

W106_Converging_Lines_Of_Prophecy.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the chapter of the Open book under the covering titled Pleroma. But we have reached the last of the series and focusing our attention upon the closing chapters of the book of the Revelation. It is our custom to read the Scriptures together at this meeting, and those of you who are listening to this recording, if you care to join us, will you switch off for a little while? Now I'm going to give you a whole package of Psalms, so don't be alarmed while we read together Psalm 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 that you will find them fairly reasonable. We are considering, as you know, the testimony of the closing chapters of the book of the Revelation 19, 20, 21 and 22. And we were looking, first of all, at the converging of all prophecy. And we cannot see along those converging lines any place where the great period of light and blessing can possibly come until the Lord himself returns. We seem to feel that testimony of all Scripture is that God has said and said with meaning, I will overturn, overturn, overturn till He come whose right it is, and I will give it unto him. Well, then we begin to look at the testimony of the Book of Revelation concerning the character of the millennium. And even though we would like to believe that it was a period of universal peace and blessing because the hearts of people are hungering for such a thing, we cannot honestly believe that when we say see so many things that point in a opposite direction.

[00:01:51] And our first concern is not to bolster up some theory we already entertain, but to search and see the scriptures and make our theories toe the line with what is written. So if we're disappointed because the millennium doesn't seem to be quite such a wonderful period as we were led to expect, possibly there's a lesson inviting for us. Suppose we put it like this? The millennium apparently is the seventh thousand years of this world's history since Adam. So that means the week has come to its end. And it ended with a Sabbath. Now all we have, we sort of felt that God is going to have a most marvelous blessing because it's the Sabbath or is the truth for this that the Sabbath is the winding up of a period. And the blessing really will commence on the first day of the next week, which goes on until that perfect kingdom is delivered to the Father that God may be all in all. There is a day of peace and prosperity coming, but if we put it in the wrong place. You remember in the writings of Timothy the Apostle said that those who put the resurrection in the wrong place, or rather at the wrong time, that's all they did. They didn't deny the resurrection. They simply said it's past already. He says their word is eating like a canker.

[00:03:29] So you see, it is right to get things in the right place. Otherwise they themselves can do harm. Well, now it is questioned, of course, by many, the idea that we are suggesting that the millennium is a mixed period. I think the answer is that what God is going to do universally, He is doing at the first with Israel only. There's going to be no sorrow and no sign and no death. There's going to be no curse. There's going to be none of those things in his holy hill. But the nations in the millennial kingdom, they have to go up to serve the Lord. Year by year and as a plague threatened to those who do not. So that doesn't seem to be about universal peace and universal obedience still. So will you now go with me a stage further in this subject? And I want to compare two passages of scripture Isaiah, chapter two, and then the parallel that we have in the Prophet Micah. And I would suggest this to you before we read either of them, never take it for granted that because you happen to be acquainted with a scripture that you know all about it. Let's take. Because I'm perfectly certain of this. There are no vain repetitions in scripture. If God has been pleased to allow Micah to say the self-same words as Isaiah, you could depend upon it. There's a reason.

[00:05:10] But of course, if you glimpse at it and say, Oh, well, turn the page, we know that you won't see the reason, so let's do it ourselves, shall we? Isaiah Chapter two. Verse two, and it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths for Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more. O House of Jacob. Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Now keep that in mind and turn to the Prophet Micah. That's a little bit further on, though. One of the minor prophets. Immediately following Yoda. 950 in your Bibles. The Prophet Micah, Chapter four. But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills and people shall flow into it.

[00:06:49] Unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in his paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more. Do you think it's worthwhile reading any more friends who you say? Yes, I think so. Because you warn me. Right. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid. For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it for all people will walk. Every one in the name of his God. And we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. That's the bit that's different. Is he? Same period, Same healer, the Lord. Same idea that many nations are learning. And in suddenly it says you're walking in the name of your God. And I'm walking in the name of mine. That's just that little difference that the two quotations brought together indicate that it's not absolutely perfect accord yet.

[00:08:02] Otherwise, why put that in? Well, now there's another piece. Both of these passages have that very characteristic statement that they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Now, will you turn to the Prophet Joel? Chapter three, who speaks about the day of the Lord? Hosea Joel and Chapter three. Verse nine. This is when the when the nations are in the valley of Jehoshaphat proclaim ye this among the Gentiles. Prepare war. Wake up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. That's an exact reversal, isn't it? What's all this mean? Well, it might be very difficult at first to put it in its right place, but surely this suggests if it doesn't suggest anything else, that they had had a universal agreement. To disarm. And now is a call for war. And I've got no arms and I've got to start afresh. You see, there will be a period of peace and safety. Everybody is agitating for it, and at long last, it must come. So all I'm doing for the moment is to say to you, don't be satisfied with a casual quotation of a scripture. You look at the passages and let them sink in. Keep them in your mind, even though you're not always able to understand their place. You'll never understand it if you never acquaint yourself with them.

