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Bible Study No. 1: "All the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled down to the very last detail in the New Testament!"

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May God grant grace for the proclamation of His Word.

When we read about the Lord's return in the Holy Scriptures, I am reminded, for example, of His first coming and also of the fact that there were plenty of prophecies in Scripture which had specified every detail and yet the scribes failed to recognize them. I was reading Matthew 2 today and it moved me deeply. I won't dwell on this for long. We will then read more scriptures. But listen carefully to what is written in Matthew chapter 2, perhaps from verse 1 to 5: Matthew 2, verses 1 to 5:

[1] ***Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,***

[2] ***Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.***

[3] ***When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.***

[4] ***And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.***

[5] ***And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,***

[6] ***And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda...***

And so forth. [Mt 2:6]

So what strikes me here is this. Something supernatural is happening. God is at work from heaven, providing information, causing a star to rise, guiding those who set out on their journey. And yet, upon arriving in the city of God, in Jerusalem, there is no prophet to be found. Instead, the scribes and the chief priests are summoned.

According to the letter of the Scripture, they know exactly where Christ, the Messiah, was to be born. Why then were they unable to instruct the people accordingly when they give a scripturally correct answer here? And they said unto him: ***"In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou***

Bethlehem…" and so forth. "… f***or out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.***" [Mt 2:5-6]

The letter of the Scripture was there, and the knowledge in their minds was there too, but no revelation as to what was now to happen, if indeed this were the Messiah. And when we now think of the Lord's return, of the many scriptures associated with it, the question arises once more: who is called upon to provide the answer? At that time King Herod was alarmed and summoned the chief priests and the scribes of the people.

Later, and I would like to read this to us as well, when the time was fulfilled, God sent a forerunner, not a scribe, but a prophet, just as he had said in his Word. For he spoke not only of the birth of the Messiah, but also of his ministry, of his suffering and death, of everything that was to come to pass.

I shall read from Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7, from verse 26:

[26] ***But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.***

[27] ***This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.***

[28] ***For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.***

Listen to what comes next. These two verses are important.

[29] ***And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.***

[30] ***But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.***

God has an order, not only in the universe. God also has an order concerning his plan of salvation, his church, Israel, and the entire course of events. God has ordered all things.

And since, over the last few weeks, I have specifically met people who ask me whether we believe in the law or whether we reject it, and so on. No, we do not reject anything at all. God's Word is holy and true to us from A to Z.

What we do, however, is refrain from offering our own commentary on it. Instead, we are very content with what God has said in the New Testament about the Old Testament and has had written down. How wonderfully Paul has placed the law in its proper context and then rightly set grace upon the lampstand and extolled it.

Anyone wishing to read up on this can do so in parts of the Epistle to the Romans, but particularly in Galatians 2 and 3 where one can read very precisely what was

said and written.

I am also familiar with the Sermon on the Mount in which our Lord said that not a tittle will pass from the law until all this has come to pass. [Mt 5:18] And that is what we believe. That is what it says here in Matthew chapter 5, verse 17:

[17] ***Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.***

He was the only one who was placed under the law so that he might redeem those who were under the law. [Gal 4:4-5] And he was the only one who kept the whole law, but perhaps precisely for the sake of those who find it a little difficult to place this, we read in the book of Acts, for example, that the apostles went to the synagogues on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath the people of God were gathered together. The Jews were gathered together. And so Paul was repeatedly called upon to speak. And that is what he did.

In Acts 28, verse 23, we are clearly told what his main task was, not to sit in the chair of Moses, but his task was, as we are now about to read here from the Holy Scripture, Acts 28, verse 23:

[23] ***And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.***

Do you see what his aim was? To lead people to Jesus. He did not read from the law and the prophets to say "you shall" and "you must", but he had understood very well, perhaps even explained what we read in Hebrews chapter 3, Hebrews chapter 3, verse 4.

