

Signs of the Times

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon explores various prophecies in the Bible, including the 83rd Psalm, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and examines their relevance to current events and the end times scenario.

Duration: 54:37

Scripture: Psalm 83:1

Topics: "End Times", "Gods Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the discovery of an ancient book of Psalms in Dublin, Ireland. The manuscript was found open to Psalm 83, which talks about God's enemies and their plans against His people. The preacher emphasizes that God is trying to get people's attention and urges the audience to get right with Him. He also highlights the ongoing struggle of Israel to live in their land and connects it to the overall picture of the end times as described in the Bible. The preacher then delves into the interpretation of Daniel's vision of four beasts, explaining that they represent four kingdoms and the emergence of ten kings in the last days. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the saints of the most high will receive and possess the kingdom forever.

Transcript

We are going to be looking tonight at the subject of Bible prophecy. So many things going on in the world this evening, I thought it would be a good time just to take a look at a few of the prophecies that we have in the Old Testament and then tie that back to just what it is that God has called us to be doing in these days. Now, yesterday, CNN.com carried this story, Medieval Book of Psalms Unearthed.

Dublin, Ireland, Irish archaeologist Tuesday heralded the discovery of an ancient book of psalms by a construction worker while driving the shovel of his backhoe into a bog. The manuscript was open at Psalm 83. Let me read you the first few verses of the 83rd Psalm.

Do not keep silent, O God, do not hold your peace, and do not be still, O God, for behold your enemies make a tumult, and those who hate you have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against your people and consulted together against your sheltered ones. They have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.

For they have consulted together with one consent, they form a confederacy against you. The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, Gebel, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, with the inhabitants

of Tyre, Assyria also has joined with them. They have helped the children of Lot.

Amazing. This story went around the world. This manuscript is over a thousand years old, and digging it up out of the mud, this is the psalm that it was open to.

You think God might be wanting to say something to the nations? I mean, this is exactly what's happening tonight. Exactly what's going on in the Middle East is what is being declared here in this 83rd Psalm. So, as I said, tonight I want to take a brief look at some of the prophecies found in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, and see how things are moving in the exact direction that the Lord said they would as we get closer to the return of Christ.

So turn with me this evening to Ezekiel, and we're going to pick up in Ezekiel's prophecy in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel. And in the 37th through the 39th chapters of Ezekiel, you have the prophecy of, first of all, the restoration of Israel to the land. And that is what is dealt with in the 37th chapter.

And then in the 38th chapter and the 39th chapter, the prophecy goes into a great confederacy of nations that will attack Israel in the time of the end. And so I wanted to just take a look specifically at the 38th chapter and to look at the nations that are going to be allied together, and also to look at some of the things that are currently happening in our world this evening. So Ezekiel chapter 38 says, Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal.

I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out with all your army, horses and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet, Gomer and all its troops, the house of Togarmah, the far north and all its troops, many people are with you. Now what I want to do is I want to look at the nations that are listed here and see if we can get a picture of just exactly who these nations are today.

Now some of the nations that we read about, they are immediately familiar to us, but in actuality, the familiar names are not really the places that we think they are today. And so I want to bring some clarification to this. The prophecy is first of all against Gog and the land of Magog.

Now, of course, I think most of us here tonight would immediately say, well, this is talking about Russia. And it probably is, but I just want to tell you, it's not that easy. You can go back and research all of the Hebrew authorities and the ancient authorities and trying to pin these names down and trying to identify exactly the region that they're referring to today isn't that easy of a thing to do.

And so as you do the research, what you do find is you're certainly in the region, absolutely in the region that we would know in the past as the former Soviet Union. And there's one little phrase here that I think gives us the liberty to take it all the way up into the farthest part, which would take us directly into the area of Moscow and maybe even further up into St. Petersburg. But it's the reference here to the far north.

All of these nations are pretty much north of Israel. Well, not all of them, most of them, but then there is a reference here to the far north. So when we're talking about Magog, I think we can safely say that we are talking about Russia.

