

It is my great joy to be able to minister the Word of God to you again this morning. I would invite you to take your Bibles and turn to Revelation chapter 20 where we continue our verse by verse study of the Lord's disclosure of the things that will happen at the very end of the age and the eternal state, a time when he will be glorified.

In a few minutes we will be looking closely at verses seven through 10. But before we do, may I draw your attention to some thoughts that I believe are important as we endeavor to understand these things?

As we return once again to this study of the last days of human history and the glorious return of the Lord, I would caution you from falling into the temptation of being enamored with all of the current events that might be pointing to his soon return, even though I believe it is very soon. Avoid being caught up in politics and all of the indicators of the count down to the rapture type of thing. Be careful with that. People often become fixated on trying to identify the antichrist or they become fixated on trying to figure out the technology that we now have to be able to enforce the mark of the beast or they get all excited thinking about calculating the increased number of earthquakes and volcanoes and other natural disasters that may signal the end.

Beloved, we should be aware of signs of the times, of the seasons in which we live. That is acceptable. But being preoccupied with them is not what the Lord has intended. Beloved, let your heart be increasingly captivated by Christ. Let him be your focus—the majestic Son of God, the one who reigns over the universe that he created. The apostle Paul said that he counted all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Beloved, may I encourage you to marvel at the Lord's sovereignty over all things? Be absolutely in awe, as we study the Word, of the one who possesses heaven and earth. Allow yourselves to be enamored with the one who is just and perfect, the one whose purposes cannot be thwarted by man or by devil. Be amazed at the self existent, pre existent Christ, the first efficient cause and the well spring of all that has been created, and the final cause in which all things will ultimately be consummated.

Beloved, he intends for us to be able to see him through his Word, to be absolutely overwhelmed with his surpassing mercy, the surpassing mercy of the Lamb as well as the terrifying wrath of the Lion. He wants us to primarily focus on him, not to be focused on ourselves and the world around us and even the shortness of the hour. I mean, all of those things are secondary and tertiary. But, rather, he wants us to be absolutely ravished by his glory and grace. He must be preeminent in the study of this revelation of himself.

And I might add that as we look at the apocalypse we have an opportunity for a breathtaking view of his glory, of the second person of the triune godhead who came to us as the image of God, the exact likeness of his being, the embodiment of the glory of the triune godhead, the one who came the first time to give us a glimpse of his glory as well as a glimpse of the coming kingdom when he establishes it here on earth.

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Will you recall in Matthew 16 Jesus' promise that some of his disciples would not taste death until they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom? And it is interesting in the very next chapter, six days later, Jesus took Peter and James and John his brother, took them on to a mountain in a very remote place and there the Lord peeled back his flesh and the effulgence of his shekinah glory blazed forth. It blazed forth in terrifying brilliance. The text says that he was transfigured before them and his face shown like the sun and his garments became as white as light and behold Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him.

So there you have it. As promised, some of his disciples did see the coming of the kingdom, a glimpse of it through the Son of man before they tasted death. They were allowed to have a preview of the kingdom age to come, this very kingdom that we will all experience.

And it is interesting that Moses and Elijah were there representing the Old Testament, the Old Testament saints that will be a part of the kingdom. And, of course, Peter, James and John were there representing the new covenant saints that will also be there. There they all were together with the Lord beholding the ineffable majesty and grandeur of the Savior, the King, the preeminent one, the one who suffered and died, the one who is our pardon as well as our perfection. There they stood basking in the light of the presence of the living God, experiencing a preview of what we will all enjoy in the coming kingdom age.

Over 2700 years ago the prophet Isaiah predicted the light of Christ in his kingdom, that it would blaze forth in brilliance and majesty in Zion, a magnificent promise to his covenant people Israel and ultimately to all of us.

In chapter 60 and verse one he says:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.¹

Later in verse 20 we read:

Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And the days of your mourning will be over. Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.²

¹ Isaiah 60:1-3.

² Isaiah 60:20-21.

Oh, what an awesome, redeeming God we serve, dear friends. And for this reason our study must exalt the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So allow the Word to stir your spiritual affections with his infinite condescension that he would even come and stoop down to see us in our helplessness and in our sin and save us and love us even while we were yet sinners.