Hebrews 3, verses 4 and 5. Once again for the translators, Hebrews 3, verses 4 and 5:

[4] ***For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.***

[5] ***And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.***

As I said earlier, one needs divine understanding to proclaim the Old and New Testament in a balanced way and to see light shed from one upon the other. For myself, and I hope I am not misunderstood in this, it is very close to my heart that God's Word, as spoken by those who proclaim it, is the pure truth and that it is not presented in any other way than as it was handed down to us.

And the guiding principles for this are two scriptures, one from 1 Kings 17, well known to all of us. 1 Kings 17, where the woman whose son was raised from the dead said, 1 Kings 17, verse 24:

[24] ***And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.***

We all know that this Word in the Bible is the truth. The only question is, is it still the truth when it comes from the mouth of a priest, a preacher or an evangelist? Is it still the truth when the Word comes from our own mouths?

When it came from God's mouth it was the pure truth. In the Bible it is the pure truth. But has it not been distorted? Have people not given their own interpretations? Have there not also been false prophets? And did the Lord not also foretell for the last days that there would be many false prophets and false Christs anointed with the Holy Spirit and yet false? [Mt 24:24]

In the days of Ahab there were 400 prophets. [1 Kin 22:6] They said: "Thus saith the Lord." And yet the Lord had not spoken. And then there came one who could utter from his lips what was in his heart: ***"What the Lord says unto me, that will I speak."*** [1 Kin 22:14]

And in his mouth the Word of God was the pure truth. The words of the others who said: "Thus saith the Lord," were not the truth. They had, as the Scripture says, a spirit of falsehood. [1 Kin 22:22] So we must search. And search in the light of the revealed Word. And then examine whether what is being said is still the pure truth. The pure truth of the pure Word as it has been handed down to us in Holy Scripture.

As I have just remarked, it is truly my sincere desire to say only what God has said and to believe it just as He has left it for us. Of course we know that there are Scriptures that are difficult to understand. Even Peter in his epistle referring to Paul's epistles, he wrote: ***"There are some things in them that are hard to understand which they that are unlearned wrest unto their own destruction, as they do also the other Scriptures."*** [2 Pet 3:16] So it is written. Perhaps I am reading this verse so that everyone may know where it is written and also know that it is written. It is important, precisely because we have now reached a very decisive moment in human history. We must examine, but this examination must not be carried out according to our own standards.

The Word must be the standard and not just one passage, but the entire testimony of Holy Scripture.

In 2 Peter 3, where the Apostle speaks of the coming of the Lord, he also writes that one day with the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day and that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is patient and does not wish for anyone to perish. [2 Pet 3:8-9] He then writes of the day of the Lord, which will come like a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and so on. [2 Pet 3:10] Then, in verse 16, 2 Peter 3, from verse 16:

[16] ***As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned***

and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction.

Not just with what Paul said. For example, on my last trip, I was told somewhere that some people claim that the closing words of Matthew 28 were added later and do not belong in the Bible at all, and so on. Just because it is written there: "***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***" [Mt 28:19]

And these people who believe so strongly in the oneness of God that they feel powerful enough to wish the scriptures which to some extent contradict their understanding, their doctrine, out of the Bible. I am truly grateful to God that we have Matthew 28. This way we know in whose name God has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our salvation. Thanks be to God for every one of his words from A to Z in the Old and New Testament. And we see what really matters.

I have said this somewhere before. If someone feels uncomfortable when certain scriptures are read, then something is wrong. Blessed is the person who can truly believe as scripture says. And here too, for example, and we shall speak about it this evening, in connection with the coming of our beloved Lord and Savior. When one reads the wide variety of expectations and interpretations on this subject, including those from a Jewish perspective and from the viewpoint of those who can believe according to the New Testament, it is beyond belief. And I do not say this out of arrogance, but it is written, not everyone should presume to be a teacher. [Jam 3:1] One must have been appointed by God for a task. Otherwise one does not bring order, but rather introduces disorder into what God has said.

I have had time to read quite a bit over the past few days, and time and again it has filled me with fresh gratitude that God is guiding us along this marvellous path and enabling us to place the various aspects of the coming of Jesus Christ, namely to place them in the context to which they actually belong. I believe it was Brother Branham who said back then that a church split because one man told that the Lord would come on a cloud and he had his scripture to back that up, whilst the other cited the scripture from Revelation 19 where he is shown coming on a white horse, and then the two of them argued and divided the church, and then they went their separate ways.