[00:09:50] Well, that's just so far as to suggest that it's not all just plain sailing, everyone toeing the line. There are suggestions all here in these passages that there are little

differences even at that time. When we come back again to the book of the Revelation, chapter 20. And just by way of helping our memories. I'm suggesting that three hours. Cover the outstanding features of these ten verses. Three words, of course, that give you a sort of a guide. First of all, the millennium is peculiarly the restraining of evil. It's not gone. It's restrained. I won't go into all the passages we looked at last time to prove that feigned obedience is the true rendering. If anyone was not at that meeting. You know, there are 2 or 3 Psalms where the margin says they will render and obedience, but that word is in the margin described as being the Hebrew word to tell lies. And every other reference outside of the Psalms speaks of cringing and dissembling and deceiving and altogether opposite to willing obedience. In contrast with the people of Israel, where we read in Psalm 110, where the Lord is writing in Zion, his people shall offer themselves willingly or Israel are willing. They are a kingdom of priests, but not the nations. Yet they are going to learn patiently, slowly and sometimes painfully, because when the Lord rules in the millennial kingdom, he rules with a rod of iron.

[00:11:38] And that doesn't sound too pleasant, does it? We'll look at that later. Now the three words that evil is not destroyed or eradicated, but it is restrained. That is symbolized by the fact that the devil is put into prison for a thousand years. The next word. Is the word rain. Verses 4 to 6 are occupied with the overcomers who would not receive the mark of the beast and they live and reign with Christ a thousand years. So there is the restraint of evil and the reigning of the overcomer. And then immediately after the thousand years when Satan is set let loose, there is the rebellion which is brought to an abrupt end by fire from heaven. The rebellion of Gog and Magog. Now, if you look down those ten verses of Revelation 20, you won't see much else there. Verses 1 to 3 are about the restraining of Satan. Verses 4 to 6 are about the reign of the overcomer and verses eight and nine are the rebellion. Well. Now other verses, I haven't left any verses out. That's all it says. And one of the contentions that we have for the moment before you is this that all our conception of the teaching of the millennium must coincide with Revelation 20. It's absurd to go all over the Scriptures and lift out verses of Scripture and and say, this is millennial and that's millennial and that's millennial and never bothered to see how they fit with the only passage of scripture that ever uses the word of thousand years.

[00:13:25] This is the only passage where the millennium is mentioned. So that's our point. If it agrees with this, we agree that it goes in. If it doesn't agree with this, we'll

suspend judgment and say possibly we we're putting into the millennium what belongs to the succeeding day of God. Now with regard to this restraining of evil. Some time ago I drew your attention, but I don't suppose everybody would have remembered it, and I want everybody to see it. I drew your attention to the peculiar use of the word Sabbath in Psalm eight. Psalm eight commences like this. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth? Who hath set thy glory above the heavens? Out of the mouth of babes and Sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies That thou mightest still the enemy and the Avenger. For that word still is the word to keep Sabbath. Text. Extraordinary use of the word at first, but it's the very word that is used of God that rested on the Sabbath day. So he is a he is a Sabbath keeping in connection with the enemy and the Avenger. Now if you'll think for a moment. While the Sabbath was given to be a blessing to the people of Israel, a sign of their relationship with the Lord in Covenant, there was a good deal of restraint about it.

[00:14:58] Let me read just one passage and you can supply others. I'm going to read from Exodus 31, verse 14. Exodus 31, verse 14. Ye shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death. For whosoever do it any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. And you can multiply those passages. You mustn't light a fire on the Sabbath day. You know the way in which the Jewish people circumvent that. They employ a Gentile. If you lived in a Jewish quarter, you would find some Gentile woman would be busy going, lighting everybody's fires on the Sabbath day, getting a little penny from everybody for doing it. They mustn't do it, but they do it. I remember many, many years ago when I worked for a Jewish firm. I had to go in and do some job because I was using paste and because it was a certain fast or piece. When the mass met anything that was leavened and fermented, they had to be away. I was the only one there. Just a little workshop. All those things are being done, you see. Well, by the time you go through all the enactments that had to be remembered on the Sabbath day, you begin to realize that it wasn't only a holiday and a day off. You couldn't go more than a Sabbath day's journey.