The Word is here to remind us, as well, that the world is not our home. You know, the more we follow Christ, the more we serve him, the more we learn of his Word, the more we feel like aliens, right? You talk to people that don't know Christ and you see the things that occupy their hearts and you feel like you are living in a parallel universe. And we really are. We are citizens of another kingdom. We await the return of the warrior king and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth, one that is utterly bereft of sin. And I might add, too, that as we study these things let it stir your heart to evangelism. Allow these things to help you catch a vision for sharing the love of God to fellow sinners that they might be saved from the wrath to come.

We live in a world that is obsessed with self, do we not? The world is not obsessed with Christ. That is for sure. I was thinking of some of the things I heard recently. Of course, you are all familiar with this one. "You deserve a break today," right? Stay true to yourself. Look out for number one. It is time to take care of me for a change. Stand up for your rights. And on and on it goes.

And as a result we have got a culture that is absolutely self oriented, an entitlement culture, a society filled with pleasure seekers. And, unfortunately, this terrible sin virus has found its way into the Church. So often we see churches with a man centered versus a God centered theology. Life is all about man and his needs rather than God and his glory. And, friends, the danger of all of this in the culture in which we live is to begin to subtly live for the glory of self rather than for the one who suffered and died in your stead and delivered you from the kingdom of darkness and from the shackles of Satan and sin.

So my challenge to you this morning is simply this. Meditate on the Word of God for the purpose of thinking more highly and more accurately of Christ. Allow the Word to saturate your very being with Christ. None of us think too highly of Christ, nor do we think too much about him. We tend to think of ourselves much more. Just ask yourself how much time did you devote last week to thinking about Christ?

So let's return to this study with our eyes fixed on the majestic Son of God, to behold his lordship and to tremble at his awesome holiness and his terrifying judgments while at the same time getting absolutely lost in the wonder of his tender mercies and love for us. This is the great hope that we have, beloved. This is our future that God has prepared for us because of his great love. So let's get lost in the wonder of it all.

Now, a bit of context before we look at the text. Remember by now the tribulation judgments upon an unbelieving world have passed. The final 70th week judgment upon Israel is over. A remnant of ethnic Israel has now been reconciled to God by his grace

through faith in their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has now returned in power and great glory. He has established the long anticipated and promised millennial kingdom and we studied here in Revelation a summary of this millennium. And that is what we have in Revelation 20, just a summary, a brief outline that is developed much more fully and in greater detail in the Old Testament prophecies.

So far we have studied the incarceration of Satan, the allocation of rulers and the resurrection of the saints in the first six verses. You will remember that when Christ the warrior king returns he immediately orders Satan to be bound and incarcerated in the abyss for the duration of the millennium. Imagine 1000 years of unthreatened holiness will characterize the messianic age. None of his demon horde will be roaming over the earth enacting their diabolical plots. And this will go on until the very end when Satan will be released briefly and ultimately destroyed eternally in an epical battle.

Hallelujah. The Lord Jesus Christ will take back from the usurper that which is his and he will rule and reign along with the resurrected Old Testament saints as we have studied, the New Testament saints and the resurrected tribulation saints, all of whom will be stationed around the globe in various places of honor and responsibility proportionate to their level of faithfulness and service during their mortal life.

So that is what we have studied thus far. And today, now, we will examine the fourth and the fifth scene in the text. We will look at the incineration of rebels in verses seven through nine as well as the retribution of Satan in verse 10, yet another demonstration of the perfect justice as well as the infinite power of God.

So the incineration of rebels, verse seven. Follow along as I read this text and then we will unpack it a bit here this morning.

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.³

Here the Lord demonstrates how incorrigible sin and rebellion truly are. Despite the munificent and the just reign of God himself upon the earth, we see here a great number of the descendants of those saints who first entered the kingdom now hate the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Although they will outwardly conform to the new covenant, inwardly they will defy it.

Now a question naturally arises. Why would God release Satan at the very end of the millennium? Why would he do this? Why would he allow this rebellion to occur?

³ Revelation 20:7-9.

Well, the text doesn't really tell us, but I believe it to be one final demonstration of the depravity of man that damns his soul. Think about it. Despite the supernatural Utopia of the tangible presence of the living God for 1000 years upon the earth, man's sin, his sin nature is so exceedingly powerful and utterly incurable apart from transforming grace that he will rebel against the lordship of Christ whom they are able to see and, instead, serve their father the devil.

Jesus reminded us of this staggering reality during his first coming when he said in John three beginning at verse 19:

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.⁴

People hate the light of Christ today. That is why this church is not filled and overflowing and they will hate Christ at the very end of his millennial reign. Practically speaking, I must say I grow weary of the tireless efforts of many evangelicals to come up with some unique strategy to make the gospel more relevant to the lost, as if the Holy Spirit is derelict in his duty, to somehow dim the light of the truth so that it won't be so bright and so exposing, so people will feel much more comfortable. Have you ever looked into a bar or some type of a night club?