Well, they can count themselves lucky that I wasn't there. I don't know what I would have done, but even preachers and proclaimers of the Word sometimes have such a big ego, and if they cannot satisfy that ego, then they are not content. God wants people who do not seek to have their own opinions confirmed, but people who, if they are to proclaim the Word, that they divide it rightly. [2Tim 2:15] Both are true. He will return to fetch his bride as the bridegroom. He will come with great power and glory on the clouds of heaven. [Mt 24:30] Then, when the final battle is at hand, Armageddon, he will come on the white horse and lead the battle. [Rev 16:16; Rev 19:11] All of this must always be seen in this specific context where it

simply belongs.

And that is precisely what Paul meant when he said, writing to Timothy: ***"Be a workman who does not need to be ashamed, who rightly divides the word of truth."*** [2Tim 2:15]

And we shall now embark on a brief reflection on the Word. Without saying too much, we shall let God's word speak for itself. I would like to read from Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah 31 contains the best foretelling in the Old Testament concerning the New Covenant and the New Testament. There are many such scriptures, but this one is simply very important in its entirety. Jeremiah 31, verse 31:

[31] ***Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,***

[32] ***Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.***

[33] ***But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

[34] ***And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.***

What a marvelous Word! Forgiving their iniquity, no longer remembering sin, a new covenant, a new testament, a new heart, a new life, new lips, all as the Lord said: ***"Behold, I make all things new."*** [Rev 21:5] What strikes me most in this context is that in connection with this, we come to know the Lord himself. We no longer have to guess at riddles, but recognize him, from the least to the greatest. I shall read the verse once more:

[34] ***And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.***

We have emphasized and highlighted here just how important it is to know God personally, to accept him in the way he revealed himself, and simply to say: "Yes." I have looked up and re-read a few scriptures on this subject. There are scriptures that describe him as a human being in his humanity, and there are scriptures that describe him as Lord, as King, and one simply has to take these two things together to have the whole picture, rather than remaining on one side or the other. But let us now delve deeper into this: "***for they shall all know me.***" [Jer 31:34] Whoever

has truly been redeemed, whose iniquity has actually been forgiven, and whose sin is not imputed against them, whoever is included in the New Covenant will know the Lord.

They will no longer wonder or ask who it was.

I have also read a passage on this subject, brief but very obscure, from Proverbs 30. Here we find a man who shook his head because he was struggling to understand certain things that cannot be grasped by the mind. Proverbs 30, and here I am particularly concerned with verse 4, but let us read from verse 1b.

[1] **This is the saying of the man: I have labored, O God, I have labored, O God, and have faded away, or I am exhausted.**

Here someone has toiled, and we can tell from the wording that the effort was immense. He has made an effort. I have not added this. I have merely read it. He says it twice in succession: ***"I have toiled, O God, I have toiled, O God, I have wasted away, I am exhausted."***

All our toil will get us nowhere. We must be set on the foundation of truth by God, and then we will no longer toil, nor wear ourselves out, but will be blessed by God.

Let us read on. Namely, verse 3:

[3] ***I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.***

[4] ***Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?***

And from this verse, ***"What is his name, and what is his son's name,"*** people have written all manner of things, without realizing that the entire Old Testament is in fact prophetic in nature. When we read, ***"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee,"*** this was still a future event in the Old Testament. [Psa 2:7] It is only in the New Testament that we are then told how it actually came to pass. The prophet Isaiah also foretold it in chapter 9.

What I would just like to say is this. Perhaps for some of you this is the first time that we touch upon the subject of the Godhead or speak about it. No one can explain God and that's a good thing. And if anyone has toiled like this poor man and then admits it and says, ***"I have toiled, O God, I have toiled,"*** from which we can see that he was at the end of his strength and then adds, ***"O God, I am exhausted."***

Our striving leads to exhaustion, to becoming silent before God, entering the tabernacle, where it is no longer people but the Lord who speaks to us through His Word. Then revelation also comes concerning Scriptures with which we were previously unfamiliar.

