

Church History - Session 3 (Prophecy in the Church Age)

by Edgar F. Parkyns

Edgar F. Parkyns explores the significance of prophecy in the Church Age, emphasizing the book of Revelation as a divine love letter meant to guide believers through trials and prepare them for Christ's return.

Duration: 48:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:44, 2 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 1:1-22

Topics: "Church History"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes a journey of a woman who starts off feeling foolish and blind. As she progresses on her journey, she begins to notice the terrain and encounters various challenges, such as crossing a river and encountering dangerous Indians. However, she finds comfort and assurance in a book that she carries with her, which helps her understand the events unfolding around her. The speaker relates this journey to the book of Revelation, explaining that it contains mysterious visions meant to be made known in the churches and that it is written in code language to be understood by those who follow the Bible.

Transcript

Israel, Israel had the light of prophecy. Abraham was told about Israel going down to Egypt and coming out again. Moses forewarned them what would happen to them if they disobeyed or if they repented and turned to God.

All the way down through their history they had the light of prophecy to guide them. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Worms are one of the things that will come to pass. Has the Church any prophecy to guide her in these dark periods which we are looking at? I would certainly say she needed it.

The deception is great, the period is very dark, she would need it. There are some who say no, there is no prophecy for the Church Age. They say that the prophetic clock stopped when Christ was crucified and it will not start again until the rapture of the Church.

No prophecy during the Church Age. Well, the siege of Jerusalem took place in 1870 and fulfilled prophecies didn't it? The Jews were scattered through the nations in fulfillment of prophecy. They have suffered century after century, weary, desolations in ghettos, scattered through every part of the earth.

No century without the warnings of Moses and Jeremiah being fulfilled in their history. They are being regathered in fulfillment of prophecy. They are regained in fulfillment of prophecy.

There has been no break in prophecy as far as Israel is concerned. And what about the Church? We have already seen that in passage after passage the falling away was foretold. And we have seen it taking place.

And right through to the end of the age Peter said in the last day there shall arise men, scoffers, saying where is the promise of his coming? Well now that must be before his coming, mustn't it? For them to say that. Where is the promise of his coming? So in the Church too there is no break in prophecy. There is prophetic life.

And I want us to look a little bit further into that. We have already looked at 2 Thessalonians 2. But now I want us to look at the greatest love letter. The greatest love letter in the whole Bible.

A letter from the bridegroom to the bride. A letter written after he had gone on a long journey to comfort her, guide her, instruct her during the long periods of trial that she would have to face until she would meet him at last. The book of Revelation.

A letter from the bridegroom. The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The only book in the Bible with such a tremendous title.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ. His very own book. Other books come to us.

The Epistle of Paul. Or Peter to the strangers scattered abroad. Or James to the 12 tribes.

But this is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. So it's in a class on its own. You may of course be those who say, oh well some elder wrote it to try and comfort his fellow sufferers during the persecutions of Nero.

Well if that's your viewpoint then that's it, we won't say any more. But I believe it is what it claims to be, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. If so, it is an unusual book.

He didn't write any books on earth. But now having ascended to heaven and having been there for some 60 odd years. 60 years have gone by.

He finds it is time to send a letter to his bride. The Revelation of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful book this is.

Which God gave to him. It was not only the Revelation of Jesus Christ, his father gave him the authority and the information for this book. To show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.

He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Who are the servants? The clue is found in the same verse. Who are the servants? He sent to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass.

And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Do you know what kind of a man John was? He was a man who loved the Lord Jesus. Those are his servants.

You see the opening verse tells you to whom he is writing. People like John. Get it? Please don't take anything I say from now on unless I am proving it from the Scripture plainly and simply.

And if you have any point of not proving the Scripture plainly and simply, you let me know. This wonderful Revelation of Jesus Christ. Oh, it is indeed from the Bridegroom.

It has a portrait of the Bridegroom in the opening chapter, hasn't it? Wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus. And it leads on through many perfecting visions until at last we come to the picture of the marriage of the Lamb. And the eternal heavenly home.

I have read the last chapter. It all comes out right in the end. A beautiful love letter.

The trouble with the book of Revelation is that people will read what people say about it instead of reading the book itself. Oh, a book on Revelation. Oh, wonderful.

We know what is going to happen next. And they get all excited. And the bigger the print and the louder the shout, the more people believe.

