

(1 Corinthians) the Time Is Short

by Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen emphasizes the urgency of recognizing biblical signs indicating that the second coming of Christ is imminent.

Duration: 47:51

Scripture: Matthew 24:33, Matthew 24:42, Luke 19:13, 1 Corinthians 7:29, 1 Corinthians 7:31-34, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Topics: "End Times", "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses various events and prophecies mentioned in the book of Revelation and the book of Daniel. He highlights the future event where two witnesses sent by God will testify to the truth during the reign of the Antichrist. These witnesses will be slain by the Antichrist, and their dead bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days before being raised up and taken into heaven. The preacher also emphasizes the technological advancements that allow the whole world to witness such events, as implied in the scriptures. Additionally, he mentions the significance of Israel being brought back to the land and Jerusalem becoming a burden to all nations as signs of the second coming of Christ.

Transcript

But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it, for the form of this world is passing away. The Bible teaches that history will culminate with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to establish the kingdom of God. Although the scriptures never give us the exact time of Christ's return, they do give us certain things to watch for that will indicate that his return is near.

All around us today, we are seeing signs that tell us the time is short. Today, we're going to consider some of the signs of Christ's soon return and then see what our response is to be. So beginning, first of all, with the signs, there are many, many things that we could spend a lot of time talking about that I think indicate that the second coming of Christ is near, but there are just a few that we're going to be able to highlight this morning.

The first sign that we want to talk about is the sign of the nation of Israel. Israel is more or less God's time clock, and you can actually, by looking at Israel, you can get a pretty good idea of where we are on God's time clock. You see, the Bible made it clear that because of the continual rebellion of the nation that God

would send them into captivity and that they would be in captivity for a great length of time.

But yet he would eventually regather them, he would bring them back into their own land, and the fact that they would come back into their own land was to be a sign that all of God's purposes were near to being fulfilled. Jesus alluded to this in Luke chapter 21. Let me read to you verses 20 through 24.

Jesus said, But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

But woe to those who are pregnant, woe to those who are nursing babies in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now, here in this particular passage, which is similar to some of the other statements found in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Mark, the difference is Jesus here is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred back in the year 70 AD under Titus, the Roman who came and brought desolation to Jerusalem.

And he says concerning Jerusalem that Jerusalem would be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the fullness of the Gentiles or until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. So he said they would be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem would be trampled until.

So the implication is clearly that when the people would be restored and Jerusalem was no longer being trampled by the Gentiles, that we would be in the time of the end. So as we go back to the year 1948, we find that it was there in that year that Israel was reestablished as a nation after being in dispersion from 70 AD to that point. Then in June of 1967, we find that Jerusalem was then taken once again by the Jews and became the capital of the nation.

So the fact that Israel was scattered and led into captivity and now has been regathered is a strong indicator to us that we are living near to the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Another thing the scripture said concerning Jerusalem. Is that Jerusalem would become a burden to all of the nations, listen to the prophecy of Zachariah, and it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples, all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

So we see not only has Israel come back into the land, not only has Jerusalem become the capital, but we see that Jerusalem itself is indeed a burdensome stone to all of the nations. Here is a nation of people who coming back into the land in 1948 were seeking a homeland, seeking a place that they could live in peacefully, that they could establish as their homeland and a place where they would no longer experience the kind of persecution that they had experienced for so many centuries. But as all of us know, peace has eluded the nation of Israel.

They have not been able since the day the nation was established to live in any peace consistently. They're constantly in danger of being invaded from the nations around them, and Jerusalem indeed has become a burdensome stone to all the nations. So as we look at Israel, we see that the regathering of Israel was to be assigned to us that the second coming of Christ is near.

So as we find the people now back in the land and as we find things unfolding, just as God said that they would, this is a sign to us that the time is short. I read an article last night concerning the development of missile technology in Iran. And the interesting thing to me was not only the fact that the Iranians are developing their missile technology so quickly that by next year, they're going to have the capacity to strike Israel, to strike Europe, and also perhaps to strike even the east coast of the United States.

But the thing that I found even more fascinating was that Russia is behind all of this current development, that Russia is supporting, that they are passing on information, that they are sending technicians to Iran, and that there is really a joint effort between the Russians and the Iranians in this particular area. And of course, the great enemy of Iran, Iraq, all of the Arabic nations that are predominantly Islamic, the great enemy is Jerusalem. And the first priority is to free Jerusalem from the hand of the Jews and then, of course, to bring the rest of the world into submission to Allah.

