

Prophecy Update 2006

by Chuck Smith

The sermon discusses the end times, the signs of the end times, and the role of Russia and Iran in the end times, ultimately leading to the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of God's kingdom.

Duration: 42:11

Scripture: Matthew 24:6

Topics: "End Times", "Eschatology"

Description

This sermon delves into the belief that the end of the world, as controlled by Satan, is approaching, leading to great devastation followed by the return of Jesus Christ to establish God's kingdom. It discusses prophecies of the Messiah's suffering and glorious reign, the signs preceding the end times, and the tribulations to come. The sermon also touches on the rise of iniquity, the aggressive homosexual agenda, and the potential geopolitical events aligning with biblical prophecies.

Transcript

I do believe that we are quickly coming to the end of the world as we know it. When we talk about the end of the world, we're not talking about the total obliteration of all things. We're talking about this present world that is controlled and under the power of Satan, a world that is in rebellion against God.

And we believe that that rebellion is almost over. We believe that the Bible speaks of events that are soon going to happen in this world that will bring extremely great devastation and that at the end of that great devastation, Jesus Christ will return from heaven with his church to establish God's kingdom upon the world, and we will see the world that God created and the world that God intended, a world that is living in harmony with God, and the hallmark will be love and joy and peace throughout the world. The Bible speaks of a period of great tribulation that is coming.

It is the judgment of God upon a Christ-rejecting world. The worst disasters that the world has ever seen or known are about to take place, but they will be followed by the new golden age of peace. Jesus promised his disciples that if he went away, he said he would come again, and thus we are looking for the coming of Jesus Christ.

Now in the Old Testament there were many prophecies of the Messiah. There were prophecies that dealt with Messiah reigning over the earth and the conditions that would exist upon the earth when the Messiah did reign, how that there would be peace even among the animal kingdom as the lion would lie down with

the lamb, and how that they would eat hay like an ox, and it spoke of the glorious time when there would be no sicknesses, there would be no pain, there would be no suffering, that the lame would leap for joy, the blind would be able to see a glorious age with the Messiah reigning over the earth. But there were also prophecies that were almost contradictory to the prophecies of the Messiah reigning in a glorious kingdom.

And there were prophecies of the Messiah being despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and they could not in their minds somehow rationalize the vast difference between the scriptures that spoke of the Messiah dying and suffering for sin with the Messiah reigning forever in the kingdom of God. And so they sort of spiritualized the scriptures that spoke of his being despised and rejected and dying. Thus when Jesus came the first time, and he was despised and rejected and did fulfill those prophecies that spoke of these things, the disciples had a hard time handling it.

Even his own disciples. It is interesting when Jesus was asking his disciples, who do you say that I am? And Peter said, well you're the Messiah, the son of the living God. It was at that time that Jesus began to tell them how that he would be turned over to the Gentiles, he would be crucified and slain, and would rise again the third day.

Peter began to rebuke him. He said, Lord, be that far from thee. And Jesus in turn rebuked Peter and said, Peter, you don't understand the things that are of God.

How do you reconcile the vast contrast of the scriptures, the prophecies concerning the Messiah? Well, they are understood very easily when you understand the two comings of the Messiah. In his first coming, he did fulfill the many prophecies that dealt with his suffering and with his death for sin. At his second coming, he will fulfill those prophecies that deal with his glorious reign in the kingdom of God here on earth, and the earth becoming as God intended and wanted the earth to be.

One day Jesus was walking through the temple precincts with his disciples, and they were pointing out those huge stones that Herod had used in the building of the temple. And as they were marveling at the size of those stones, Jesus said to them, not one of these stones is going to be left standing on another. A very amazing and interesting prediction.

So when they crossed the Kidron Valley and came over to the area of the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him and said, Lord, what will be the sign of these things? That is, the signs of the destruction of the temple. And what will be the signs of your coming and the end of the world, this world age? And so Jesus preceded there in Matthew 24 in Luke 21 to tell them about the signs that would precede the destruction of the temple. And just as Jesus predicted, those signs did come, and the temple was destroyed, and not one stone was left standing on another.

But then Jesus went on to speak of the signs that would come before his coming again and the end of the world. And so speaking of the signs that would precede the end of the age, he spoke of world wars, of pestilences, of famines, and of earthquakes in different places. In the 20th century, we have experienced two world wars.

Right now, our world is being plagued by pestilences. Millions of people, especially in Africa, are dying of AIDS and creating one of the greatest social problems that our world will ever face. Also, as the result, there are millions of people that are starving to death in Africa and, of course, in many areas of Asia, the

famines that Jesus spoke about.

Just a little over a year ago, we had that tremendous earthquake in the Pacific that sent that tsunami tidal wave that wiped out so many thousands and thousands of people. Of course, more recently, we've had earthquakes in Iran and earthquakes in Pakistan that have snuffed out the lives of thousands of people. We have the threat of bird flu.

