His head are many diadems," I like to think of this in connection with the refusal that our Lord made of Satan's invitation to worship him. Satan said to him, "I will give you all

the kingdoms of this world if you will fall down and worship me. Our Lord said, "Thy shall worship the Lord thy God and him only, only shalt thou serve." As a result of the refusal of the temptation, he not only has all of those kingdoms that satan was talking about, in which he was the usurper, but he has on his head all authority, all of the diadems that are reflected as the eternal ruler.

Now, I also think on a more human level of Lot and Abram. One day early in their history Abram mention to Lot, because the herdsmen were fighting with one another, "Lot we have a problem. Our herdsmen are in strife and so we have to do something about it. And I suggest," Abram evidently said, "that we divide, and divide the land, and you go one way and I go the other."

Now, he'd been a 20th Century man he would say, "I will take this and you can have whatever you would like thereafter." But Abram's no 20th Century man, he said, "Lot, you chose and I'll take what's left." Well Lot looked off and he saw the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, lovely place, couldn't think of any nicer place to have his flocks, a fertile place, he would be a wealthy man before long if wasn't all ready wealthy, and so he chose that. Then shortly after, we read in the Bible, the Lord God said to Abram, "My Abram, I'd like for you to look to the north, and to the south, and to the east, and the west. And Abram, I'm going to give it all to you. All of it."

Now, you talk about an accession of real estate. Lot's little valley of the Jordan was nothing, and as matter fact it belonged in the property that God was giving to Abram. You see it's very true. He gives the very best to those who leave the choice with him, and the greatest illustration of this is our Lord himself. And therefore, "many diadems rest upon his head, He has a new name written," notice that only he knows because this is the name that refers to his essential being. No one knows that name. No one can know that name. It's a name that the eternal trinity knows, that's all. This is John's way, as he records the revelation given him, of saying he's the eternal Son. He has a name written which no one knows except himself. We'll never know it. It'll always be the special

name that he understands and knows. The name represented the person, and consequently, only he knows that name.

His garments are described in verse 13, "He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood." The blood, of course, is not his own but of the kings of the earth he overcomes. That's evident from the citation from Isaiah 63 that follows in verse 15. In chapter 17 we read in verse 14, "These (that is the kings) will wage war against the lamb, and the lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and those who are with him are the called, and chosen, and faithful." He is the over comer physically of the kings of the earth.

Now, of course, it is also true that he is the conqueror spiritually by the blood of Calvary's cross. That is referred to in chapter 12 and verse 11 where read, "And they overcame him because of the blood of the lamb, and because of the word of their testimony and they did not love their life even to death." And then a second name, "And his name is called the word of God."

Now, we know him in that sense. We know him as the word of God. In the beginning was the word and word was with God, and the word was God, and the word became flesh. And we remember the epistle of the Hebrews in which the author says that God spoke to the ancients through the prophets in Old Testament times, but in the present day he has spoken to us in such a person as a Son. In other words, he has spoken his word in Christ. He is the word of God. We know him, therefore, as the one who saves. We know him as the redeemer. We know him as the one who offered the saving sacrifice and all of the other blessings that come from the ministry of the Lord Jesus. We know him as God's word to us. Incidentally, a word we didn't ask for, but one that God initiated and gave us because he had the initiative in drawing to himself a redeemed people. The word of God, that's the churches name for him, the word of God.

His companions are described as "the armies, which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses." The situation that John

presents is on the one hand the kingdom of God, on the other the kingdom of the beast, or Satan. On the one hand Christ, on the other hand the antichrist. On the one hand the holy angels, on the other hand the evil angels. On the one hand the glorified saints who return versus the mortal sinners on the earth who are opposing our Lord Jesus Christ.

And there's only one conclusion to that kind of fight, Yahweh, Jehovah, the Lord Christ overcomes. We read in verse 15, finally, "And from his mouth comes a sharp sword," punishment executed, the judgment of the Son of God in the cosmos because God has given all judgment into his hand. I mentioned in the Scripture that this fifteenth verse is one drawn from four specific passages of the Old Testament. What is remarkable about it my Christian friend is this, that every one of these passages is a strong Messianic passage. It will give you an idea of how this book was constructed by the Lord himself and given to the Apostle John, drawing upon Isaiah chapter 11, Isaiah chapter 49, Isaiah chapter 63, and the 2nd Psalm. We read these words, "From his mouth comes a sharp sword," Isaiah 49, one of the prophecies concerning the suffering servant of Jehovah, "so that with it he might smite the nations." A passage drawn from Isaiah chapter 11, another Messianic passage and verse 4, "And He," incidentally in the original text emphasis rests upon these next two "he's". I was taught, when I first learned classical Greek long before I ever became a Christian, by my Greek professor in college.