Now, the thing that I found fascinating about the Russia-Iran connection is the fact that Ezekiel prophesied in chapters 37, 38, and 39 of his prophecy that in the last days there would be a coalition of nations. And he specifically uses the term latter days. These nations would come together in the latter days, and they would come down against Jerusalem.

And the leader of this coalition is known as Gog. Gog and Magog, and those who have studied ancient geography and linguistics and so forth, have concluded that that is a reference to what we know today as modern day Russia. There's references to Gog, Magog, Rosh, and Tubal, these places, all are references to the area that is known today as Russia.

That they would lead the coalition, and the first nation that's mentioned with them is the nation of Persia. And of course, modern day Iran is ancient Persia. So I thought, here again we're seeing exactly what the Bible said would take place, and of course, again, these things are all to precede the second coming of Christ.

They're to actually lead up to it. So the first sign that the time is short is the sign of Israel being back in the land and becoming a burden to all the nations as God said that it would. The second sign that we want to briefly mention is the sign that a final world empire is forming, and I think that is being seen in Europe.

For that's exactly what the Bible says would take place, that the final world ruling empire would emerge out of Europe. The Bible teaches that out of Europe, the final world empire will emerge. The European Union seems very likely to be a fulfillment of those prophecies.

The European Union is poised to become the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth. Now, you know that the process is taking a bit longer than people had estimated or hoped for, and there's still a lot of conflict and things aren't what they are projected to be. But if things do come together, as is hoped for by many in the European Parliament, it won't be long before Europe will rise to this position of prominence worldwide.

Now, again, the significant thing is that that is what the Bible says would happen. And this, of course, just even 50 years ago, seemed another impossibility, especially 50 years ago when Europe lied in rubble as a result of the Second World War. Who would have ever imagined that Europe could once again rise to a place of world dominance? But yet, of course, that's what the scripture said would take place.

Let me give you some statements from the prophecy of Daniel, chapter 7, verses 17 and then verses 23 through 26. Daniel had had a vision and in his vision he saw a number of a beast. And these beasts that followed in succession one after another, they were actually representative of the four kingdoms that would rise and have domination over Israel and also actually have world domination.

So verse 17 of chapter 7 says, those great beasts, which are for our four kingdoms, our four kingdoms, which shall arise out of the earth. Now, the fourth kingdom is the one that we're particularly interested in. Daniel was interested in that one as well.

So he asked a question concerning the fourth beast, and the response was this. The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. Now, along with this fourth beast, there were 10 horns on the beast and the 10 horns are 10 kings who shall arise from this kingdom.

So going back and doing just a little bit of a of a history lesson at the time that Daniel had received this this vision, those those beasts were representative of, first of all, the Babylonian empire. Babylonian empire was the empire that had conquered Jerusalem, and Daniel was now a captive in Babylon. And then there was also to follow the Babylonian empire, the Persian empire.

And then there was the Grecian empire, and then the fourth empire would have been the Roman empire. But the interesting thing about the Roman empire is that there is a second phase to it represented by the 10 horns. So the beast itself represented the first phase of the Roman empire.

The 10 horns represent the second phase or the 10 kings who shall arise from this kingdom. This has not yet happened. 10 kings have not yet arisen from the ashes of the Roman empire to become.

A world governing power, but this is something yet in the future and then. Another shall rise after them. So there will be initially 10 kings, but then another king shall rise after them.

He shall be different from the first ones. He shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the most high, shall persecute the saints of the most high and shall intend to change times and law.

Then the saint shall be given into his hand for a time and a times and a half a time. But the court shall be seated and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it forever. So we've seen Babylon come and go.

We've seen Persia come and go. We've seen Greece come and go. We've seen Rome in its first phase come and go.

But the second phase of Rome, I believe, is developing in what we know as the European Union, which will initially be even as it is presently under the rule of a handful, but will eventually be given over to the rule of one man, the man that we commonly call the Antichrist. So as we see things forming in Europe and following the biblical pattern, this again, I think, is clearly an indication that the coming of Christ is soon. And I personally think that anyone who disregards this or sees this as not having any significance whatsoever in as far as the second coming of Christ is concerned is a person who isn't taking their Bible as seriously as they ought to.

I think it's very clear that if you look at the scriptures and if you study them seriously, you have to conclude that these things are a fulfillment of what God said would happen. Now, this leads us to the next sign, which is the sign of globalization, the sign of globalized, because what the Bible goes on to say is that there will finally be a one-world government with a one-world economy and a one-world religion. So we see Europe coming together.