And there is one more point I would like to make.

When reading the Old Testament one must always pay attention to whether any Scripture from the Old Testament has been carried over into the New Testament and illuminated there. This is very important when reading Holy Scripture. If, for example, a word from the Old Testament has not been used in the New Testament or has not been interpreted as some people interpret today, then one must be careful there. It is exactly the same with the Scripture from Genesis, ***"Let us make man."*** [Gen 1:26] Who would have ever interpreted that as referring to a plurality of gods? Not in the Bible. People disregard what God has said and come up with their own interpretation which, however, does not hold water because it is incorrect.

And in this Scripture here, in Proverbs 30, verses 5 and 6, I read:

[5] ***Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.***

[6] ***Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.***

I have just read those two verses in Proverbs 30, verses 5 and 6. "***Every word of God is pure***", but it must not be interpreted. It must be lived as it is written. "***He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.***"

Do you notice the change in this man? First, the great groaning: ***"I have toiled, O God. I have toiled, O God. I have wasted away."*** And when he had finished his toiling, God was able to grant him enlightenment. And then what we have read gushed forth from his mouth:

[5] ***Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.***

[6] ***Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.***

We recall the words from 1 Kings 17: ***"Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."*** [1Kin 17:24]

God's holy Word remains the pure truth and it must not be adulterated. It must be lived just as it is written here.

In the times in which we live there is indeed much to observe and this must always be done in the light of the Word. Even as regards purely external matters, the course of events in this generation, I believe we can all see the decay, the apostasy. We, who are now of an older generation, have indeed witnessed many things firsthand, the developments we have lived through.

But what struck me just recently, when was it, last week, when the report about the Danish pastor was shown and a discussion about homosexuality was broadcast

here on our television across the whole country and people were arguing in favor of this being permitted and that men should also be allowed to marry one another. Oh yes, brother Russ says, women too, I suppose. Actually, one really shouldn't even mention it here from the pulpit. It makes one feel so sick that one could vomit. But the public is being manipulated into thinking it's not that bad at all.

And this priest actually went on to say: "Paul with his quote, what kind of things did he say?" It wasn't Paul who said it, God spoke through him, saying that people would fall into a depraved state of mind because they had not accepted God in truth and had not offered Him proper worship. [Rom 1:21, 28] And when one man finally got to the point and said: "Yes, but listen, ladies and gentlemen, marriage is after all an institution that brings new life into this world and so on, and what are you going to make of that term now?"

But did not our Lord say: ***"In the days of the Son of Man it will be as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah."*** [Luk 17:28, 30] People no longer allow themselves to be corrected by the Spirit of God. Even the priest, for him God's Word is no longer God's Word. People take what they want to take, and the rest they twist however they please.

Jesus, our Lord, did indeed say that it would be so, and this too is a direct sign of the end times, that God must forsake people in this way, creatures created in His image, and He must forsake them thus. And yet they still consider themselves very wise. Beloved, I mention this only to make it clear that Scripture is being fulfilled in this area too.

Just as it was back then, and you know, in the days of Lot, what did Lot do? [Gen 19] How many daughters did he have? And he sent them out the door. And the men did not want the daughters. They wanted the men. And what happened? God abandoned them. He rained fire down from heaven.

God will not be mocked now either. [Gal 6:7] If He has announced the judgment, then the world must become ripe for judgment, and believers have a chance to turn to God, to receive a new life, and to escape all that is to come upon the earth. And for all those who do not take the Word of the Lord seriously and do not heed God's call for themselves but resist God's cause, only judgment remains for them.

For us, of course, the most important sign is the gathering of the people of Israel. That is why I have written the open letter with a view to ensuring that our voices are raised, including on this point, in defense of the truth. And we believe that God will have His way in this matter too and will speak to some people.