One of the things you will quickly notice is that typically all of the windows are covered up and it is very dark inside. People constantly these days are reinventing ministry, trying to make the gospel more appealing, less offensive. We need to be funnier or we need to be friendlier or somehow somehow we have got to appeal to the emotions and to the will rather than to the mind. We need to hook them with maybe some kind of signs and wonders or some healing service or some testimony about how Jesus made you healthy and wealthy and successful and so forth. Or to come up with some gimmick. And I get them all the time through the email, through the regular mail. I think they call it the snail mail. I get it all the time as a pastor, some new gimmick to attract a crowd.

Some of the ones recently I heard of were door prizes. There was one group that offered a karate demonstration that would be guaranteed to bring people to your church. There is, of course, the famous power lifters and there is the ever present, ubiquitous Elvis impersonators. Or you could bring in some sports celebrity. The list goes on.

And then, of course, what you do in many situations is you practice the use of altar calls. You get the people in and then after about 32 verses of *Just As I Am* you continue to manipulate and beg people to walk down to the front of the sanctuary to some kind of imaginary altar as if that is what is here, once again appealing to the emotions and the will rather than the mind with the transforming power of the gospel of Christ.

⁴ John 3:19.

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I was having a conversation recently with a person who was advocating these things for our church and I asked this man, “Do you think it is possible for us to make the gospel irresistible?”

And he thought for a minute and he thought, “You know, I think maybe we could.” That was his mindset.

And I told him, “You know, I have got an idea. Now let’s just imagine this. Let’s just say that we could completely remove the curse from the earth and let’s have God come and inaugurate a perfect Utopia of peace and righteousness and health. Moreover, let’s incarcerate Satan and all of his demons so that there will no longer be any temptations, so that there will no longer be anything to somehow distract people from Christ, no more false teachers. And let’s—on top of all of this—let’s have Christ himself live upon the earth in all of his glory. Let’s let him rule and let him reign in perfect righteousness and let’s even add the glorified saints in with that mix. Now that would be the absolute perfect context for evangelism. Would you agree?”

And he very quickly agreed.

And I said, “With such a scenario no one could possibly reject Christ because now Christ would be simply irresistible.”

And he agreed.

And then I told him about the millennial reign in which those things will occur and what we see is something radically different. People will reject Christ by the billions. Unfortunately, this dear brother had no understanding of the millennial kingdom. He had never studied it. He had never heard it taught.

You see, dear friends—and please hear this—it is Christ who saves, not us.

Man left to himself will never choose Christ regardless of how appealing the context. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:2 we are “saints by calling.” And in verse 30 he says:

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."⁵

Beloved, there can be no better demonstration of this than the massive numbers of people who will reject Christ and follow Satan in literally a war against Christ as we see here at the close of his millennial reign.

In his excellent book *Jews, Gentiles and the Church*, David Larson who once spent a number of days with us here makes this observation, quote, “Why is Satan released in

⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

this manner and at this time? The successive periods of God's dealings with humankind all put certain hypotheses and theories to a test. Human conscience or government cannot fully answer our problems. The law cannot provide salvation and the hardened human heart often resists the gospel of the grace of God. But lurking down in human hearts and expressed in many a treatise on the human condition is the notion that were only human beings economically self sufficient, if only we are spared the graft and the crookedness and prejudice of public officials, if only we did not have to face to the insecurity of hostile threat and more, then we would do well."

He goes on to add, "God is determined to demonstrate to the whole universe and to all created beings his, quote, 'manifold wisdom,' end quote, Ephesians 3:10. For 1000 years human kind lives under the direct and just reign of the Son of God. No one lacks any good thing. Satan can be no excuse. No one can say, 'The devil made me do it.' Yet at the end of such a time unregenerate human hearts are ready to follow the evil genius of Satan in revolt against God. Thus is disclosed the depths of the depraved heart, the intransigent and debilitating reality of sin. God's insistence that only redemption and regeneration can address the sin problem is unequivocal. On a grand scale God has conclusively proved social planners and do-gooders are absolutely mistaken. No sociological scheme, however well intentioned, can truly address the need of the human heart. Only the new birth can change the deep dyed sinfulness we all share," end quote.