We see the emergence of this new power in Europe, but not only do we see Europe emerging as perhaps the ultimate power on the earth, but we see the nations of the world moving toward what is called globalism or globalization moving toward a one-world order. Nations that were once fiercely independent and would have never thought of anything like this are now actually pursuing this and opposed to anyone who would resist it. People in power are looking for finally a one-world government, looking for finally a one-world economy, looking for also a one-world religion.

All of this is quickly coming to pass, and I don't think I need to go into detail on it. It's fairly obvious if you just read the papers and just stay current with what's going on, you stay current with the general mentality among people in political positions today and people in religious positions, you see that everything's moving in that direction. Quickly moving in that direction.

Now, the final sign, and as I said initially there are many other things, but just highlight these four. The final sign is that of technological advancement. Technological advancement is not specifically stated in the Bible as being a sign, but it's implied.

There are certain things that the Bible says that imply technological advancement. Let me give you three examples. Example number one is that in the book of Revelation, in the 11th chapter, we're told about an event that will happen in the future where two witnesses, two men who are sent by God to testify to the truth during the reign of the Antichrist, where these two men will finally be slain by this man known as the Antichrist.

And we're told that their dead bodies will lie in the street of the city of Jerusalem for three days, and the entire world will view their dead bodies lying in the street. And after three days, the spirit of life will be given to them. They'll be raised up, and they'll be taken into heaven, and the whole world is going to observe this.

Now, the implication there is technological advancement. How could the whole world observe an event that happened in Jerusalem even 60 years ago? It wasn't possible. But through technological advancement, through satellite telecommunications and things of this nature, we have the technology.

That can happen. We could tune in right now and see a live event going on anywhere in the world because of technological advancement. So it's implied in some of the things that are stated.

Another evidence of technological advancement would be the mark of the beast. Again, Revelation chapter 13 declares that there's coming a time when every person on the earth is going to be required to receive a mark on their right hand or in their forehead. And without this mark, they're not going to be able to buy or sell.

Now, again, 100 years ago, how was something like that going to be possible? What were they going to do? And because of that, people who were critical of the Bible said, oh, you know, these things are impossible to understand. This is all symbolic. There couldn't be anything that's, you know, literal being

spoken of here.

And the whole world, oh, of course, you know, the Bible, when it talks about the world, it must be referring to just this little Mediterranean area, this small area geographically. But now we see we have the technology. The technology is available today so that every person on the earth could receive a mark in their right hand or on their forehead and be unable to buy or sell apart from that.

We see not only that the technology is available. In some cases, it's being implemented, as I've pointed out in the past. It's being implemented with pets.

The military, many of the world's armies are implementing these kinds of things for certain military personnel. They're talking about giving them some sort of a computer chip that's inserted into their body at some place in order to always be able to locate them. And then people have, in a sense, in jest, but yet you see behind it there's, you know, there's something quite serious.

People have suggested that maybe one day soon we would be able to do something so wonderful for everyone. That we would no longer have to have the problems that are related to a currency. That we would no longer have to have the problems that are related to credit cards and things of that nature.

That we could just do away with all of these things by simply giving someone a mark. Oh, the convenience of it. How nice it would be to just be able to go into the market and run your hand under a scanner.

And there the direct debit comes. See, it's all so, it sounds so perfectly consistent with the way things have moved. So we see that implied in the scripture is technological advancement.

It's implied there. And I think another area where it could be implied is in the statement of Jesus that unless the days toward the end were shortened that no flesh would remain. I think it could be implied there the development of the kind of weapons that we are seeing being developed today.

The development of nuclear weapons, the development of biological chemical weapons. We've been reading recently about this germ anthrax. Just a few ounces has the potential to kill the entire population of London.

And then we think of people who are developing that. And we heard earlier about the missile technology. So through satellite telecommunications, through the ability now through computers and things of that nature to keep track of people.

The development of the nuclear and chemical and biological weapons. All of these things are a fulfillment of what the scripture implied. Didn't say specifically but implied that there would be technological advancement.

So these are the four things. And as I said again, there are many other things that we could go into great detail on. But these are the things that I think stand out at the forefront.

Those things that indicate to us that the second coming of Christ is near. Once again, Israel being in the land, being brought back after almost 2000 years and Jerusalem becoming a burden to all the nations. That has happened.