We're talking about that general region. Now, notice in verse five, the other nations that are listed here. We have, first of all, Persia.

Most people realize that modern day Iran is Persia. And so here we have two identifiable nations. We have Russia.

We have Iran. But then we have, interestingly, we have Ethiopia and we have Libya. Now, I had a call the other day on the Pastor's Perspective Program, and the caller asked, now how in the world is Ethiopia going to play into this scenario? If you know anything about Ethiopia, Ethiopia is predominantly a Christian nation and somewhat unique in that region.

But the reality is the Ethiopia here is not the Ethiopia of today. We probably would be better off using the ancient name, which is Cush. And Cush covered, the land of Cush covered a very broad area and it covered the area of modern day Sudan.

So, when you understand it to be modern day Sudan, it makes a lot more sense that Iran is allied with Sudan, both of them, of course, being fundamentalist Islamic countries. But then we have Libya. And, of course, for us, Libya, most of us are familiar with Muammar Gaddafi and the whole situation that's happened over the past couple of decades in Libya.

With Gaddafi. But again, Libya here in the scripture is not necessarily the Libya that we have today. It's actually probably a much larger area than we would know as Libya.

The biblical name is Put. And Put pretty much covered the area of North Africa, everything west of Egypt. And so what we're looking at there then possibly would be Libya, as we know it today, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

So, those are the nations that are actually included in these names Ethiopia and Libya. But then we have two other names mentioned, Gomer and Togarmah. And these are probably the most difficult to, Gomer, at least, is probably the most difficult to positively identify.

But Togarmah is almost certainly the land of Turkey. But going beyond Turkey, as we know it today, spreading out further to the east than Turkey. And so listen to the countries that are potentially included in Gomer and Tomarga.

They are Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Now, here's the interesting thing. Of course, every single nation that we have just mentioned, with one exception, and that would be with Magog being Russia.

Every one of these nations are Islamic nations. And so, we're talking about a confederacy of nations to the north, to the east, and to the south of Israel that are going to ultimately come against the land of Israel. And evidently, apparently, it seems quite probably that Russia is going to lead the charge.

Now, that's interesting. And of course, this is something that modern day Bible teachers have been speculating about for quite a few years. And there was all kinds of talk about this back before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

And interestingly, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the talk was all about the Russian invasion, or the Soviet invasion, or the communist invasion of Israel. And the other nations were just sort of seen as an

incidental element to this prophecy. But when the Soviet Union dissolved, and Russia seemed to be becoming more compatible with and friendly toward the West, then the Bible scholars began to start to concentrate a little more on the other nations that were mentioned.

And at the same time, interestingly enough, Islam began to resurface as a dominant ideology or force to be contended with in the world. And so, then, for quite a few years, there was sort of a shift away from emphasizing the Russian aspect of the prophecy and talking particularly about the Islamic aspect of the prophecy. But now, here is the amazing thing.

You know, if you wait long enough, it's interesting how things will develop. We've kind of come all the way back around once again, because now we're beginning once again to talk not only about the Islamic nations, but to bring Russia back into the picture. And there are some valid reasons for that.

In June of 2005, an Islamic hardliner named Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, he is the president of Iran. It was in 2005 that he won a landslide election and became the president of that nation. And in doing so, he vowed to, number one, build a powerful Islamic society.

Secondly, he vowed to defy Israel and the United States. And thirdly, he promised to accelerate Iran's bid to become a nuclear power. Now, when this guy became the president of Iran, analysts, politically minded people, people who are watching the international scene, most people, especially in the West, were absolutely stunned.

They were shocked. They could not believe that somebody as hardline as this guy is could be elected to the presidency of Iran. Now, while the Western world was in shock, Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, congratulated the new leader of Iran and said that Moscow was eager to continue selling nuclear technology and research facilities to Tehran.

And Putin went on to say that the development of a Russian-Iranian tie contributes to global peace and stability. Putin has come out consistently on the side of Iran. As the UN has been seeking to slap sanctions on Iran over their refusal to comply with the nuclear proliferation treaty, you notice in the UN Security Council, Russia is refusing to take a hard position against Tehran, Russia and China.