You've probably read about it. The scientists are still concerned of the possibility of this bird flu being transmitted onto humans and because of traffic and because of people getting on airplanes and so forth, they said it could soon spread around the world and become a major pandemic. Some of the scientists are predicting that as many as 25 million people could lose their lives as a result of the bird flu.

And so, it is interesting that the signs that Jesus spoke about, the pestilences and the earthquakes, the famines, and the world wars are taking place in our world around us. This year, of course, our church has been involved in two great massive relief efforts. First of all, sending teams over to the South Pacific and spending thousands upon thousands of dollars in helping these people, feeding them and helping them to rebuild their lives.

But before we were able to complete the job in Southeast Asia, came along the hurricanes that devastated the southern part of the United States and now we have spent a little over a million dollars in the help of the people that are down there in the South and we are still sending teams. In fact, we have a team presently of some of our high school kids just returned from the helping out down there in the South as they took their Christmas vacation to go down there and to minister to people and to help people there in the South. But we see the tremendous, and they tell me that they're going to bring back pictures, they said, you cannot imagine the devastation as the result of those hurricanes as the trees are flattened, houses are flattened, and the tremendous damage that has been done.

And though we have been down there for a little over a year, or no, not on that one, we've been down there for several months, there's still so much to be done. Nature, it seems, is going askew. More hurricanes this past year than at any time in recorded history and the scientists are saying that there will probably be another year, this year 2006, will probably also bring many hurricanes there in the Atlantic Ocean.

Now Jesus also said that the iniquity of the earth would abound so that the love of many would wax cold. I believe that iniquity is abounding in our earth. I think that Hollywood is a great reason for the iniquity, that it is spreading evil, wicked thoughts, putting it into the minds of people, influencing people, and that the iniquity of the earth is indeed abounding.

But I believe that one of the greatest iniquities in our world today is the increasing aggressiveness of the homosexual community, their attempt to make their perverted lifestyle accepted as normal relationship. And this is the final activity of man that provoked the judgment of God upon the city of Sodom. When you get to this place of evil, God then steps in and brings his judgment as he did on Sodom and on Gomorrah.

It's the final affront against God and it provokes the wrath of God. In the first chapter of Romans, Paul describes the downward, progressive downward trend of man ending, of course, in perverse activities. He said the wrath of God is going to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and then the unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness.

Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God and neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. And professing themselves to be wise, they actually became fools because they changed the glory of an incorruptible God into an image that was like unto corruptible man. Wherefore, God also gave them over to their uncleanness through the lust of their own flesh to dishonor their own bodies between themselves who changed the glory and the truth of God into a lie.

And they worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. For this cause, God gave them up unto wicked affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

Likewise, also men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another. Men with men doing things that are unthinkable and receiving in themselves that penalty of their error which was fitting. Because they did not like to retain God in their minds, God gave them over to reprobate minds to do those things which are perverse.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, and bolsters, and inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, and without natural affection, they were implacable, unmerciful. And who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do they do the same, but they take pleasure in those that do them. And again, Hollywood plays up these very activities that are condemned here in the scripture.

And again, trying to get all of us to accept them as natural. Tell me, as you read Romans 1, if that doesn't describe the condition of the world in which we live today, a world that is ripe for the wrath of God to be revealed from heaven. In Matthew 24, Jesus tells us that just before he returns, the earth will go through a period of great tribulation worse than anything that the world has ever seen before or will ever see again.

In the book of Revelation, it describes the conditions during this period of time in which over one half of the world's population will be destroyed. Jesus said, unless those days were shortened, no flesh would remain upon the earth. In other words, he is talking about warfare with weapons of mass destruction that actually will threaten the existence of man upon this planet earth.

In conjunction with these other things, in the last days, the Bible speaks of the rebirth of the nation of Israel, how that the Jews would be gathered back into the land from all over the world. And it will not be a peaceful time in Jerusalem, but a time of great trouble and controversy. Zechariah tells us in chapter 12, behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all of the people round about when they shall be in siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

There's going to come an invasion of Israel by the enemy nations, the Muslims, which will be supported and backed by Soviet Russia. And in those days, the Lord said, I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people and all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the earth is gathered together against it. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and he that is feeble among them in that day will be as David and the house of David shall be as God and the angel of the Lord before them.

And it shall come to pass in that day that I will destroy all of the nations that come against Jerusalem. In Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39, God describes how he will destroy these armies that will be coming against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass that in all the land, says the Lord, two parts will be cut off and die and a third shall be left.

So again, great destruction and loss of life. And I will bring the third part through the fire. I will refine them as silver is refined and I will try them as gold is tried and they shall call on my name and I will hear them and I will say they are my people and they shall say Jehovah is our God.