I have noted down two scriptures, one from Isaiah chapter 11. Isaiah chapter 11. Here the Lord speaks through the prophet in verse 11:

[11] ***And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left.***

And so on. "***for the second time.***"

We read earlier in Jeremiah 31 that the Lord stretched out His arm, led His people out of Egypt and announced the new covenant. [Jer 31:31-32] Here we read that on that day He will stretch out His hand a second time to bring back the remnant of His people who remain.

We have also read this in Acts 7 verse 13 as was explained to us by Joseph who revealed himself to his brothers the second time. Acts chapter 7 verse 13.

[13] ***And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.***

Both things happened. He revealed his identity to his brothers and they knew who was standing before them. [Gen 45:1] It is only on the second occasion that the Jews will recognize their Messiah and why it is written: ***"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."*** [Zech 12:10]

And here it must be said that the Brockhaus and the Luther translations and others capture the essence of this passage better than Dr. Menge's translation does. I read it as it appears in the original text. Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10. Zechariah 12 verse 10.

[10] ***And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him...***

And so forth.

That's the original text. Menge did not fully understand this. He was a philologist and he undoubtedly wanted to help clarify the meaning. Menge translated: ***"and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced."***

And I shall also tell you why this difference simply must be highlighted and emphasized. When the Lord God speaks here in the Old Testament as Yahweh, as the Lord and then says through the mouth of the prophet: ***"and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,"*** then He who at that time existed in a spiritual body is already announcing that He will exist in a body of flesh so that He may then be pierced.

And so the very one who spoke there, Yahweh, the I Am, is the same one who as the Logos, as the Word became flesh, dwelt amongst us and we beheld his glory. [Joh 1:14]

But note, it was not merely a matter of fulfilling Micah 5 that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. [Mi 5:2] Every scripture had to be fulfilled, including Zechariah 11, where they weighed out the 30 pieces of silver. Zechariah 11 verse 12:

[12] ***Pay me the price I am worth to you, and they laid down thirty pieces of silver.***

Psalm 22 had to be fulfilled, as it says there, but all at a very specific time. Here, Psalm 22 verse 10, again for the translators, Psalm 22 verse 10:

[10] ***Thou art he that laid me in my mother's womb.***

[10] ***Thou art he that laid me in my mother's womb.***

The whole psalm is, after all, a psalm of the Messiah. It begins with: ***"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*** [Ps 22:1] And then there are a number of verses up to: ***"They pierced my hands and my feet,"*** verse 16b: ***"They pierced my hands and my feet."*** [Ps 22:16]

So, back to Zechariah 12: ***"They will look upon me whom they have pierced."*** [Zec 12:10] And if at that time the Jews thought that the king who had been born must now assume the throne, then they failed to realize that this king had come to establish an eternal kingdom, not a temporal one, but an eternal one. And for this to happen it was necessary that those who are to be part of this eternal kingdom should indeed receive eternal life, so that they might dwell in it for all eternity. So the plan of redemption was a necessity for God so that he might be able to realize this plan with humanity, which he purposed before the foundation of the world.

Do you see how important it is not just to read scriptures, but to put them into context? Of course, we have the enormous advantage that we can already see today which scriptures have been fulfilled. And it then follows naturally that all the promises and prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled will indeed be fulfilled. It is that simple for us today. Back then, of course, it wasn't as simple as it is today. And we are grateful to God.

And yet, when we use the word "simple", we must ask: To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Who has eyes to see? Who can place it scripturally?

In John 18, as we have come back to the term "truth", it says: In John, chapter 18, verse 37, in connection with our Lord, who, as we read in Matthew 2, came as King. And here we read it. In John 18, which verse did I mention? Verse 37, yes sir.

[37] ***Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.***

[38] ***Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?***

We have already read in scripture that God's Word is the truth, provided it is left as God's Word, namely just as it came forth from his mouth. [Mt 4:4; Joh 17:17] At that time he was asked: ***"So you are a king?"*** He said: "***Yes.***" One might have expected him to establish the kingdom at that point. But as has just been emphasized, he is an eternal King and his kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and only those who have eternal life can dwell in it forever.