And so you see that there is an allegiance there between these two nations at this point. Now, just a side note, remember, Putin says that this is going to contribute to global peace and stability. Just a side note, the president of Iran has publicly denied that the Holocaust ever occurred and he has vowed publicly to wipe Israel off the face of the map.

So I don't know how that contributes to global peace and stability, but Vladimir Putin thinks that somehow it's going to result in peace and stability. Now here's the thing. This stuff is all intensified again, hasn't it? It's all flared up again.

We have on the northern border of Israel, we have Hezbollah. Hezbollah is basically a colony of Iran. It is a state within a state.

It is just as though Iran invaded Lebanon and expanded its borders into Lebanon because Hezbollah, which means the party of God, they are completely loyal to the government of Iran. And so all of this stuff is continuing to escalate over there even as we speak tonight. Now here's the question.

The question is this, is the current crisis going to develop into the invasion prophesied here in Ezekiel? Is that where it is headed? You know, I was looking on the internet today and on CNN, on a particular program there, Paula Zahn, I think is her name. There she is. She's on camera and, you know, they'll have a little headline underneath their picture there, which is sort of indicating what the topic is they're discussing.

You know what the headline read? The headline read, is this the end? Is this the end? So they're not just talking about this stuff in churches. This is the conversation that's going on all over the country today and around the world. People are asking the question, is this the end? Is this Armageddon? Is this Ezekiel? Is this what the Bible said would happen? So is the current crisis going to develop into this invasion? Well, if you look at all the nations, as we have done, that will ultimately be involved, I would have to say no, that it is not yet to that point.

Because as we look at the current situation, notice Iran is sort of the instigator in this. In Ezekiel's passage, the instigator is not Iran. The instigator is clearly Magog, or as we would understand it, Russia.

Russia is the leading force in this invasion, and Persia is an ally of Russia. And then as we look at the other nations that are here, as we look at Northern Africa, and as we go up into Turkey, and as we go across that region there, we see that at this point, those nations haven't really been stirred and brought into this. But remember, those various nations that we mentioned, Turkmenistan and some of these others, these were all at one time part of the Soviet Union.

They were known as the Southern Republics of the Soviet Union. So you can see how, even though at this moment things are not to this point where this kind of a thing could practically happen, we see that the stage is definitely being set. So the stage is being set in regard to the situation in Israel and to the prophecies in Ezekiel.

But we have other prophecies. And I want to look quickly at a couple of more of the Old Testament prophets. Turn with me to the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel.

In the 7th chapter of Daniel, Daniel now has a vision. Maybe you remember in the 2nd chapter, Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, had a dream. And Daniel was the one who interpreted the dream.

And the dream, remember, was in the dream there was a great image with a head of gold and a chest and arms of silver and so forth. And Nebuchadnezzar saw this great image. And then he saw a stone that was not made with hands, that was cut out, smote the image, reduced it to dust, and the wind blew it away.

The stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the earth. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that God had given him a vision of the future. God had shown him the kingdoms of the world in succession, particularly the kingdoms that would have dominion over Israel.

Now, Daniel has a dream here and a vision. And the interpretation of Daniel's vision, although it's a different picture, the interpretation is pretty much the same as was the interpretation for Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Now, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the image had 10 toes.

And there it was declared that in the days of those 10 kings, God would set up a kingdom. Now, here Daniel has a vision, but he has a vision of four different beasts. And the fourth beast is the one that is intriguing to him.

But as we pick up in verse 17, I want to pick up with the interpretation. Rather than going into all the details of the vision, suffice it to say there are four beasts that Daniel sees in this vision. And now here in verse 17, we have the interpretation of what those four great beasts are.

Those great beasts which you saw are four kings or kingdoms which will arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. Then Daniel says, I wish to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful with its teeth of iron, its nails of bronze, which devoured broken pieces and trampled the residue with its feet, and the 10 horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up before.