Why, I feel sure if only I shouted about three times as loud, you would believe me with a great deal more sincerity and fervor. But I am not going to. Because I hope that you will stir up the loins of your mind and be sober.

And hope for the end, for the grace of it to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. So use your mind. God made it to you.

Stir it up. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. Yes, I think this book has suffered more from what people have written about it or shouted about it than any other book.

And yet, it is, as I have suggested, a love letter from the bridegroom to the bride. Why, dear me, if you ever got a love letter, would you be in a hurry to listen to what people said about it rather than listen to what your beloved sent to you? I don't think so. And even if you didn't understand it all, you wouldn't go sharing it around with everybody and sharing their views on it, surely.

Yes, here is a love letter from Jesus to his church. And we ought to understand it as such. And then it will begin to make some sense to us.

So leave all those books and things and all those amazing statements which the more loudly they are made, the less substance you find underneath them. Come back to this book and just look at it and read it. Let's look again at the closing chapter, Revelation 22 and verse 7. You can often find out details about a letter from reading the introduction and the end.

So here we are at chapter 22 and verse 6. These sayings are faithful and true. The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show to his servants things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

And then verse 16. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. You see then, that all these mysterious visions are sent to be made known in the churches.

That is, they concern you. What about the period of this revelation? Have a look at Daniel chapter 12 and verse 4. But now, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even till the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.

And verse 9. Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Now please think about this. What is the angel saying to Daniel? Isn't he saying this? Daniel, the things that you are seeing are not for now, but for a long time in the future.

Isn't that what he's saying? Can your reasoning just come along to that and see that's what the angel is saying to Daniel? It's not for now, it's for a long time ahead. Seal them up. Now then, have a look at Revelation 22 and verse 10.

And he says to me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. What does that mean? The exact opposite from the passage in Daniel. Isn't that right? Daniel would have to wait for a long time before what he saw would be fulfilled.

The angel is telling John, there is not a long gap. This time is near. Come again to the first chapter.

And you will find that this wonderful letter is written to the church. Concerning the church, firstly. Blessed is he that readeth.

You see, this letter would be taken to the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna and Thyatira. And one of the brethren in the assembly would stand up and read it. Just imagine that you were there in the assembly and someone is standing up to read it and he reads, Blessed is he that readeth.

You might think, oh, lucky fellow, he's got a blessing already. But then it goes on to say, and they that hear the words of this prophecy. Oh, that means me as well, even though I'm just sitting in the church, I hear, isn't it a blessing to me? But why is it a blessing? And keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.

Why would it be a blessing? Not just to give me a funny feeling down the spine, or anything like that. But what is being written is going to begin to happen very soon. That's why it's going to be a blessing.

So you see, in chapter 1 and in chapter 2, the same thing, and chapter 22, the same thing is said. This book was to have an impact on the lives of those who first heard it. And concerning the church, in sign language, have a look at Revelation 1 again.

He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Signify in English is signify. Signify.

And in the Greek, the Greek word behind this is exactly the same. It means to show by sign. Listen, let me underline this.

The book of Revelation is written in code. It is written in sign language. When we were at school, we used to write to the members of our gang in code.

We had a little number code which we were sure nobody would break. And we wrote our secrets with our code. Jesus had something to say to the church, which he didn't want.

Those who did not know him, he didn't want them to understand it. So he gave it by sign language. So don't say that everything in Revelation is literal.

No. Most things in Revelation are symbolic. The lamb is not a lamb, it's Jesus.

The seven horns on his head are not seven horns, they're world power. His seven eyes are not seven eyes, they're the spirits of God. The lampstand is not a lampstand, it's a church.

The woman in heaven clothed with the sun is not a woman, she'd be burned up if she was. She's a sign. The beast riding out of the sea is not a beast, it's an empire.

It's a sign. This book is written in sign language. And unless you understand that, then you can't possibly read it.

Look here, supposing you were doing an early exercise in French. And you had your English-French dictionary beside you, and you were working very slowly through a passage. And every word you didn't understand, you looked in the dictionary board.

But then you come across the word in your passage, P-A-R-N. Oh, there's no need to translate that, you know what it is. Pain.

So you put in your translation, pain. That's easy, isn't it? And a little bit further down, you come across the word M-A-N-G-E-R. Oh, that's easy, that's the manger.