The emergence of a final world power in Europe. We see that developing with the European Union. The whole global mentality that has swept through virtually every country.

And then the technological advancement. So these are the signs of the times. Remember Paul said, the time is short.

As we look at the world around us. I think we can conclude literally the time is short. Now, Paul, of course, wrote those words 2000 years ago.

And Paul, like every other Christian after him, was anticipating the coming of the Lord in his lifetime. He hoped and believed that Christ would come in his lifetime, but he didn't. Some people say, oh, well, Paul was mistaken.

How could he have been an inspired apostle? He made a mistake. No, he didn't make a mistake. Because what the Bible does consistently is remind us that whether or not Christ comes back in our lifetime, the time is short.

There is an appointed end to time as we know it, which the world doesn't think in those kinds of terms. But there is an appointed end. There's an appointed end for each one of us.

Because, of course, our lives, as the Bible says, are like a vapor that appear for a moment. And then they are gone. So Paul was absolutely right in saying to the Corinthians, the time is short in the sense that time will culminate.

It will come to an end. There was an urgency even in Paul's day. But if that was true then, which it was, it is certainly true today.

It is true today, even if Christ were not going to come for another 500 years. But I think all of the evidence indicates that he is going to come much sooner than that. And so we move on to our next point.

And that is, what is our response to be? As we look around and we see these things, Bible prophecy literally being fulfilled before our eyes. What is our response to be? Well, Paul gave us the answer. He said, the time is short so that from now on, even those who have wives should be as though they had none.

Those who weep as though they did not weep. Those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice. Those who buy as though they did not possess.

And those who use this world as not misusing it. Jesus said the same thing when he said this. He said, let your waist be girded and your lamps burning and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master.

Jesus was saying the same thing. Paul was really just echoing the words of Jesus himself. This is how Jesus told us we are to live.

We are to live like people who are waiting for their master to return. In other words, we are to live with a constant anticipation of the kingdom of God coming. We're not to live with the attitude that, oh, that's a far distant event that doesn't have any relationship to me.

And I shouldn't concern myself with it right now. But you know, the sad thing, many in the church in positions of leadership have taken that very position. And there are multitudes of churches today that.

You could go into and ask a question concerning the book of Revelation, perhaps ask the question, do you teach the book of Revelation? Do you believe the book of Revelation has relevance to today? And the

answer would be absolutely not. We don't see any relevance in it. It's a highly symbolic book that's impossible to be interpreted.

And it probably was fulfilled back in the time of the Roman Empire. That's what you would find from churches that even believe the Bible. And you would find from many who even are Bible believers that they would say that we can't know any of the things about the second coming of Christ.

That's an event that we're not going to really know anything about. And it's probably hundreds or maybe even thousands of years from today. I think that position is absolutely ridiculous.

Jesus said we're not to live that way. And the Christians in the first century didn't live that way. They lived with expectation and anticipation of the Lord's return.

That's why Paul said the time is short. So Jesus said, this is how you're to be your ways to be girded in your lamps burning. In those days, of course, they would wear a long flowing garment.

And in order to be freed up to move swiftly, they would have to pull that garment up and then gird it around their waist. So Jesus is saying, in essence, he's saying, do not be restricted. Be unencumbered.

Be freed up to move swiftly. That's what Paul is saying. Those who have wives should be as though they have none.

Those who weep as though they did not. Those who rejoice as though they did not. Those who buy as though they did not possess.

And then he goes on and he says concerning the world that we're not to misuse the world. The word misuse can be translated abuse. Can also be translated to consume entirely.

You see, this is the point that we as Christian people are not to be like non-Christian people. Because as the scripture says, the non-Christian, he has his lot in this life. The non-Christian thinks only in terms of the here and now, the material world.

This is it. This is all there is to it. And you've got to get all you can while you're here.

For years, there was an advertisement for one of the popular beers, Budweiser. And the advert was that you only go around once in life. So get all you can.

Get all you can out of this world. You only have one opportunity. So get all you can.

Paul talked about that philosophy. That philosophy was prevalent in Paul's day. It was reworded just slightly different.

Let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. It's the same philosophy. Get all you can right now because this is the end of it.

But is this the end of it? You see, that's the big question. If materialism is true. If there is nothing more than the material world, then Paul even agreed that that philosophy was as good as any other to live by.

And actually, Paul, in that context there, which we'll come to later on in this book, he was arguing for the resurrection. He was saying if there is no resurrection, then that philosophy is valid, just as valid as anything else. Because if there is no resurrection, then materialism is true.