Now, listen in verse 23. 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, break it in pieces. The 10 horns are 10 kings who shall arise from this kingdom, and another shall arise after them.

He shall be different from the first ones, and he shall subdue three kings. Now, we just shifted geographically. We've moved from the Middle East and that whole surrounding region.

We've moved now over to the other side of the Mediterranean. We've moved now over to Europe. This is a prophecy about Europe.

The thing that I want to remind you of is that there are many different factors that play into this whole end times scenario. And so right before us tonight, front and center is Israel and their ongoing struggle to live in their land. But while that is sort of taking up everybody's attention, there are other things that are still at work in other areas that are contributing to the overall picture of what we have laid out in scripture regarding the last days.

And so we come to this fourth kingdom. Now, this is a beast that it's, as Daniel describes it, it's exceedingly dreadful. And the messenger tells him this is a fourth kingdom.

But then on this beast, there are 10 horns. And notice he goes on to tell us the 10 horns are the 10 kings. Now, the 10 kings are the second phase of what we would know historically as the Roman Empire.

The beast itself is the first phase, which is past. But there is a second phase that is coming. And it's going to be seen in the emergence of 10 kings out of what was formerly known as the Roman Empire.

So we can expect 10 kings to arise out of Europe. Now, for many, many years, Bible commentators, Bible teachers have been talking about the European economic community. And they've been pointing to Europe.

And they've been talking about 10 kings coming. And then just a few years back, we began to see this thing really start to unfold. But there's only one problem.

In looking at the European Union and many people believing and predicting that that was going to be the fulfillment of these things back before they reached the 10-nation point, it all seemed to fit so well. But then something happened. They exceeded 10 nations.

They went to 15 nations. And then they went to 25 nations. So now we have within the European Union, we have 25 nations making up this confederacy of nations.

And we have several other nations that have applications in to become part of the union. So here's the big question. How is it ever going to get back to 10? And there are people who have different solutions for that.

Some people say, well, what's going to happen is they're going to divide the whole world up into 10 separate regions. Or some say they're going to divide Europe itself up into 10 separate regions. That is a possibility.

But there's another possibility that is even with us tonight. The European Union, unbeknownst to most people, is actually already divided. It's divided into two portions.

The Western European Union is the primary powerholder within the union. And the Western European Union sees itself as a distinct entity from the European Union in its overall sense. And guess what? 10 nations make up the Western European Union.

You can go, if you'd like to do a search on the internet, go to Google. Just type in Western European Union. It will take you to the website of the Western European Union.

And if you want one more little thing that will absolutely blow your mind, in the charter for the Western European Union, they have all of these different sort of pieces of legislation, different things that they want to implement within the Western European Union. They have various recommendations. And the 666th recommendation, so it's called recommendation 666, you know what they recommend in recommendation 666? They recommend that we find a man that can represent us, one individual that can stand before the world as representative of the European Union.

In essence, that's pretty much what the recommendation suggests. So, you see, again, things are moving in this direction. It's all unfolding.

It's all slowly but surely developing. Now, there's all kinds of speculation, and there has been for many years, as you know, regarding the person of the Antichrist. Somebody called the other day and said, was the Antichrist born in the 80s? I don't know.

Perhaps he was. We don't know that. But what we do know is things are moving in that direction.

Now, over in the ninth chapter of Daniel, we have another vitally important prophecy, but this is the one that actually links the two topics together. This is the one that links the European Union and its leader with the land of Israel. Daniel chapter 9, verse 24.

Seventy weeks are determined for your people, for your holy city to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. This is the 70-week prophecy of Daniel. And I think most of you realize this, but let me just define it for those of you that might not quite understand it at this point.

The 70 weeks are 77-year periods. And so what's being shown to Daniel, interestingly, this is at the end of the Babylonian captivity. Seventy years have already been completed, and now Daniel is inquiring, what is the future of my people? They've gone into captivity in Babylon, and now they've left Babylon, and they're going back to their land.