This must be to do with the birth of Jesus. Well, you've got the whole passage sold, or have you? You've got it all mixed up, because you've mixed up your English with your French. Now, if you're going to mix up literal interpretation with symbolic interpretation, you're going to get into a fog.

This Jesus said, this is given in sign language. Believe him. And those books who say to the contrary are contradicting what Jesus said.

You may remember that the signs in Daniel, that great image and those four beasts, worked out in quite an ordinary way in history, didn't they? Over long centuries. Here's a book written like Daniel. Is it not likely that it's going to work out in ordinary history over the long centuries? Concerning things shortly to come to pass.

Yes, that those who were there, hearing the brother stand up and read in the assembly, would say, well, I must listen carefully to this, because it is going to affect me in my lifetime. Why? To the churches then in existence. Britain through Ephesus and Smyrna and Tyre and Tyre.

They were real churches then in existence. Paul also wrote to seven churches, didn't he? Have you noticed that? So you may translate these very straight messages to seven churches in the same way that you use Paul's letters to seven churches, to give us light for all time. Yes, so that is, yes for the church of all time, including in its scope the second coming.

So now you know that these visions are going to begin with something affecting the early church, and they are going to lead right up to the second coming. To understand its signs, we must look for clues in the book itself. As we have been doing, we have been looking at some of the clues.

Let me give you a couple more clues in the book itself. In Revelation 3, our Lord writing to the church at Sarnas says, If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Verse 3, Revelation 3. And in 3.18 he says, I counsel thee to lay thyself by gold clothed in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with thyself that thou mayest see.

Now then, in the passage in Revelation 16 and 15, he is saying exactly the same thing in the middle of the vials. Listen. Behold, I come as a thief.

Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. He is still talking to the church in the midst of the seven vials. Get that? Again.

Some people are saying that the rapture of the church occurs in Revelation 4, verse 1. It doesn't say so, but they say so. Tell me, which comes first? The resurrection, the first resurrection, or the rapture? You who know Thessalonians and Corinthians. Which comes first? Yes, the dead... No.

The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we shall be saved. The resurrection, I'm sorry, comes first.

You're getting me all bogged up. See that? The dead in Christ rise first. Then we which are alive shall be called up to meet them in the air.

So, the first resurrection, to which the early church was looking forward, occurs before the rapture. The rapture does not occur. It cannot occur before the first resurrection.

The first resurrection is found in Revelation 20, verse 5. Don't look for any rapture before then. These are the plain clues of the book. Now, you can read books about Revelation which will deny all these things.

But if you listen to what Jesus wrote for the church, you will understand. Please, get rid of everything that contradicts what Jesus says. And you'll begin to understand what this book's about.

We shall find other clues in the rest of the Bible. I want to tell you a story. I made it up myself, so I can guarantee that it will answer me.

During the years 1850 to 1890, I suppose, there was a tremendous trek westward over the plains, from eastern United States to the far west, as folk went out looking for new homes in that magnificent territory. I want you to imagine that a young bridegroom has gone out west to prepare a home for himself, that's the idea, to prepare a home for his bride. And, in due course, he's going to receive her.

You get the analogy, it's a picture of Christ going on before to prepare a place for her, and he will receive her for himself. The bride stays in New York some time getting ready, and she joins a wagon train going west. It's rather a mixed wagon train, there are people of all kinds of character in it, but the only way, of course, to cross the area is in such company.

Her bridegroom has sent her a letter from away out west. But the letter doesn't arrive in time to meet her as she steps off, but reaches her after she has begun her journey and has experienced a few skirmishes with the Red Indians in the Great Lakes area. She finds that her letter, her package, has been opened.

Those responsible in the camp have examined it, but not being able to understand much of it, because it's written in code, they let her have it. As soon as camp is formed for the night, she can get away into her covered wagon sheet, light the kerosene lamp, and read her beloved letter. Oh, how her heart is thrilled by this.

What a glorious portrait is there in the opening page. Oh, how her heart thrills with this glorious description. And then there are some very straight words of excitation to her, how she is to behave and keep herself pure, and she takes all that to heart, for she realizes that there are many temptations, as well as dangers, on this journey.

But then she comes to a section of the letter which absolutely bewilders her. All about beasts and horns and mountains and all kinds of powers, it just doesn't make sense. And so she hurries through that, and comes along towards the end.