[00:16:32] Well, then, of course, they invented ways of stretching it. They said, Oh, a man can walk about in his own house. Well, as long as you're inside the walls of your own village, you haven't started walking yet. And you get a bit further that way. And if you send your servant along the road and he makes little dumps of food for you on the journey, you can keep on going after all the things they did. I remember when our

brother Mr. died was alive here. He knew a Jew who had a great burden of heart and soul. He kept a little time. He lock up shop here in the east of London. And he wanted to go to the synagogue. And he didn't know what to do because if he left the key of his lock up shot with the people next door, he knew that they went in and sometimes stole things. But the key was a big one and he knew he was under obligation not to carry a burden on the Sabbath day. And carrying a key was a burden. That man was distracted. So they had a Beth Din, they had a meeting of the judgment, and they came to the conclusion that if he put a thong of leather through the key and hung it around his neck, he could go to the synagogue because he wasn't carrying it. Are you laugh at that. But that was a burden for that man on that Sabbath.

[00:17:49] All I'm saying to you is. Notice whenever you read about the Sabbath, don't think of it only of its delight. Think of it as a restraint. Thou shalt not work. Thou shalt not do this. Thou shalt not walk so far. So if the millennium is the Sabbath, it may have the element of restraint about it all the time bottling up, keeping back. But if it's not done with a pure heart, it will only cause resentment and murmuring. And that's what happens. So the first restraint that we get is that which has to do with Satan. Now, we are told in Revelation 20. We just read these words. I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be loosed a little season. Now, that's the first move in the millennium. One of the things, I suppose, that everybody says in their heart, if they never said it in words, they thought it. Why is it that God allows this tempter? To be at large. And then comes the thought, you know, we wouldn't be so bad.

[00:19:24] If the devil were locked up or if he were destroyed. And God says, I know that. I know that argument. I'm going to give you a thousand years. With no center at large. I'm going also to have 12 apostles sitting on 12 thrones so that they could administer justice to you. And I'm going to have the overcomers living and reigning with Christ. Just well, there be it's a moot point for the moment. Will we assume there in the heavenly Jerusalem and ruling heaven the earth from heaven, you think? Well now that's splendid. Now we'll get on lovely. But you see, all that is revealing something that still cries out for something more than man can achieve. It is not perfect. Even though

Satan is restrained for a thousand years, even though the 12 apostles do their utmost and their best. What an indictment it is to the nature of man. Is it what is given his last and most favorable opportunity. Since Adam was first put in the garden and he ends the moment Satan is released, the moment is out. There are those waiting for the word and the words cannot be blinked. There were not just a tiny handful, a number of whom is as the sand of the sea. Sand of the sea is used, as you know, for a multitude beyond computation. And they are definitely antagonistic to the Lord, for they encompass the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

[00:21:05] And then if you're not satisfied, then they are drastically dealt with without further word. Fire descends and they're devoured. That's how the millennium end. If that indicates a perfect kingdom, I say God save us from a perfect kingdom, for that isn't so. It isn't so. And you can't conceive that with a kingdom like that, the Lord could immediately pick that kingdom up and deliver it to the Father that God may be all in all. Oh, no. We've got to have a new heaven and a new earth. And even you'll discover in the new heaven and a new earth it isn't absolutely perfect at the beginning. There is a statement in the Old Testament which we may have to examine about a period unto a thousand generations. And if you're going to take that at all, literally, that's going to be longer than the time since Adam. So let's be prepared to suspend our judgment and modify our views until we get a little more data from the scriptures. Now then, what about this? It's very difficult for us at first to imagine a chain that can hold Satan. Unasylva in. But then, of course, it's not a man made chain. And you do know that all through the Scripture we get earthly symbols. In order to help us to understand spiritual realities. I mean, when you read in the 19th chapter that the Lord is seen riding out of heaven on a white horse.

[00:22:37] Well, now, you wouldn't go to the extreme and say that that white horse had a lovely stable and lived on celestial oats and whatever a spiritual horse is, let it be. The nearest we can get to it is to get the same parallel here. Leave it at that. So. If you have any problem about how you could bind Satan with a chain, how about the other problem when you have in the river Euphrates. Thousands of them of these angels, demons or whatever they are. Chapter nine. And I want to turn to this passage so that it's in keeping Chapter nine. Verse 11. And I have a king. Over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit. So here's the same word whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon. Now, now, don't play with that word. It is so. But it is Abaddon. But that

doesn't mean that it means something worse. It means he was terribly wicked. But in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon, meaning a destroyer. So here we have the bottomless pit, and we are told about the the angel of it, whose name in Hebrew and in Greek is given. Well, that's very much in harmony with the passage we have in Chapter 20, when we have the bottomless pit and the ancient serpent whose Greek name is Diabolus and whose Hebrew name is Satan. It doesn't say Greek and Hebrew, but it's that's what it is.