The 70 years have come to a conclusion. What is in the future? The angel says, 77-year periods are now determined upon your people. And in that period of time, which is a total of 490 years, there are things that are going to be accomplished.

Transgression will be finished, sin will be made an end of, reconciliation will be made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness will be brought in. Basically, what we're describing here is the coming of the kingdom. So the kingdom will come at the end of 77-year periods.

But here's the thing, as you go on, notice what it says. Note therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the prince, there shall be seven weeks or seven 7-year periods and 62 weeks, which brings us to a total of 69 7-year periods. So here he tells us about 69 7-year periods, but there's one 7-year period that is left.

Now, from the time that the command was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, which was in March of 445 BC, 483 years later, that would be the 69 7-year periods, 483 years later or 173,880 days later, something happened. The Messiah came until Messiah the prince. But look at verse 26.

After the 62 weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. This is all history. Jesus came 483 years after the commandment was given to Nehemiah to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

Jesus came, but he was cut off, not for himself. We know, of course, that he died for the sins of mankind. But listen, and the people of the prince who is to come.

Now, notice this terminology, the prince who is to come. These are the people of the prince who is to come. They shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

Anybody who knows their history knows who destroyed the city and the sanctuary. The Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD. So the prince is connected to the Romans, but he's not yet come.

Notice verse 27. This prince who is going to come, he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. There's one week left.

There's one 7-year period left. This is where we get the understanding that there's a final 7-year period. The prophecy right here in Daniel.

But notice what it says. He's going to make a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of the week, halfway through, three-and-a-half-year point, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate.

So you see this man that will rise up out of Europe, the prince of the people who destroyed the city and the sanctuary. I believe that his headquarters will ultimately be back in Rome. Today, the European Union is headquartered in Brussels.

I myself feel that it is just a matter of time before the headquarters are moved to Rome. He's going to be based in Rome. And this is the one who is going to confirm a covenant with the people of Israel.

Now, just exactly what that covenant entails, we don't know. Some have speculated that he's going to allow them to rebuild the temple. Maybe so.

He's certainly going to obviously work out some sort of a solution for the problems in the Middle East. What do we have tonight? We're at a stalemate. We've got world leaders gathering in Rome today.

We had the Secretary of State over in Lebanon today and in Israel today. And what's the news this evening? Nobody can come to any conclusions on how to deal with this. And that's the way things are going to continue to go.

Things are going to become more and more perplexing. And solutions are going to be fewer and fewer. And so there's the necessity of somebody to come along who can solve these world problems.

This man is coming according to the prophecies of Daniel. Now, Zechariah 12 and 14. These are the last two prophecies I want to look at really quickly.

In the 12th chapter, Zechariah prophesies of the coming battle for Jerusalem. The first three verses of chapter 12. The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel, thus says the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him.

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples. All who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all the nations of the earth are gathered together against it.

You already know the animosity of the nations toward Israel and toward Jerusalem. And if you don't realize this, everything that's going on in the Middle East, every conflict, not just the current one between Israel and their northern and southern neighbors, but even what's going on in Iraq, it all centers around the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the epicenter of world conflict, and it's going to increasingly become that as time goes on.

But in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, we have a description, I believe, of how things will ultimately culminate. Verse 12 of chapter 14, And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem. Listen to this.

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. This is a description of various types of nuclear activity. I was watching on the news last night, and there was a specialist there on the news, and he said that there is no doubt whatsoever that within the next 10 years, we will experience various nuclear exchanges in various parts of the world.

He predicts there will be nuclear activity in the United States itself, because of course, we have sworn enemies who want to nuke us, and they're doing everything they can to be able to do that. And of course, we see with Iran, we see the development there of their nuclear program. We see over in North Korea, the development of their nuclear program.

I read in the paper today where now the Venezuelan president, who is a Marxist, he's been visiting Russia and seeking an air force. And he has openly stated he wants to break the monopoly, wants to break the power of the US. And all of these activities, it's all coming together right before our very eyes.