And we don't have to worry about anything beyond this life. Of course, he said the resurrection is a fact. Therefore, to live by that philosophy is utter folly.

To live by the Budweiser philosophy is utter folly. You only go around once in life. Get all you can.

That's the philosophy of the world. But that's where God calls us to be different. You see, the natural man is in that position.

He looks at this life and he sees that he needs to leave his mark in the world. So he goes out and he seeks to establish his dynasty. He seeks to leave his name as one of the great names.

He wants to leave this great legacy of himself. Pass it on to his children and so forth. The scriptures talk about these kind of people, but then they go on to say, but actually what they don't realize is that when they die, there's something beyond death.

There's a judgment. There's an appointment with God. There's a time to give an account for this life.

And what will be realized at that point for many, tragically too late, is that that wasn't what life was really supposed to be all about. What life is supposed to be all about is serving God and living for his glory and for his purpose. And that's what Paul is reminding us of.

That is simply what he's saying. That we as Christian people are not to live as non-Christians and we are not to be so consumed with the things of this life that we are distracted from the more important aspect of life, which is spiritual. In other words, the spiritual is to be the priority for the Christian, not the material or the natural.

Now, I have a wife and I have certain obligations as a husband and as a father. But as a Christian, what I have to do with my relationship with my wife, with my relationship with my children, is I have to bring us into the proper focus. I have to keep the spiritual before us.

It's so easy to be consumed with the natural and with the material, even from the perspective of being a family man, providing for the family, both for now and for the future and things like that. That's just part of what people do. And there's nothing intrinsically the matter with that as long as we have our priorities right.

We can certainly provide for our families and we're called to do so to a certain degree. But we are never to do so to the exclusion of the spiritual. We're never to do so to the extent that we put that above the spiritual.

That's what Paul is saying. So those who have wives should be as though they had none. In other words, we're not to get all caught up in that kind of lifestyle that's so typical of so many families.

Coming from the U.S., there was what was known as the American dream. The American dream was to own your own home, to have maybe two nice cars, to have a maybe a house for holiday somewhere where you could go in the summertime, you know, have enough money in the bank to send your kids off to get a college education. These were all things that were part of the American dream.

And most people spend their lives pursuing those things, seeking to attain the American dream. American dream is fine for America, but it's not going to get you anywhere. It's not going to get you into heaven.

And it's not going to matter whether or not you fulfilled it when you die. That's the point the Bible's making. See, we're to be focused on, you know, if you want to use these terms, the heavenly dream.

That's much more than a dream. It's a reality. We're to be focused on the things above.

The scriptures remind us that our citizenship is in heaven. You see, again, what Paul is saying to Christians, and this is what the New Testament is very clear about, Christians were never to settle in this world. And one of the reasons why the church has failed to a large degree in its mission is because of the tendency to settle down in the world.

The church settles down in the world, and then eventually it becomes so much like the world that there's no distinction any longer between the two. And once the distinction is gone, the impact is gone. There's no effect.

It's like Jesus said, the salt when it's lost its savor is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trampled underfoot by men. But you see, it all starts with settling down in the world. And when you read the New Testament, you find that the New Testament church was a church that wasn't settling down in the world.

The apostles were always reminding the Christians in their writing that they were pilgrims and sojourners, that this was all a temporal thing over and over again. Those those things are brought to our attention in the pages of the New Testament. And as you read the New Testament, what you end up getting out of that, if you take it seriously, is you end up, in a sense, very unsettled, but at the same time, completely secure.

Because, you know, your security is not in the world that's changing day by day and eventually passing away, but our security is in the eternal God who never changes. So in a sense, we're completely unsettled. But in another sense, we're completely secure.

That's what Paul is calling us to. That's what he's saying. The time is short.

And so we are not to settle down in this world. We're not to make the things of this world the priority. That's not to say we negate our responsibility.

Of course, we have to fulfill our obligations. But we cannot let those things become the priority in our lives. We have to be ready to drop whatever we're doing.

And to be available to the Lord. For whatever he might have for us, you see, the Christian is called to be a servant of Christ, and that means we are under the direction and the authority of Christ. We're not under our own direction.

We're not here to fulfill our own goals or our own plans. And any Christian who has planned out their own life without a serious time of consultation with the Lord is misunderstanding what it is to be a Christian. You see, I don't do that as a Christian.