Oh, the depth of his love that saved a helpless sinner like me and like you by the uninfluenced choice of his sovereign grace.

Now notice when Satan is released from the pit we read that he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog. The four corners of the earth refers to the four points of the compass, north, east, south and west, indicating that this massive horde will come from all over the earth. These rebels who, again, will be compliant on the outside but defiant on the inside, like many that we know today, will somehow become convinced that they will be able to defeat the Messiah who opposes the free expression of their lusts, their sin, the one who rules them with a righteous rod of iron.

We only have to look at our own country to see the violent hatred unbelievers have toward the Lord's will revealed in his Word.

Now we don't know what manner of deception Satan will use to deceive these people who are already predisposed to hate Christ. But he will have had 1000 years to devise his scheme. And I believe that it will be the most incredible ploy he has ever concocted.

The names Gog and Magog, used to describe these rebels, are merely emblematic of the enemies of the Messiah during the last days. These are the collective names or the collective enemies of the Lord that these names represent. In fact in Numbers chapter 24 verse seven the Septuagint used the term "Gog" to translate the name Agag which is believed to have been the title for the Amalekite king which carries the sense of "the supreme one," like the title Pharaoh of Egypt. So Gog is most likely a general title the

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Holy Spirit uses to describe this leader of the enemies of God, the supreme one who opposes God.

There are a variety of interpretations of Magog, all having some merit. The ancient historian Josephus identified it with the land of the Scythians. In fact, Noah's grandson was named Magog, the son of Japheth as we read in Genesis 10 verse two. These people later became known as the Scythians that inhabited the region north of the Black and Caspian Seas. Others see Magog as the people in southeast Anatolia later known as the Asiatic people such as the Mongols and the Huns. But regardless of their identity it is agreed that this defiance upon varied people in rebellion to God.

Now the allusion here in Revelation 20 is to Ezekiel's prophecy in chapter 38 and verse two where the same names appear, Gog and Magog. And, again, they appeared there to describe the leader and his allied armies from neighboring countries around Israel that the Lord will energize to come down upon Israel from the north. And I believe as we have studied before and as I have argued that this will occur just before the tribulation. I believe that this could happen very, very soon. And then, of course, the Lord will destroy them.

But the scene here in Revelation 20 is different. Here Gog and Magog are not comprised of countries neighboring Israel, but rather they originate from the four corners of the earth according to verse eight. And also in Ezekiel's text the attack is launched from the north and they come down upon Jerusalem and they are destroyed on the mountains of Israel. But here the attack comes from every direction and surround Jerusalem on the broad plain of the earth and it is there that they will be destroyed.

Moreover, I would argue that chronologically the events of Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39 concerning Gog and Magog precede the description of the millennial temple detailed in the subsequent chapters there in Ezekiel chapter 40 through 48. While the events concerning the Gog and Magog of Revelation 20 occur at the end of the millennium. So the two are very different battles yet similar enemies in that they all oppose Christ and his people.

Bear in mind that, once again, the target of these attacking forces will be the radically restored temple mount where the Lord will be enthroned in his glorious temple, the one that he has constructed from which he will rule and reign over the nations during the millennial age. In fact, Isaiah chapter 24 verse 23 tells us, "The LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders."⁶

So here Satan in the guise of Gog will lead his world-wide military coalition against the millennial temple.

Now notice in verse nine.

⁶ Isaiah 24:23.

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“And they came up on the broad plain of the earth.”⁷

I would remind you that in Zechariah’s prophecy in chapter 14 and verse 10 we read that Jerusalem will rise. When the Lord returns he is going to radically renovate the earth, return it back to Edenic splendor and one of the things will happen is that Jerusalem will rise. And there in that text we are also told that this broad plain will extend, quote, “from Geba...” which, by the way, is 10 miles north of Jerusalem, “to Rimmon,” which is 35 miles southwest of the city. So this plain surrounding Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom will be a plain of somewhere around 100 square miles. It will be a massive place.

Isaiah chapter two and verse two indicates that the entire topography surrounding Jerusalem will literally be flattened in order to elevate Jerusalem and, thus, distinguish the temple mount in its very center.

There we read, “the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.”⁸

My, what a day that will be.

Now think about it. The beloved city as we read here in verse nine will be the most elevated place in all of the earth with the temple mount being the highest and the most prominent point in all of the earth. Moreover, the millennial temple will be the most magnificent structure the world has ever known having been built by God himself. And it will be displayed above all else in the world like a dazzling diamond upon the earth encompassing one square mile. That is a large temple as we read in Ezekiel chapter 42 verses 15 through 20.