Now, we don't know how long it's going to take for all of this to escalate and come to its culmination. Nobody knows that. And if you look back over the past 50 years, you find that there are times when

everything seems to be radically accelerating.

And you would think within the next few months, we are going to be there. But then interestingly, God has this way of just sort of slowing things down. And you know why he slows things down? He slows things down for one reason, because God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Now, if things escalate, and all of this stuff happens very rapidly, and it means that we are going to be evacuated in the rapture within the next few months or year or whatever, that is great. I'm ready to go. That's thrilling.

But I don't know if that's going to happen. I need to always be ready for that to happen. But rather than sit around and try to figure out exactly when it's going to happen, there is a lot that we are still to be doing.

And that's what I want to wrap things up with tonight. I want to, having just sort of, you know, looked at where we're at in this prophetic scenario, close with what do we do about it? What is our response to be to the things that we see going on around us? And let's look at 2 Peter chapter 3. And we'll wrap things up with 2 Peter 3. And we'll pick up in verse 10. 2 Peter 3, 10.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Will come as a thief in the night. The implication is that he will come unexpectedly.

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 it will be burned up. Therefore, now listen.

Here's the instruction to us. In light of all these things. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire and the elements will melt with a fervent heat.

Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace without spot and blemish. Let's just take a quick look at each of these things.

Here's the question. What manner of persons ought we to be? What manner of persons ought we to be? Well, first of all, he says that we need to be conducting ourselves in holiness. We need to be conducting ourselves in holiness.

We need to be living right. Now, I honestly, I marvel at what I see happening in the body of Christ today. I see people who have been walking with the Lord for years for a long time and even involved in ministry, serving.

And I see those kinds of people dropping out of the race, giving up, compromising at this stage, at this time saying, well, you know, I'm going to take a little break from my service to God or I'm going to go out and try to, you know, catch up on some of the years that I lost out on or I want to go out and discover, you know, who I really am. This is not the time to do that. It's never the time to do that, really.

Because Jesus said, if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it, right? But, you know, listen, if there was ever like a really, really bad, bad time to make a decision like that, this is it. So listen to me tonight. If you are thinking that, if you're pondering that, if you're moving in that direction, slap yourself in the head and get going back in the other direction because it's just, this isn't the time to do it.

We're to be living holy lives, conducting ourselves in holiness and godliness. You know what godliness means? It means God-likeness, being like God. How do you become like God? Real simply, you know how you become like God? You spend time with Him.

God, when you spend time with Him, He impresses His life upon yours and you start to look more and more like Him. You start to become like God. That's how you attain godliness.

Remember, Moses went up on the mountain and spent 40 days in the presence of God. And when he came back down, what happened? The glory of God was impressed upon the face of Moses. And here, Peter says, in these days, cultivate godliness.

Spend time with the Lord. And then he says, looking for the day. We're to be looking for the day.

We're not to be obsessed to the extent that we're not doing anything and we're just sitting here looking. But we're to always be keeping our eye on the world situation and recognizing this thing is all coming to a culmination. It's all coming to a head, just like the Lord said it would.

So looking for the day. But then listen to this. It says, hastening the day of God.

Hastening the coming of the day of God. Now, think about that for a moment. Hastening.

What does it mean to hasten something? It means to hurry it up. This is a really interesting exhortation. Peter seems to be implying that there's something that we could do to bring this culmination about more quickly.

That's what he seems to be implying in this term. Hastening the coming of the day of God. How can we do that? Well, I think there are two things.

Jesus said, pray what? Pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. As we pray for God's kingdom to come, that is a means, I believe, of hastening God's kingdom, bringing it about more quickly. But secondly, I believe that this would have something to do with getting the gospel out to people.

You see, that's what we're to be doing today. We've said it before. Many times you've heard Pastor Chuck say it.

You've heard many Bible teachers say it. There's some person out there somewhere who is going to complete the number of Gentiles that are going to be saved. And when that person's saved, this thing known as the church is over.

There's somebody out there. We just have to find that person. And there's over 6 billion people.