And, girl-like, she reads the closing part of the letter, and she's very thrilled at what she sees there. There is the time when her beloved will meet her. Oh, she comes riding on to the scene, with a host of glorious riders.

Takes her to be with himself, and there's a description of a heavenly home, and the glories that will follow. Oh, she's thrilled with her letter, and she puts it away with a thankful heart. At the earliest opportunity, when they've formed camp again, and the wagons are drawn into a ring, she gets away and looks at her letter again.

And it puzzles her. All that middle section. Oh, how bewildering.

Who letters this woman? Who's that woman in Charlotte? And, well, there's a terrible beast, though. We don't need him. And she struggles with it, but she can't get on.

Day after day, she's more and more sort of separated from the rest of the camp, and they wonder whatever's happening to them. Until someone says, look here, there are a couple of Jesuit priests in the camp. Why not go to one of them and tell him what's troubling you? He says, thank you.

I think I'll do just that. And when camp is formed, she goes across to the other side, and she meets the Jesuit priest. Oh, he says, I've been waiting for you to come to me for a long time.

I've seen that you're very troubled. What is it you want to say? Well, she said, it's like this. I have a letter.

You had better give me the whole confection. He says, then I can put you right. Well, she says, no, it's not that.

It's a letter from my husband. It's a beautiful letter, and I know it from him, and there's a lovely portrait of him at the beginning, and a beautiful picture of the home we're going to. But the middle part puzzles me so badly, I can't make head or tail of it.

Oh, he says, my dear, I'm sorry to see you so worried like that. Perhaps I can help you. I know your husband quite well, and the leader of our whole party knows him very well.

He's one of his closest friends. So, let me have a look at your letter. I'll be able to explain it for you.

So, this Jesuit, whose name happens to be Alcazar, he's a Spaniard, takes the letter and looks at it, and in due course comes back to her. And he says, here's your letter. She says, no, it's not that.

It's beautiful to have a letter like that from your husband. Yes, she says, it is lovely. That's a lovely portrait of him, isn't it? Yes.

And the home you're going to, isn't that magnificent? Yes. But what about the middle part? My dear, I thought you were going to worry about that. I tell you, there's nothing for you to worry about.

What your husband was writing about was about the things that took place just when we were leaving New York. Only, the letter didn't reach you in time. It's all over now.

Do you remember those skirmishes with the Indians and all that? That's what he was writing about. So, don't worry any more. Just leave it.

And now, come and join in the rest of the party. We'd like to see you at the campfire. We'd like to see you joining in the party.

We'd like to see you at the campfire. We'd like to see you joining in the party. Don't be so warm and miserable.

Oh, she says, thank you, sir. And she says, can I have my letter back? She says, well, I don't think it's good for you. It's obviously been making you ill.

And it is with great difficulty that she at last gets it back from him with half a promise not to read it any more. But still she's not content. Her anxiety isn't lifted.

She thinks, what on earth did my dear beloved write this long and incomprehensible letter to me for, if it was all about those few little fightings with Indians that we had at the beginning of our journey? He's nowhere in sight yet and I don't know what troubles we'll meet. Surely he'd have written something more sensible than that. And then eventually she goes to the other Jesuit priest whose name is River.

He also is a Jesuit of the I'm going to say of the 17th century. But never mind, he's there in the Caribbean. And she goes to him with the same tale.

Well, he says, I'm sorry to see you troubled and do come and make your confession. He says, no, it's not that. I want to find out about this letter.

The other priest says it all happened at the beginning and she gives her reasons why she doesn't feel that's a sensible explanation. Well, he says, my dear, let me have a look at it. You can trust me, can't you? I'm sure that I can find an explanation for it.

So she says, you'll let me have a back, won't you? Oh, yes. She says, I'll let you have a back with my notes on the bottom. So, in due course, he brings it back to her and she thanks him for it and he comments on the portrait at the beginning and the happy home at the end and he says, yes, thank you.

And he says, what about the middle part? My dear, he says, there's nothing to worry you. It's all in the future. My dear, why worry about that? It's not going to happen until after your husband has met you and taken you out of the way.

Oh, she says, thank you. I've never looked at it that way. Are you sure? Oh, yes.

I have spiritual light on it. You can take it on my authority. This is it.

It's all in the future. You'll be raptured. I know it's not written plain in the letter, but of course it's one of those letters.