Behold the day of the Lord is coming and the spoils shall be divided in the midst of thee for I will gather all of the nations against Jerusalem to battle and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled and the women ravaged and half of the city will go forth into captivity and the residue of the people will be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle and his feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east and the Mount of Olives will split in the middle toward the east and toward the west. There will be a very great valley and half of the mountain will be moved toward the north, half toward the south, and this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all of the people that have fought against Jerusalem.

Their flesh shall consume away while they stand on their feet. Their eyes will consume away in their sockets and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. The description of the effects of radiation or atomic warfare.

The Bible speaks of this coalition of nations that will federate together to seek to drive Israel out of the land. It's not surprising that Russia and Iran are the leading nations of this coalition. The nations that are listed that will be joining with them to come against Israel are all Muslim nations.

At the present time, we, of course, have heard the leader of Iran declaring that the Jews must be driven from the land. He has said we need to wipe Israel off the map. This past week, in fact, just yesterday, some of the leaders of the Palestinian Authority have confirmed and declared that, yes, Israel must be wiped off of the map.

Iran, of course, is becoming one of the greatest threats to world peace. They purchased from China and from North Korea missiles that can reach Israel. In fact, they have modified the missiles and now have a range of 2,200 miles.

They're working toward the development of nuclear weapons, and it is thought that they are only months away from the development of an atomic bomb. North Korea has begun its project again of developing an atomic bomb. And Israel, of course, has declared that they cannot allow Iran to possess an atomic bomb.

And they will do whatever is necessary to prevent it. It is interesting that the chief of Russia's strategic forces just a little over a week ago, on December 24th of this past year, was at the unveiling of the new state-of-the-art intercontinental ballistic missiles that they have developed that they boast are capable of penetrating any prospective missile defense. The news media reported that Colonel General Nikolai Solovtsov, the chief of the strategic missile forces, took part in the ceremony that marked the commissioning of the latest set of Topol-M missiles at a base in Taktish-Shevevo in the Volga River, Saratov region.

Russian officials have called the prospect of U.S. missile defenses as a destabilizing in the world and boasted repeatedly that the Russian missiles could pierce any nation's missile shield. The Topol-M missiles are capable of hitting targets more than 6,000 miles away and have so far been deployed only in silos, but the mobile version mounted on heavy off-road vehicles will enter combat service in this next year. The Topol-Ms have been fitted with single nuclear warheads, but officials have considered plans to equip each of these missiles with three individually targeted warheads.

It would seem like as our attention, because of 9-11, has been diverted toward Afghanistan and Iraq, that Russia has taken this opportunity to continue to develop weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering these atomic bombs throughout the world. And they have not stopped nor slowed down in this race for superior power. But what is interesting in the light of Bible prophecy are the recent ties that are being developed between Russia and Iran.

Of course, as Europe is objecting to Iran becoming an atomic power, and they say, if you can believe them, that they are only seeking to develop nuclear type of power systems for Iran. But with all of the oil that they have, why would they have to develop nuclear power systems or power grids? Russia, though, has said, well, don't worry. We will do the cleanup of all of the uranium and so forth so that we'll take care that they won't be using it for the making of bombs.

It is thought that it is possible that before the end of this year, Iran will have nuclear bombs. But the fact that Russia is joining with Iran, supporting Iran, is of great interest. Suddenly, Russia is posturing itself as the great friend of Islam, as the U.S. is being cast as the great enemy, the great devil of Islam.

In recent speech, Putin declared, Russia has always been the most faithful, reliable, and consistent defender of the interests of the Islamic world. Russia has always been its most reliable partner and ally. How much longer can things go on before God intercedes? Of course, only God knows.

But Jesus did say, unless those days were shortened, no flesh would remain upon the earth. But then he said, for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. With North Korea, with Iran, perhaps entering in this year to the nations that possess nuclear weapons, it could be that before this year is over, we will see what the Bible has predicted will come, the invasion of Israel by the overwhelming forces of Islam, Islamic nations that are supported and joined by Russia.

Of course, we know that the Mideast, Israel, is a hotbed of violence. We know that Israel has sought to placate the Palestinian Authority in their recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. But it has put, of course, the leadership, Eric Sharon, in a very precarious position.

Because if there are continued terrorist attacks against Israel, it will show that Eric Sharon made a very great mistake in giving up unilaterally the Gaza Strip. Of course, he is talking about giving up more territory in Samaria and in Judea unto the Palestinian Authority. And of course, with the elections coming up, it will be interesting to watch if a hardliner gets control of Israel, who will really begin to move in a very dramatic and powerful way against the Palestinians, which Israel will be forced to do if there is continued terrorist attacks from the Palestinian territories.