That is why we must be born again to a living hope, otherwise we cannot see the kingdom of God. [Joh 3:3; 1Pt 1:3] That is the condition which God has laid down in his Word, not laid down by a human being, but laid down by God in his Word. Take Deuteronomy 18:15: ***"God will raise up a prophet like me."*** That has been fulfilled. I see that many scriptures which referred to the Messiah have been fulfilled.

I read a treatise, I believe, on Genesis 49. And as you know, every now and then one has to read a few commentaries to become even more grateful that we no longer have to interpret, but can simply believe as Scripture says. Genesis 49 verse 10:

[10] ***The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.***

In the original text the word Shiloh is written here, and the translators of the Bible gave it some thought and interpreted who it might be. Menge stepped in again to help us, so that we wouldn't just be left with that word without knowing what to make of it. He interpreted it as follows: ***"Until he comes to whom the scepter belongs, and the nations will obey him, binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine."*** [Gen 49:10-11]

Back then he said to his disciples: ***"Go and fetch the donkey and the colt."*** [Mt 21:2] Is that how we read it? Thus it is written. It was prophesied here: ***"Until he comes, the one who is to come, namely the one to whom the scepter belongs."*** To him, the Lord, to him alone belongs the scepter. At that time he had the colt and the donkey untied, they were brought to him, he sat upon it and rode into Jerusalem, and all the people honored him.

This passage reminds us of Zechariah chapter 9. Zechariah chapter 9. It sounds as though we have days of celebration ahead of us. Zechariah 9 verse 9:

[9] ***Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.***

You can read in the New Testament, in Matthew 21 and throughout the Gospels, how this scripture was fulfilled. [Mat 21:1-5] Why are we highlighting some of these passages this evening? To make one thing crystal clear: that the Old Testament foretold what would happen at his first coming and what would happen at his second coming. However, everything was written down as if in a single block, and so it was necessary to distinguish which parts were written for which time.

And as far as the ministries are concerned, both at Christ's first coming and now before his second coming, there is a scripture of John, "***if you are willing to accept it: He was Elijah who is to come."*** [Mt 11:14] Now just imagine: ***"He was Elijah who is to come."*** This translation says: "***who is to come***". How could he have been?, common sense would ask, "what he is only to be in the future?"

Do you realize how important spiritual understanding is, so that we may see and understand scripture as God intends?

That one scripture is still recorded in Matthew 17. We can read it together. Matthew 17. Here it says, Matthew 17 verse 11:

[11] ***And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.***

Spoken very clearly with regard to the future. And then verse 12:

[12] ***But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not.***

Beloved, only when we recognize God in the manner of his revelation will we also accept the ministries he has bestowed upon the church and recognize them, just as Israel will later accept and recognize the ministry of the two witnesses, in comparison with Jeremiah 31 where we read: ***"Then they shall all know me, from the least even to the greatest."*** [Jer 31:34] We read in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 8. 1 Corinthians 2 verse 8: ***"Which none of the princes..."*** Perhaps for the sake of context we should probably start from verse 6. 1 Corinthians 2, from verse 6:

[6] ***Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:***

[7] ***But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.***

Look, not only have we been predestined according to Ephesians 1 verse 3 and many other scriptures, but this hidden wisdom of God, which forms part of God's plan of salvation, for whom has it been predestined? For those who are predestined. And all others will pass it by. Now comes the explanation. I shall read the last part of verse 7 and then continue with verse 8:

[7] ***Which God ordained before the world unto our glory:***

[8] ***Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.***

[9] ***But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.***

Who can love him? Only those whom God in Christ has loved out of the world and enabled to become believers can love him in return. All others will do so with their lips, but not with their hearts. And it is simply part of the matter that we love God with all our hearts and believe his Word.

But it is just as much a part of the matter that we really do put things into their proper perspective: what belonged to that era and what belongs in our own day to the plan of salvation, what belongs to Israel and what to the church, what happens before the rapture and what happens afterwards, where does each element fit. And I believe that we may emphasize and highlight this anew time and again with a grateful heart. The beauty of it is that we do not espouse any doctrinal position, but can simply leave the Word of God as it is written, in the context for which it was given and for which it was intended. And then everything falls into place: the promises that were fulfilled at Christ's first coming, as well as the final ones now at his second coming.