You'll be caught away before any of these things happen. Oh, she says, thank you. What about that great beast in me that comes over to see? My dear, you'll never see him.

He lives on a lake on the far side of the Rocky Mountains. Now, come along and enjoy yourself for the rest of it. Stop worrying about it.

It's nothing to do with you. It's all in the future. You can take the little words of excitation at the beginning, but you know the rest.

For the rest, just don't worry. You'll never see it happen. Cheer up.

And so she thanks him and accepts this very reasonable explanation and especially on such strong authority and pleasantly begins to join in the fun. There's a magnificent woman in Scarlet there who introduces her to the leader of the group who's been longing to meet her for a long time and they have some grand parties together and soon she's in the thick of a pun and wondering why ever she moped away trying to understand that incomprehensible letter whereas really it didn't concern her at all. And she knows on high authority now it doesn't concern her, but yet it presents her, so why worry? That's it.

She forgets the promises she's made to her beloved to some degree. They fade in the background. She's more and more enamoured with the leader of the party.

He tells her about her husband. Let me thank you, sir. I'm his very best friend.

I know all his secrets and I'm here operating on his behalf so you can trust me. And she does trust him until one night after the revelry is almost finished and flees away shaken and in tears rushes out to the perimeter of the camp trembling and overwhelmed with doubtless and shame and confusion. Out there she sees against the skyline two men keeping guard and she observes them for some time and presently they draw near and say you should be back in camp, you know it's not safe for you out here.

Oh, she says, I can't go back. I can't trust anybody. They all profess to be my friends but they all deceive me.

I can't go back there. They say, you must, you know your husband told you to go this way or you'll just have to go that way. She says, I don't know what to do.

Can you help me? It's my husband's letter that puzzles me. Well, they said, I dare say that we could explain that letter to you. We know your husband well and we promise to keep guard of this camp and we'll try and look after you as best as we can.

But wouldn't it be better if you found out the meaning for yourself? I've tried, but I can't. Look, if we explain it to you you may not believe us. Have you got any of your old husband's letters? Your husband's old letters? Yes, you should.

A whole bundle full. Right, do this. Go back and re-read your husband's old letters and look for clues and rethink that you'll find the meaning of this one that you're holding.

Genesis to Revelate. Genesis to June. The old letters, there they are.

The clues are all there. So, she goes back, thanking them and this time keeping herself separate from the revelries of the camp and especially from that scarlet woman. She looks in the old letters and she begins to find clue after clue and she looks again at her husband's letter and it begins to make sense and she realizes that the very people who had deceived her and almost seduced her were written about in the letter and she failed to recognize it.

All to think that my husband warned me this way and I didn't take any notice. I was so stupid and blind. And then she begins to notice the terrain as they cross a river, as they reach a mountain, as they meet a

dangerous party of Indians and she looks in the book and there they are, fitting into place, one after another.

Oh, the excitement of it. We're getting near the end of a journey. She can keep herself pure now as she looks at the book and watches the events as they pass by so rapidly.

Her whole attitude has changed. She now has a new joy and a new assurance that she never had before. She feels that she's in control of the situation.

She watches those two men on the exterior of the camp who are keeping guard and she signals to them happily. They can see she's going to endure to the end. Situations get tense.

The enemy are drawing in. The evil in the camp is coming to light. Disaster seems to be rushing in on every hand.

But suddenly, over the horizon, comes her beloved with a thousand cavalry with him riding across the hills to her rescue, taking her home. At last, her troubles are over. The letter has done its work.

All right. Now then, I suggest to you that that is what this book is about. It is from the bridegroom to the bride.

It is to show her things that must shortly come to pass, but also things that will lead right up to the second coming. It is written in code language so that other folk won't understand. But those who will follow the Bible and not read other books will get to know what it's all about and will be warned in their time.

Well, is that so? The early church thought so. And if you read some of their letters, some of their memoirs of those who suffered martyrdom, you will find that from the book of Revelation they drew their strength. And if you would ask some of them in the third century where they found themselves in the book of Revelation, they would have answered you under the fifth seal, where the first company is martyred, but there's another company to follow.

Yes, the early church was guided through her bitter hours of suffering with the help of the letter that Jesus wrote. And you'll find references to Revelation in many of their writings. They knew they were in the book.