Furthermore, this broad plain of the earth will be a well-watered, fertile lowland filled with all manner of magnificent plants and streams. It will be another Garden of Eden as will, frankly, the whole world. And so this will provide a glorious frame around the splendor of Jerusalem, the millennial temple on Mount Zion where the Lord will be preeminent. And isn’t it interesting that this will be the broad plain of the earth where the final slaughter will take place?

Now notice also the Lord says this army will, in verse nine, “surround the camp of the saints.”⁹

This is not only a reference to the dwelling place of the saint who will live in and around Jerusalem, but also, according to Ezekiel chapter 48 verses 10 through 22, there will be a holy allotment of land around the temple mount reserved as a place for the priests and the Levites and the servants of the temple to dwell.

⁷ Revelation 20:9.

⁸ Isaiah 2:2.

⁹ Revelation 20:9.

Now imagine, if you can, that in the midst of such divine splendor and holiness you have this kind of evil that exists. It is unfathomable, isn't it? But, you know, it happened once before at the beginning of human history in the Garden of Eden. And here, dear friends, it happens one final time at the end of human history in the garden of the earth where the Lord once again is dwelling amongst his people.

Although Israel and the nations will be disarmed having forgotten the skills and terrors of military warfare, somehow a vast (according to the text) number like the sand of the seashore will amass themselves against Jerusalem to destroy the temple and the Messiah king who dwells there.

But notice their fate in verse nine. "And fire came down from heaven and devoured them."¹⁰ Short and to the point. In an instant, an uncountable number of proud rebels will be incinerated. Fire from heaven will devour them. And with that, human history will end. Man's long battle against his Creator will end with incineration being a fitting climax to his treason against the one who offered to save him by his grace.

But the scene does not end there. We see, fifthly, the retribution or, in other words, the reckoning of Satan.

Verse 10. "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."¹¹

My mind goes back to the promise that God made in Genesis 3:15 that he would eventually bruise Satan's head. And here, dear friends, we witness that final and fatal blow. Satan is now thrown into the same lake of fire where the antichrist and the false prophet have been for 1000 years, a place Jesus described as outer darkness, a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth, a place of a never dying worm and unquenchable fire all of which speak of a place, as Robert Thomas puts it, quote, "of mental agony and corporal suffering combined in proportion to the guilt of those who have sinned, Luke 12:47-48," end quote. This will be the fate of all those who reject Christ as Savior and Lord.

Dear friend, if you are without Christ, this will be your fate unless you repent, unless you trust in Christ who is your only hope of salvation. Dear Christian, were it not for God's grace this horrifying place of unending torment would be our eternal dwelling place.

How thankful we should be.

I want to leave you with some thoughts, some biblical insights that unfortunately escape the notice of many people, even many Christians, but certainly our political leaders. In fact, what I am about to say and frankly everything that I have said before what I am about to say would be things that they would scoff at.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Revelation 20:10.

Only a fool would deny that the most disputed piece of real estate in all of the earth is the temple mount in Jerusalem. If you study geo politics, if you turn on the news you will very quickly get the idea that if somehow those pesky Jews would just relinquish the temple mount, better yet, the link with Jerusalem, better yet leave Israel and the land all together and give it to the Palestinians, then somehow all of the Arab Muslim world would be happy and we could finally achieve Utopia and live in peace.

It all centers around that one little piece of property.

You know our study of Revelation explains why this is the case, why the temple mount is so disputed, because, dear friends, it is there that the Messiah, warrior king will return and build his glorious temple and it is from Mount Zion that he will reign. That is why Satan wants to prevent this. Mount Zion will one day be the worship center of the world. Satan knows this and he is trying to prevent it.

Today he is working through one of the most wicked, vile, false religions the world has ever known, the religion of Islam, trying to thwart the purposes of God as they relate to his covenant promises to Israel in the establishment of his messianic kingdom.

I was reading recently a Palestinian leader Jeris Soudah who made this statement regarding the temple mount, quote, "The principle of negotiation on this piece of property is not acceptable in the Arab Islamic world. They can negotiate on East and West Jerusalem. But when it comes to the temple mount, there is no such negotiation. Even if it is going to get us into World War III," end quote.

That is the sentiment of these dear people that we should love and pray for that they might come to the knowledge of Christ.