But look at how we have read the Word. Psalm 22: ***"They have pierced my hands and my feet."*** [Ps 22:16] And then in Zechariah 12: ***"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn."*** [Zec 12:10] Look, it had to be this way. His hands and feet had to be pierced. He had to take our place. He had to bear our guilt and sin. He had to take away the power of death. He had to conquer hell. And he had to rise from the dead on the third day to bring us victory over death.

He did not merely proclaim it; he brought it about. Just as redemption, the forgiveness of our iniquity, and the atonement for all sin took place on the cross of Calvary, so too did our justification. Everything came about from God's side. We must, however, believe it. We must then experience it personally, so that these things are not merely recounted and written down, but become a lived, personal truth in your life and mine. That is how God intends it to be.

But look, if back then the scribes had not merely been summoned to locate Bethlehem, namely the place where the Messiah was to be born, but had also been summoned when that great day of atonement came, when his hands and feet were to be pierced, when lots were to be cast for his garment, and when a sponge filled with vinegar was to be offered to him, it was all written down after all. [Ps 22:16, 18; Ps 69:21; Mi 5:2] And looking back today, we can say: everything has been fulfilled down to the very last detail. Praise be to the name of the Lord! And we can give this assurance to everyone, for we do not have to take the risk ourselves. We can give everyone the assurance that God watches over his Word, and that everything that remains to be fulfilled will be fulfilled down to the very last detail.

God has taken responsibility for this, and so it will come to pass.

When the final part of the plan of salvation becomes history, we shall look back and say: "Yes indeed, there it was written, and here it has been fulfilled," and so on. Oh yes, we believe that we are now experiencing the final part of God's plan of salvation with mankind. We believe that we have reached the end times. What did I hear recently? From 104 countries—I have actually visited just as many countries in total, what a coincidence—in any case, they have returned from exactly 104 countries to the land of their fathers, to the promised land, not to be cast into the Mediterranean,

but to await the Messiah. And he will appear. They will look upon the one whom they have pierced, and then the great weeping and groaning will begin; then great distress will come upon them.

But look, some say: "He will be a great man, an anointed one like David." They think that he will now somehow, somewhere, at some point, be born. Others believe, including Jews, that he will indeed come on a cloud, because it is written in Daniel 7: ***"I saw one like a son of man coming on a cloud."*** [Dan 7:13] And so even there, the most learned among the Jews are of different opinions as to how it is to come to pass. How grateful we can be once again that we are not divided in our views, but are able to discern when, what, and in what context it is to take place. And we have the assurance, as already said, that every Word will be fulfilled in the context for which it was given and intended.

He will come as the Son of Man, and then sit upon the throne of his glory, so it is written. [Mt 25:31] He will come with great power and glory. [Mt 24:30] But anyone who reads on in the book of the prophet Daniel will immediately notice in the very next two verses that the kingdom of God will then begin on earth. [Dan 7:13-14] I shall read those two verses to you, and then we shall conclude. My aim today is simply to emphasize time and again that God in his faithfulness has foretold what will happen, and he watches over his Word so that when the time comes, when the time is fulfilled, it will indeed come to pass in the proper context.

Daniel 7, verses 13 and 14:

[13] ***I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.***

Listen to what the next verse says:

[14] ***And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.***

Do you see the connection here? When he will come on the clouds of heaven, then, as we can read in the Gospel of Matthew… But now I would really like to ask a question: How many of you have read the booklet, "The Return of Christ and the Various Comings of the Lord"? I would like to see your hands now, but only if you actually read it. Well, leave them down, just leave them down. Brother Schmidt, I am not going to help you out there, no.

You know what, allow me to make this remark; I say it with a heart full of love. If you knew how often I leave the office after midnight, after one o'clock in the morning, to make certain things available, to provide instruction, and how much effort is involved overall, then I really do have one request: Either we read, or I'll stop writing. Yes, because a booklet can only have a purpose and fulfill that purpose

if its content is actually read. If that isn't the case, I'm actually so disappointed that I just want to stop.