It could be the trigger that will bring the other Islamic nations to the defense of the Palestinians, and we could see that whole area go up in the scenario that the Bible paints for us in Zechariah that we read tonight and in Ezekiel, which really gives you even more detail from what the Bible says. This will happen, but God will intervene and destroy these nations that come against Israel. At that time, Western Europe

will arise to a world-dominating power.

A leader will arise to lead Western Europe, whom the Bible dubs the Antichrist. And he will make a covenant with the nation of Israel in which he will agree with them for the rebuilding of their temple, and they will acclaim him as the Messiah, because the Jews today are looking for the Messiah, and they believe that they can identify him as one who will lead them into the rebuilding of the temple. But after three and a half years, then this man of sin, this leader of the European community, will show his true colors.

He will come to Israel. He'll stand in the rebuilt temple. He will declare that he is God and demand to be worshiped as God, and that will trigger what is known as the Great Tribulation, God's wrath being poured out upon the earth.

That will bring a great war between the East and the West, the Western nations against the nations of the East, and they will meet in the Valley of Megiddo for the final war. And it is at that time that Jesus will return with his church, set his feet upon the Mount of Olives, and declare the end of the world as we know it and the beginning of the new world, the kingdom of God, wherein righteousness will rule and reign. And the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy.

So there are good days ahead, but before those good days do come, the world will first of all experience the worst days in the history of man. According to Jesus, there has never been a time before, nor will there ever be a time again in which there will be so much slaughter and so much devastation of this earth. Cataclysmic judgments of God that will be taking place upon the earth during this period of time.

Now, I am firmly convinced that when the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth, that the church will not be here. The Bible tells us that God has not appointed us unto wrath. The Bible tells us that this time of God's wrath and judgment is against the ungodly, the unrighteous, those who have held the truth of God in unrighteousness.

Jesus said to his disciples when he was talking about the days of the great devastation, he said, pray always that you will be accounted worthy to escape all of these things that are coming upon the earth and that you might be standing before the son of man. And surely that is my prayer, that I will be counted worthy to escape these things that are going to come upon the earth. Paul the apostle writing to the Thessalonians who were concerned because some of the members of the church had died before Jesus came back and established the kingdom because they were expecting that in his life in their lifetime.

Paul wrote to them and said, now I want to write to you concerning those that have died that you sorrow not as those who have no hope. For if Jesus both died and rose again, so then those who are asleep in Christ, he will bring with him when he comes. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God and we who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord will not precede those that sleep.

They've actually preceded us. They'll be coming with him when he comes for us, but then we will be caught up. We will meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And the book of Revelation tells us about seven years that we will be with the Lord in heaven as we are there at the marriage supper of the lamb and the church. The bride of Christ is presented to him as a virgin, pure and spotless and the glorious celebration in heaven of the glorious hope of the return of Christ

and the establishing of God's kingdom upon the earth. So the big issue is where are you in your relationship with our Lord? Surely things are winding down.

I don't think that you can expect things to get better. The laws that are being thrown formed and framed throughout the world. A message like I'm giving tonight, before the year is over, I could be arrested for such a message as declaring that I am inspiring hatred against homosexuals.

And there have already been laws that have been passed in many places in the United States that are forbidding the speaking against that kind of a lifestyle. And they have actually put before our legislation here in California, similar types of laws. The freedom of speech is soon to be very greatly restricted unless you want to just use your speech for filthy communication and that they will cry, Oh, freedom of speech, don't censor us, but they will seek to censor the preaching of the truth of the gospel because it does condemn sin.

And as long as God gives me breath, I'm going to preach the gospel and the full word of God. I do believe that 2006 will be one of the most exciting and interesting years in our life as all of these events seem to be culminating just about at the same time. Now, Jesus, when he talked about these things, said to his disciples, when you see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, lift up your head for your redemption is drawing nigh.

It's time for you to look up and lift up your head. It won't be long. Our Lord is coming soon.

Father, as we look at the world in which we live, we realize that we've about come to the end of the tether. Things can't go on much longer as they are. We see Lord evil days waxing worse and worse, just like you said.

And just as you question concerning the iniquity in the world because of the bounds, would you find faith on the earth when you came? Lord, we do pray that you will find faith in our hearts and in our lives as we Lord feel more and more like we are strangers and aliens in the world in which we live. May we Lord draw close to you. May we Lord redouble our efforts in reaching this poor world with the only good news, and that is better days are coming when you come and establish your kingdom.

But may we Lord be faithful in inviting people to come into your kingdom now before it is everlastingly too late. And if there be those here tonight Lord who are not ready, we pray Father that you will stir their hearts to live godly lives, to deny themselves of the life of the flesh, take up their crosses and follow you so that when you do come for your church, they will be accounted worthy to escape the judgments that are soon to come upon our earth. These things Father we ask in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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