Indeed, the Muslim world is determined to rid Jerusalem of the Jews and prevent them from building a temple. In fact, a sermon that was given in the Al Aqsa mosque, you have seen that Dome of the Rock. I have been in it. Some of you have been in it. It stands right now where the holy of holies once stood. In fact, they have got a big cover around the spot where you could see where the ark of the covenant once rested upon the rock.

A sermon that was presented there in September 10 of 1999 describes how determined the Muslims are and I quote, "Oh, Muslims, do you want glory? Do you want to remove the corruption around you? Do you want victory? Do you want to be able to carry Islam to the whole world? Do you want to please Allah?" The preacher went on to say, "The Islamic state of the prophet, may peace be upon him, established was able to carry Islam to the world by Jihad. Allah says, 'And fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah together and everywhere,'" end quote. [?]

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He went on to add, "Islam says about the Jews that they are enemies. Islam says about the Jews, 'fight them, kill them, drive them out.' Islam says about the Jews that they are infidels." He went on to add, "I swear by Allah that the Islamic state is close and it will overthrow their thrones and it will overthrow this alleged peace process."

And finally he said, "And we say to the rulers of the Muslim world, to the Jews and to the rulers of the world, quote, 'We are coming to the promise of Allah about you,'" end quote.

Well, certainly this is the satanically inspired rhetoric of those who are deceived. But through this we can see the shadows of Bible prophesy casting themselves forward once again.

Of course the Jews in Israel are fully aware of these threats in ways that we probably can't even imagine given the fact that they live in the midst of all of this. Recently I read an article from an Israeli publication called *Flame* which stand for Facts and Logic about the Middle East. And there in that article they speak of a coming war in the holy land. And, again, I believe this to be the war of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Here is what the article said in part, quote, "The Arab countries and Iran are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only. Their only political objective and their relentless obsession, namely the destruction of Israel.

"Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities and millions of Arab casualties would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered the five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, with 40,000 Palestinian, quote, unquote, police armed to the teeth in Israel's midst, can anybody really doubt that a second holocaust even more terrible than the first one is just about upon us?" end quote.

Beloved, I believe that the Lord is about to bring Gog and Magog down upon Israel as promised in Ezekiel 38 and 39. As we study that text we see that he will defeat this massive coalition of Russian and Arab Muslim nations, defeat them on the mountains of Israel. And he says repeatedly so that the nations will know that I am the Lord.

The antichrist will then emerge. He will establish a peace treaty with Israel which will actually trigger the seven years of tribulation, Daniel's 70th week, a time in which God will judge the world in ways that we cannot imagine. Then the Lord will return in all of his glory. He will establish his glorious kingdom for 1000 years. Then he will release Satan at the very end and then, finally, destroy all who follow him and permanently defeat Satan forever and ever.

Beloved, this is our future and it is upon us. And I pray that you know and that you love my Savior. Oh, how I pray that each of you who know him will be fervent in serving

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him, knowing that someday—and I believe someday soon—certainly if we die today we are going to see him face to face.

How I pray that you will exalt Christ in your life. However we paint the future picture of Bible prophecy through our understanding of Scripture, we must—as John Calvin said—quote, “Hunger after Christ to the dawning of that great day when our Lord will fully manifest the glory of his kingdom. The whole family of the faithful will keep in view that day,” end quote.

I wish to challenge you on two things as we close this morning. Number one, will you use these prophetic truths to give you boldness in proclaiming Christ, to pray for opportunities to share the gospel, to literally target people and to keep in your mind that the one you serve is the sovereign, glorious God of creation, the one who sustains all things and who will bring all things to a consummation that will ultimately glorify himself.

Beloved, we have nothing to fear. But will you take advantage of those opportunities that the Lord brings your way?

And, secondly, will you purpose to think much about Christ? I think about the words of the apostle Paul of 2 Timothy two and verse 25 and verse 26. He talks about “Perhaps,” he says, “God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”¹²

Will you think much about Christ and his saving work? Literally today say to yourself, “There is going to be some time this week and in the weeks to come where I am going to set aside a certain amount of time, five minutes, 10 minutes. Would to God it could be an hour where I will do nothing but meditate on Christ, where I will open up his Word and allow it to... allow me to see his glory.”

I think of that great chorus.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face.
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of his glory and grace.

Sing it with me.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face.
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of his glory and grace.

¹² 2 Timothy 2:25-26.

Let's pray together.

Father, would that by the power of your Spirit these things be so. Convict us and conform us for the glory of Christ. I ask in Jesus' name. Amen

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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