So what does that tell you? We got to get out there. We got to get the gospel out. Jesus said, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world and then the end shall come.

Now I know that the angels are going to preach the gospel during the tribulation period. I know that. But you know, I don't think Jesus was necessarily talking about that.

He could have said this gospel is going to be preached. And by the way, the angels are going to do it. But he didn't say that.

He said this gospel is going to be preached. And I think the implication is you're supposed to preach it. So you see, we are to be praying God's kingdom would come and we are to be proclaiming God's word.

We're to be getting the word of God out to people. And we all have a different sphere of life. We all have a different calling.

We all have a different thing that we're involved in, immersed in, but it's in that context that God wants to use us. And as we do that, I believe that we will be hastening the day of God. And then he said, notice in verse 14, he said, be diligent to be found by him in peace.

Be diligent to be found by him in peace. What is he referring to? You know, I think he's referring to peace amongst ourselves within the family of God, within the body of Christ. There's so much inner fighting and bickering that goes on in the body of Christ.

The body of Christ, to some extent, gets neutralized. You can't fight the devil if you're fighting each other. And that's what much of the church is doing today.

We're fighting one another. And we're getting all hung up on a bunch of petty types of things. Now there are serious issues out there and we need to contend for the faith.

There's no question about that. But there are a lot of things that are just a matter of opinion and a matter of preference. And Christians get into these battles and these conflicts and these wars and we're distracted from the real battle.

I think he's referring to the need to be at peace with one another. And then finally, he says that we might be found without spot and blameless. Without spot and blameless.

Again, taking us back to the first thing, conducting ourselves in a holy manner. Living the right life. Living the life that God has called us to.

Living the life that God has equipped us to be able to live by the indwelling of the spirit, by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Living in that place of vital communion with him. This is what Peter says.

The Lord's coming as a thief in the night. Therefore, what manner of people ought we to be? We ought to be people who are living entirely for him in these days. Not just because if I don't, I might miss the rapture or something like that.

I mean, if that's what you need as an incentive, then fine. But take it to another level. How about because of what Jesus did for you? How about because he endured the cross despising the shame? He did that.

He went through that affliction. He went through that suffering. He went through that agony.

He went through that unspeakably horrific experience for you and for me. And so why not simply as an act of love for him and a show of gratitude say, Lord, I want to live for you. I want to live every moment of my

life for you.

Jesus Christ is coming again. We don't know exactly when, but the signs are all before us. And you know, I think the Lord, I really do think that he lets this stuff flare up to just once again get people's attention.

Finding this manuscript, this thousand-year-old manuscript in a muddy bog in Dublin, Ireland, and have it open right there to Psalm 83 to be speaking to the whole world about what's happening right now. What do you think about that? I think God is trying to get people's attention. And so of all the people on the earth, he ought to have our attention so he can use us to get the attention of others.

If you're not right with him tonight, get right with him. Don't leave this place in a compromised state. Don't leave this place waffling between the flesh and the spirit.

Just tonight, you and you only can do this for yourself, but just say, Lord, I want to give it all to you. I want to follow you. I want to be serious about you.

I want to be living the kind of life that you want me to be living and be ready for you when you're come. Because remember that solemn word of Jesus, they that were ready went in. They that were ready went in.

Let's pray. Lord, we look at our world and Lord, we realize that your word is absolutely true. Every jot, every tittle is absolutely true.

And we see it tonight unfolding right before our eyes. Lord, I pray for myself. I pray for each one of us here tonight that we would be the kind of people that we ought to be, that we would be conducting ourselves in holiness, that we would be becoming more like you, that we would have our eyes fixed on that day and that we would do all we can do to hasten the coming of the day of God, that we would live in love and peace with each other and that we would be pure.

And Lord, I pray tonight for any person, young, old, in between. Lord, anyone tonight that's come in and hasn't been where they need to be, but they've been moved tonight. Lord, help them to be moved, not just in their emotions, but help them to be moved to the extent that they would turn and surrender completely to you.

We pray this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

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