They didn't understand all the future. They thought that Christ would come soon. Indeed, He intended everyone to believe He would come soon, didn't He? In all the New Testament, He has not taken away the hope from any Christian generation that He will come soon.

He intended us in all generations to be like those who stand with loins girded and lamps trimmed as those who watch for their Lord. He didn't want any generation to fall asleep and say, the Lord is not coming in our time. So you can see what an amazing book He's written to us, written in code, written with concealed meanings, which was going to unfold its secrets little by little as they were needed down through the centuries until that blessed time when He shall appear.

Now that is what the book says for itself. Have you followed me in this? Have you seen the clues there? Very, very plainly. And the early church understood it that way perfectly well.

In that great crisis of the church's history of the Reformation, which we shall be looking at shortly, this book was the key to that mighty revolution. They got light from the book of Revelation, which enabled them to stand in those centuries of crisis, trouble, martyrdom, and truth. And there is a part of the book of

Revelation for us.

Maybe, before we're through, I'll try and share what I think is that part of the Revelation which belongs to us. This has given to church history an altogether different aspect. If you read an ordinary church history book, it's chaotic.

It's such a mixture of a conglomeration of doctrines and leaders, heresies and confusions, rights and wrongs, that it's like a grey net. It's as though you took all your dinner and stirred it up in a big bowl and served it out like that, you know? But, if you can see history as I believe God foresaw it, then it begins to make a glorious pattern, and piece by piece fits into place. And you'll find more or less where we are, and what is expected of us in our day.

Now, Jesus didn't write this book to his beloved church to tell her something that she would never see. He didn't write these things to the early church to tell them only those things that are going to happen in the future three and a half years. But he told us mainly things which must shortly come to pass, and things which lead up to the second coming.

Well, I intend to get further than this, but maybe I'd better stop at that. We can digest that. And check with your Bible, not with other books.

Check with your Bible. Have I given you a fair presentation of what Jesus said? Alright. Sorry, let me just run through this a little bit.

In Revelation 119, our Lord gives to John a threefold division. Write the things which thou hast seen. That was the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1. And write the things which are. That was the condition of those seven churches of Asia. Plain instructions.

And the things that shall be hereafter, or after these things. Things which lay in the future for, mostly in the future for John, but many things will have already passed into history by this late time in the world's history. Remember the disciples were always looking for prophecy to be fulfilled in the future.

And Jesus had time and again to point out to them that prophecy had already been fulfilled before their eyes, and they hadn't recognized it. The same thing applies. Our natural tendency is to prognosticate.

It's hard work to look into history and see whether this wonderful pattern can be overlaid onto history and give meaning to it. But I believe it can. Do you believe that the seven churches were not only seven churches in the last time, but each one of them represents a series of churches as they are written in the Bible today? I have examined that viewpoint.

Some quite good men hold it. But I find nothing in Scripture to indicate it. It's often put to deviate our thoughts from the teachings of the book.

And I find nothing in history to substantiate it. For the period they give, some are 70 years, some are 200 years, some are 400 years, one 500 years, and there is no pattern about the thing at all. Moreover, if the Ephesus was the first period, then all seven churches were existing at that time.

Laodicea was there then. And again, if that order is right, the second coming must take place before the Laodicean church, before the messages about the second coming are out to Philadelphia. None to

Laodicea.

And if we are living in the Laodicean age now, as they used to tell me, it's been going on an awful long time, are you Laodicean people? Repent quickly. There may be some Laodicean churches in Perkinia Beach. There may be some Fire Pyre churches.

There may be some Pergamon churches. There may be some Ephesus churches. In fact, if you go around the world, you will find that there is more revival in the church today than there ever has been.

Oh, Laodicean age indeed. It's tremendous what God is doing. I've just had a trip around the world and I've met the Lord's people, full of love and zeal and gospel spreading.

It's tremendous what's happening. Laodicean age indeed. That's what comes of forcing a meaning on Scripture which is not there.

That's right. They read the notes, not the letter. Instead of listening to what Jesus says, they listen to what somebody else has written about what Jesus said.

And that's how every error grows up. Come back to the plain simplicity of Scripture, and I feel sure you'll get a new light on this, and you'll find that many of these wild things that people are saying in these days are lacking in Biblical foundation. And you'll find step by step, God is behind the scenes in history, working all things out according to His preordained plan.

And that will give you strength to stand in this day. Right. Let's stand together.

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