But listen, I have another question to ask, please don't be angry with me for this. But we're all waiting for God to do something, for movement to come from above, for the Spirit of God to begin to work. If I were even a little bit angry in my heart right now, I would phrase the question as follows: How many people actually gain anything at all from a sermon? If it were the same as with reading, then we might as well all stop.

Listen to what is being said: these are serious times. We need instruction on all these points, not just so that we know them ourselves, but also when we speak with others. And we would all do well to really immerse ourselves in all this teaching, so that we might have a firm foundation, know where things belong and recognize the connections. So from today onwards, I will be asking again soon, so from today onwards, we'll all become diligent readers.

How many of us spend too much time watching television? Perhaps there are some; in that case, we'll have to cut back and just watch the news, finish. I can certainly say this for myself: I rarely get round to watching it at all, and when I do, it's just the news.

May God help us. For this booklet in particular is so important when it comes to the end times and also the various comings of the Lord. And then, in fact, some questions are already answered, namely by reading and searching the Bible to see whether it truly is so. Have we understood what this evening's gathering is all about? There are the promises in the Word of God, whether it be the first coming, the second, or the return; no matter in what context, the important thing is that we do not mix things up, but leave everything in the context to which it belongs.

As we have read in this scripture, Daniel 7: when he comes with the clouds, he comes to establish his eternal kingdom here, and all peoples, tongues, and nations will be subject to him. [Dan 7:13-14] His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and as emphasized earlier, only those who have eternal life will be able to live eternally in his kingdom.

According to Revelation 20, even after the millennium there will still be people who do not have eternal life. Did you all know that? Of course, people who live on earth during the millennium, but who were not born again beforehand, will continue to live. And after the thousand years, Satan will be released for a short time and will deceive all the four corners of the earth, and the masses will surround the holy city, and then fire will fall from heaven and consume them all. [Rev 20:7-9]

So it is very important that we not just say: "Well, maybe I'll be there after all." No, we will only be there for eternity if we have received eternal life by God's grace. May his blessing rest upon us all.

He has established the new covenant; he has given us a new heart and a new life.

He said: ***"This is the new covenant in my blood."*** [Luk 22:20; 1Kor 11:25] He died to make the new covenant legally binding; the testament is legally binding. [Heb 9:16-17] We can receive the blessing that God has given us by grace, and give thanks to him for it. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Let us stand and give thanks to the Lord together.

Heavenly Father, you have seen the hands and the hearts. You know what is happening in the lives of these brothers and sisters. Beloved Lord, you who have promised to be present, to remain active to the ends of the earth, not to leave nor to forsake your own. Lord, confirm your Word as true. Save, set free, forgive, deliver. Oh Lord, heal all broken hearts, faithful God, confirm your Word as true in every way, in soul, spirit, and body. Take away from us all our troubles, all our worries, everything that weighs us down.

For we too can say: ***"My God, my God, we have toiled, we are exhausted,"*** and that is why we come to you. [Ps 22:1] Lift us up. You have promised not to quench the smoking flax, but to rekindle it. [Isa 42:3; Mat 12:20] Beloved Lord, deal kindly with us today according to your great mercy, goodness, and grace. Lord, bless all who have brought their needs before you.

Bless us all. We need you, from the first to the last, from the greatest to the least. And we wish to know you and the power of your resurrection. [Phi 3:10]

Beloved Lord and God, lift up your countenance upon us, and grant us your blessing and your peace in Thy glorious name.

And make us people of faith, as Scripture says, so that the scriptural blessing may come upon us through a mighty outpouring of Thy Holy Spirit, through a revival. For you will send the time of refreshing and the latter rain, as you have promised in the Old and New Testament. To you, the Almighty God, be thanks for your precious and holy Word. It is the pure truth; it is the Word of God, which remains forever. We give thanks for this.

Bless us and be with us in Jesus' name. Hallelujah. Amen.