Now, we are justifying and rendering this intensive pronoun, he (himself), and so we'll render it that way. "And He (himself) will rule them with a rod of iron," that is it's he who does it, not anyone else. And then again in the next he, "And he (himself) treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty." "He (himself) will rule them" comes from the second Psalm universally recognized as a Psalm that refers to Christ as the Messiah. And finally the last drawn from Isaiah chapter 63. A great Messianic passage in which references to vengeance belonging to the Lord God. These all fulfilled in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remarkable that these prophecies have been put

together and I feel very confident that God is well able to fulfill them all in accordance with his will.

One of the things that has troubled me a great deal in recent years has been the fact that in evangelicalism there has been a distressing departure from the word of God, a distressing departure from the preaching of the word of God. Oh incidentally, Mr. Pryor did mention today that in Believers Chapel we expound the Scriptures, or attempt to expound the Scriptures in a fairly systematic way beginning and continuing as a general method. We don't always follow it but almost always.

This past week in the *Christian Century*, I read a little article on preaching by a writer whose writings I have read in a number of places and it's entitled, "Entertainment of Exposition." And he's objecting, he's professor of preaching, that's not his exact title, but at Duke's Divinity School in North Carolina preaching entertainment or exposition and he's reacting a little bit to entertainment. He says that our congregations, for example, are taught by their teachers that the only amount of time that you can expect people to attend to you is the time differential between commercials on the TV. That's as much as they can stand. And so the way to preach is to give a text and tell a story, and that kind of narrative preaching is what we are looking for. But I've got to smile, it's a very good article in many ways and it's very true.

But listen to this, which brings me back to Gomez, a professor's name he's talking about in Harvard's Memorial Church and his not made for TV sermons. Gomez, in my estimation, incidentally Peter Gomez said that, "Any sermon worth preaching is worth thirty or forty minutes." And so he stands out as something entirely different from what's being taught in our theological seminaries. But he goes back, he says, "Which brings me back to Gomez and his not made for TV sermons. Gomez is in my estimation a throw back to," listen to this, "that quaint phenomenon, the expository preacher." [Laughter] Look at him. Look at him, "That quaint phenomenon, the expository preacher." He's

right. That's exactly true. It is a quaint phenomenon that we should have an expository preacher who takes a book and tries to expound it.

Well, that's not what I wanted to say a word about. What I wanted to say a word about is the distressing aspects of evangelicalism in its retreat from orthodox theology. I'm going to use Professor Clark Pinnock as an example. He has written a chapter, I'm just really citing what he has said in his chapter, which he entitles something like "My Pilgrimage", and he discusses how he has moved from a strong position to his present position today. He's Professor of Theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. He has been called by some "the leading exponent" of evangelicalism in our day, the leading speaker for evangelicalism. In his recent works he's moved from a strong belief in the inerrancy of Scripture to a denial of an epistemology grounded in the sufficiency of Scripture and in that doctrine. He has moved from the doctrine of the omniscience of God, no longer believes in the omniscience of God, no longer believes in the immutability of God in other classical theistic views.

In fact, he has expressed sympathy with conditional immortality and other doctrines that are not orthodox. In effect he has embraced a finite God for his God has limited his knowledge, and as you know the term finite means limited. And if we believe in a God who is mutable, he has limited himself. If we believe in a God who does not know everything, he is a limited God. He has admitted in these matters that he stands against classical theism. He said that more than once in his recent articles and books that he's written. He is against classical theism and yet he's still recognized as an evangelical. If we deny God these doctrines we are in effect affirming man's total freedom but not giving God the same thing, his total freedom. Particularly appropriate in our context here is his denial of God's foreknowledge of future events.

In other words, he doesn't really believe that predictive prophecy is biblical. He says that a very high percentage of prophecy can be accounted for by one of three factors. The announcement ahead of time of what God intends to do, like you can see

what kind of God he has. To me if God has announced ahead of time what he intends to do and if you believe in a God who is sovereign then you know that's going to come to pass, but for him, he does not have that God. And so then the things he announces ahead of time or just things he intends to do may be done or may not. He believes that conditional prophecies are in the Bible and that leaves the outcome open. But, my friend, if the prophecies are conditional they are not prophecies.

And then thirdly, he says that they are predictions that are based on God's exhaustive knowledge of the past and present. Well, exhaustive knowledge of the past and present is not enough. Exhaustive knowledge of the past, and present, and future is. But then in another place you can see how a person who has evangelical views in many ways cannot be consistent with himself. In another chapter, in another book which maybe he forgot, he cites a well known theologian and in that particular sentence, which he approves, that theologian says, "God," I'm using the words he used, "bends," B-E-N-D-S, "new happenings in the created order creatively in order to accomplish his goals." Well, my friend, that's exactly what the prophecy is. It is God working providentially and so controlling events that what he has said by his exhaustive omniscience is going to come to pass, what he intends to come to pass by his sovereign ordination.