[00:24:16] The Hebrew name is Satan. The Greek name is Diabolus. So there's a balance between these two. Well, now look a little bit further. Verse 14. The sixth Angel, which had the trumpet loose, the four angels which are bound in the Great River Euphrates. For veggie Angels being bound in a great river Euphrates. We can't understand that, can we? And this river Euphrates goes right back to the beginning of time and is associated with the Garden of Eden. Then he goes on to say, and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year for to slay the third part of men. Again, a terrible thought. But what are we looking at? This. Let us look at. Chapter nine, verse one. And the fifth angel sounded and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth. And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. Well, now the first occurrence of this word abyss. Is in Genesis one, verse two. Of course, I'm referring now to the fact that it's in the Greek Bible. But the Greek Old Testament was in possession of the people of Israel 300 years before John wrote this word.

[00:26:06] So it was a word common use. Understood the meaning of the word abyss. Will you go back to Genesis one, verse two? Darkness was on the face of the abyss. Or the bottomless pit. And I'm going to say this, this is only a suggestion, but I could make a suggestion without being dogmatic about it. But surely most of us, at some time or another when we have read the first chapters of Genesis, have had a little wonder in our mind where the serpent come from. Where did that Satan come from? We are told that God said, Let there be light. And He said, This is good and this is very good and that. And he made the whole world ready for man. And he planted a garden eastward in Eden. He put man in it, and then suddenly a fallen awful being turned up. Where'd he come from? Well, of course, we better to say, I think straight out. None of us know.

Well, now admitting that supposing there is a little bit of light here, a little bit of parallelism. If God can put Satan into the bottomless pit presently and keep him there for a thousand years, he could have put Satan in the bottomless pit in Genesis one two and keep him there as long as he likes. Couldn't he? Yes. And if he can let him out a little season to test people who have been put on probation through a thousand years, he could have let Satan out after man was put in the garden just to see what men would do.

[00:27:40] It may be. And then you see, by tempting man and man going over to him, he got a certain hold and he named in the scriptures as the God of this age and the prince of this world. So much so that when our Savior came, he dared to take him and show him all the kingdoms of the of the pathetic earth and said, All these will I give you for an act of worship? And our Savior didn't rebuke him and say, Now, now that's impossible. Because that's what he actually does with the false king In the book of the revelation. He gives him his throne and his great authority, and all the world worshiped the dragon. So there's a point there. How many say, put all these together and it may not make it a dogmatic statement, but it does give you a little direction so that you can prepare to discover these things are so. Now let us get the other references to the bottomless pit. In chapter nine. We've got it verses one, two and 11. Now it comes again in Chapter 11. Verse seven. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out to the abyss. So we have somebody there already. Europe is in chapter 13. The revised text instead of saying, and I stood upon the sand of the sea, it says, And he that is the devil who's come down knowing his time is short.

[00:29:16] And he stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea. Well, now we have already learned that the sea and the river are almost interchangeable words with the abyss in certain ways. So when it says he brought him out of the sea, it's only another way of saying I saw him ascend out of the abyss or the bottomless pit. And there's one other reference. Chapter 17. Chapter 17, verse eight. This is a tangle of a verse, but I won't try to undo the knots. I'll only read it. And the beast that thou sawest was and is not and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. When they behold the beast that was and is not, and yet is. Now you see we've got a reference to this beast twice. First of all, we find that he's coming up out of the abyss. Brought brought up by Satan.

And then we discover that he's given a travesty of death and resurrection. It says in verse chapter 13, verse three, I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death. And his deadly wound was healed. And all the world wondered after the beast.