I don't plan out my life. What I have to do is I have to consult the Lord. I might have goals and things that I would like to attain.

I might have certain plans that I would like to see fulfilled. But I must always say, not my will, but yours be done. Now, Paul reminds us here, finally.

That we're not to misuse, abuse, consume entirely this world. And the reason for that is for the form of this world is passing away. The word form, the Greek word is the word we get our English word scheme from.

Schema is how you pronounce it in Greek, but it's the word we get our English word scheme. We all know what a scheme is. Well, the world has a scheme.

There is a scheme that it's being carried out in a larger sense in the world. But of course, every individual has their own scheme as well. But what the scriptures remind us of is that the scheme of this world is passing away.

All of the plans. All of the all of the working, all of the design. You know, I think of this new form of government that will come eventually.

And how this has been in the works for so many years. It's interesting to go back to the end of the Second World War and to see the seeds of all that's developing today. To listen to people like Winston Churchill back at the time.

Or in the States to listen to, you know, maybe some of the the chiefs of staff, General Bradley, or even the President Eisenhower, even back to Truman. And, you know, the great world leaders at the time, they all realized after the Second World War that we could not do this again. And therefore, they began to seriously at that time talk about coming together finally in what would ultimately be a one world government.

All of us living together in peace, coexisting with one another, which, of course, I mean, there's nothing the matter with living peacefully with one another. I mean, that's a good idea. But the problem with it is, it's the same old thing.

Man trying to live apart from his creator. Man trying to develop his own scheme apart from the scheme of God. But going back to my point, the thing that I find interesting is that all of the planning that's been going on and all of the orchestration that's taken place over these, you know, 50 years or so.

And we're moving toward the fruition of all this. But it will all collapse so quickly. Man's utopia will last a mere seven years.

And then it will come to an end. And that will bring to a final end all of man's schemes to govern himself, which he has been attempting to do from the day that the rebellion took place in the garden. Well, the garden, people say, you don't believe that, do you? Isn't that a fairy tale? Now, there was a real garden and there were two people originally there.

And they started this whole mess because of their, because of their attempt to live independent of God. And that's what all of the scheming is finally all about. It's to live independent of God.

It's to establish man apart from his creator. But the form, the scheme of this world is passing away. Let me give you two verses or two portions of Scripture that remind us of that.

Second Peter 3, 10 and 11. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat. Both the earth and the works that are in them, in it will be burned up.

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? Holy and godly is the answer to that question. 1 John 2, verses 15 through 17. Do not love the world or the things in the world, the scheme, the system that we're talking about.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it.

But he who does the will of God abides forever. You see, over and over again, we have the reminder set before us. Do not set your affection on the things of the earth, but set your affection on the things above.

Why? Because the earth is dissolving. Man's empire is crumbling. And God's kingdom will endure.

So we today are to be making our investments in the kingdom of God. That's what the apostle is exhorting us to do. Make your investment in the kingdom of God.

Remember, Jesus said it. He said, lay up your treasures in heaven, not on the earth. Because on the earth, there's the moth and the rust that corrupt.

There's the thieves that break in and steal. So we're to be storing up treasure in heaven. In other words, we're to be living today for the future, not the future of the earth, but for the future kingdom of God.

The time is short. How short? We don't know for sure. But we can see by the signs all around us that the Lord's coming is indeed close.

Let's do our best by his grace to serve him without distraction. You remember, that's the whole point of the seventh chapter that Paul makes, really. He said, I say these things not to put you in bondage, but to free you up so you can serve the Lord without distraction.

Now, let me just clarify in closing. We all have responsibilities and obligations. We all have things that we have to do.

I'm not suggesting that we just leave off our responsibilities and go put on some white robes and find an elevated point and wait for Jesus to come. That certainly is never encouraged in the scripture. Jesus said, occupy till I come.

Stay busy. But again, we have to stay busy, not with the things of the world, but with the things of the kingdom. So, you understand what I'm saying? That's our priority.

We have our obligations. We have our responsibilities. We have to pay the bills.

We have to take care of the families and those things. But we have to guard against that becoming the consuming factor in our lives. And in the course of doing those things, whether it's going off to work every day or going to university or whatever we're doing, in the course of doing those things, we have to So, in the course of doing those things, seeking in the context of those things to discover how I might glorify God and further his kingdom right where I'm at.

It's making ourselves available, having the spiritual as the priority. The time is short. That's the message.

And our response is to be to give ourselves up to be used by God in these days to further his kingdom.

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