Now, when this prophecy is given of our Lord's second coming we are not talking about the things that Professor Pinnock is talking about. We are not talking about predictions with a high degree of probability. We are talking about certainties, things that are to come to pass. We are not talking about things God announces that he intends to do but which might not come to pass. We are not talking about things concerning which he might change his mind later on. We are talking about the immutable truth of a sovereign God who has ordained these great events. That's why we have confidence that will come to pass.

John concludes this section with another name in the sixteenth verse, "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'." That's a

word directed first of all to Domitian who liked to parade in the 1st Century in Rome as "God the Lord". He had himself proclaimed Emperor twenty-two times. When he rode in his tralf past the peoples, the poets cried out, "Pr nceps pr ncepum summa ducis,"[ph48:35] the prince of the princes and the highest of the leaders. In other words, Domitian was an antecedent of Ceau escu and Hitler and all of the rest of these communist puppets who like to have themselves exalted constantly before the people with their pictures everywhere and everybody bowing to them as sovereigns of their little empires.

Well, time is up. This sermon has been almost forty minutes. Peter Gomez of Harvard's Church would at least say, "If what you've said is worth it, it's worth that." I hope some of it's been worthwhile. Let me close with a few comments by way of conclusion.

We're not saying, and I hope that you understand that I do not say, that we understand everything about the future. When we expound the Book of Revelation we are not saying that everything that I say to you has to come to pass the way I'm saying that it might come to pass. I do recognize that we are human beings and we are interpreting Scripture and seeking to interpret it faithfully. But in the final analysis God fulfills Scripture as written, not as expounded by S. Lewis Johnson. "It's unwise," Reinhold Niebuhr once said, "For Christians to claim any knowledge of either the furniture of heaven, or the temperature of hell, or to be certain about any details of the kingdom of God in which history is consummated."

Now, we can heed that warning but at the same time I think that we can believe that Paul, and John, and our Lord have taught us things about the heart of the Christian hope and that the essential things that they are saying are sure to come to pass. And perhaps they'll come to pass to some extent in the way in which we think they will come to pass.

The Second Advent is the historic doctrine of the church. It is certain to come to pass. The day has passed, it has often been said, "The day is prospective." The one vacant tomb in this earth, the grave of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that one vacant tomb, it has been said, is like a breach in the North Sea dike. The tumultuous sea of the vast waters lie outside but soon they'll be over the land of the Netherlands and elsewhere. So in one sense the fact that the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ has opened and the Son of God has come, resurrected in a body of glory, that is the guarantee that others also who are in him will be resurrected for he's the first fruits among those who have fallen asleep.

We are certain to sing as we sang last Sunday with Isaac Watts, "Jesus shall reign where the sun doth his successive journeys run, his kingdoms stretch from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more." How important it is, my Christian friend, to be in him. And if there are some in this audience who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ let me say to you, there is no hope if you are not in him. James Denny once said, "Only one life has ever won the victory over death. Only one life ever can win it, the kind, which was in him, which is in him, which he shares with all those whom faith makes one with him. All in Christ possesses life and in possessing Christ's life they have a life that has all ready vanquished the tomb." That's the kind of life that we believing Christians possess.

Listen to Luther and I close with this quote. "It is not we who can sustain the church, nor is it those who came before us, nor will it be those who come after us. It was, and is, and will be the one who says, 'I'm with you always even until the end of time.' As it says in Hebrews thirteen," Luther continues, "'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.' And in Revelation one, 'who was, and is, and is to come.' Truly he is that one and no one else is or ever can be. But you and I were not alive for you and I were not alive thousands of years ago, yet the church was sustained without us. And is was done by the one of whom it says, 'who was,' and yesterday the church would perish before our very eyes and we along with it, as we demonstrate everyday, if it were not for

that other man who so obviously upholds the church and us. This we can lay hold of and feel even if we are reluctant to believe it. We must give ourselves to the one of whom it is said, 'who is'. And today, again, we can do nothing to sustain the church when we are dead. But he will do it of whom is said, 'who is to come and forever.'"

May God in his marvelous grace touch your heart and may you turn to him who is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, or as our great book puts it, "the one who is, who was, who is to come." There is no hope except in him. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, how grateful we are for the encouragement we receive from the prophetic word. We Lord forward to the day when he shall come from heaven and shall establish the rule of heaven upon earth. And O Father, for those who may be in this audience who perhaps do not yet know the life that is in him, at this very moment may they lift their hearts to Thee, give Thee thanks for him, acknowledging their sin, and their certain destruction apart from him, and leaning upon him for time and for eternity. For Jesus' sake. Amen