[00:30:56] And then we get this idea that there's a further reference to it. The beast that was. And is not. That is how he is coming back again. Ascending out of the bottomless pit and going into perdition. Now, 1 or 2 other references in the Old Testament might be of value. Not only Genesis one, verse two, but take a passage like this, Psalm 42. Psalm 42, verse seven. Deep calling unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over thee. There is still the association between the word deep, which is the word bottomless pit, and the water spouts, which have to do, of course, with sea and tempest. And then in Psalm 148, you get an association there of the dragon. Psalm 148, verse seven. This is going back to the beginning of the creation in Genesis one, because you can see it speaks of praising him sun and moon and stars and the heavens and the waters above the heavens. And then it presently says, Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps as though dragons and deeps go together. Well, now, as we say, we don't want to have too much acquaintance with this evil one. There is a limit to probing in to things to do with evil. I remember one lady I knew years ago. It was I knew what she was going to say almost before she opened her mouth each time I met her.

[00:32:58] Who should be once again attacked by Satan. Who was being attacked by Satan. So I said, look, I said, I'm getting rather tired of this every time I see you. I said, You must be an extraordinary person for Satan to be always actually might have time to do ever go into anybody else. And then that didn't satisfy, of course, she was rather pretty. And I said, you know, really and truly, you're only confessing that you've let. Yoshi, you down? I said, He doesn't make out that you are the most spiritual person in this neighborhood because you have a shield given you by God. That's got a guaranteed guarantee to quench every fiery darts of the wicked one. So why not give him a rest and take your stand where God has placed you and say that you're really in Christ, far above all principality and power and might and dominion. So although I'm dwelling a little bit on Satan and his activity and this awful character of his, we don't want to take it too far. So I'm going to leave. It should. Is. The great outstanding characteristic at the time of the end is this restraint. Well, now, if you look at Daniel the ninth chapter, I think we can get that in. Can we? Just a few minutes. Daniel, the ninth

chapter, verse 24. It tells you some of the things that are going to be brought about when we reach this period of the book of the revelation.

[00:34:33] 70 weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression or stop there, because our time will not permit us to pursue the others. But you might misread that and think, Oh, that's when the atoning work of Christ is put into application and sin has been brought to its culmination and are all perfectly free. But when you look at this word and discover that it is the word translated prison. Prison the best. Kelly is a prison. It's the same as putting Satan into prison. Sin will be put into prison. Restrained, not cleansed, Away. Restrained. And one reference to give you the idea of a lesser, but not quite so imprisoning a word in Psalm 119. You get it translated in verse 101. Psalm 119 101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, refraining, restraining, imprisoning, holding back. So you see, we've got a double emphasis. Satan will be restrained. And sin will be restrained. There's a whole estate, this element of the Sabbath coming down upon the world for that period. Thou shalt not do this. Thou shalt not do that. But that's a very different thing from having it cleansed away and you being perfectly accepted in the beloved and sin being no more. That's to come. Now there are those in the millennium who have reached that point. They are the people of Israel who become a kingdom of priests.

[00:36:21] And the Prophet Zechariah tells you that the selfsame time that the nations of the earth of the world may rebel against going up to Jerusalem. Israel will be so holy at that time that the very bells on the horses and the pots in the kitchen will be holiness unto the Lord. So I believe there's the key to the problem. If you will remember that the the Lord begins. Focuses his attention upon Jerusalem and the people of Israel, and they will be a picture to the surrounding world what the world will be like when the rest of the world learn to toe the line as Israel have been. They are to be the object lesson throughout that period. Some will learn it. Blessed be God, some do not, and they are immediately destroyed. And then it becomes more wide world. And you read They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. That's the first thing. Then after that, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the water that flows out from Jerusalem to go down and blot out the Dead Sea. That's what it says. That's the picture. But it starts at Jerusalem. Even as our savior said the key words in the first chapter of the acts beginning at Jerusalem. And that's where it will begin when he takes up the thread once

more. So they don't think for the moment we'll say our time is practically expired and we've only touched upon a few outstanding features.

[00:37:51] But if we can do this week by week and gradually build up, I hope that we shall get some idea of what is implied by this thousand year reign and what we may expect to come when the Lord sets aside all authority and power, all delegated rule sets aside all and takes to himself his great power. And at last. Inglorious victory. And see we're looking at that. We should have to face the fact that right to the very end, that is to say, ever so far beyond the millennium, he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. But he wouldn't say that if there were none there. And the last enemy that should be destroyed is death, right beyond the millennium. A long way. So I'm only saying these things are written and we must keep them in mind. And as we do, we'll get the theme falling more into a pattern. And may the Lord give us grace to be patient, one with another, and patient with those who disagree and keep us from bombast and boasting. But in these things we could easily go astray so easy that sometimes it makes you feel diffident to express opinions. But sometimes that is necessary. So shall we call a halt for this time? Picking up our story next time with the rain possibly of the overcoming.