

The Beginning of the End - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the significance of Psalm 46 and Daniel's prophecy, highlighting the importance of understanding the Bible's prophecies and the signs of the end times.

Duration: 35:26

Scripture: Psalm 46:1

Topics: "End Times", "Biblical Prophecy"

Description

This sermon delves into the prophecies of Daniel chapters 9 and 10, focusing on the covenant with Israel, the 77-year cycles, the coming of the Messiah, and the events leading to the end times. It explores the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation, and the return of Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on earth.

Transcript

Let's turn to Psalm 27. It's not the one listed in the bulletin, but it is one that just really, beg your pardon, 46, Psalm 46, it really fits the message this morning. And so I'll read the first and the odd-numbered verses.

Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses as we stand to read the Word of God. God is our refuge and strength, the very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, and though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder. He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. Let's pray. Lord we are so thankful that You are with us.

That You are our place of refuge. And though there come cataclysmic events upon the earth, You are with us. There to sustain us.

There to help us. And so Lord we just pray that this day as we look at what is going to come to pass here on earth. And as we see the beginnings of sorrows.

Lord we pray that our hearts will be toward You and the things of the Spirit. That we might walk Lord in a way that will be pleasing unto You. That we might be able to stand Lord in these last days with our faith unshaken.

As our confidence Lord is in You and as we look to You for help. In Jesus name, Amen. And you may be seated.

This week we've been studying Daniel chapters 9 and 10. Very interesting and exciting chapters. And tonight Pastor Skip will be leading us in a study of these chapters.

And I encourage you to come on out this evening because these are amazing prophecies that we have here in Daniel chapters 9 and 10. And to understand them is so very important. Especially in these days in which we live.

And the confirmation of the fact that the Bible is inspired by God. These prophecies could not have been written with such accuracy except that God who knows the end from the beginning inspired Daniel to write them. And so we encourage you to come on out this evening as we study Daniel chapter 9 or Daniel chapters 9 and 10.

In the 9th chapter Daniel tells us of this covenant that God made with the nation of Israel. And how that God had determined that there would be 77 year cycles on the nation of Israel. That would complete the whole entire prophetic picture.

There would be an end to sins. There would be reconciliation for iniquity. There would be the everlasting righteousness the kingdom of God brought in.

And the completing of the prophecies and the visions of the prophets in the Bible. These 77's were divided into 3 segments. 7 7's, 62 7's and then the final one 7 year period of time.

The 69 7's were to begin at the commandment to restore and it would be 69 7 year cycles or 483 years. You've probably heard the name Isaac Asimov. The late Isaac Asimov wrote an article in which he sought to debunk the Bible.

As you know he was an avid evolutionist and he was very opposed to the Bible and belief in the Bible. And he tried to in this article show how the Bible could not be the Word of God. And he used this particular prophecy in Daniel 9 which prophesied that from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem under the coming of the Messiah the Prince would be 69 7's or 483 years.

In the article he declares that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given to Ezra in 536 BC. 483 years later the Messiah did not come and nothing happened and therefore the Bible is not

reliable. Well had he been a careful researcher and as a scientist you would surely think that he would be.

He would realize that the commandment that is spoken of in Ezra chapter 1 was not given to Ezra. The commandment given in 536 was given to Zerubbabel and Joshua who led a group of people back to Jerusalem not to rebuild the city but to rebuild the temple there in Jerusalem. In chapter 7 of the book of Ezra, Ezra is no longer a historian but he is writing there of his own experience of going under the edict of King Artaxerxes with a group of people back to lead the people spiritually.

He was a prophet and he was a scribe or a priest and a scribe and he was going back to lead the spiritual aspects of the people who were there in Jerusalem. That was in the year 457 BC and that is where the book of Ezra is no longer a historic document but Ezra is writing sort of a biography of his own experiences. It was not until the year 445 BC that the commandment was given to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.

And in Nehemiah chapter 2 we find that Nehemiah tells us that it was the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes and it was the month of Nisan that the king gave to him the commandment to return and to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. And so the beginning of the prophecy was not in 536 BC but the beginning of the prophecy was in the month of Nisan in the year 445 BC, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes who began his reign in 465 BC, so the year would be 445 BC. And interestingly enough 483 years later Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem recorded for us called really today in our vernacular Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter.

Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem to present himself to them as their promised Messiah. But as Daniel prophesies here in chapter 9 the Messiah would be cut off and receive nothing. And so that we know that within that very week that Jesus had presented himself as the Messiah he was crucified and did not receive the kingdom.

And so rather than Daniel proving that the Bible was not inspired of God, just the opposite indeed, and had Asimov made a careful examination he would realize that the Bible is God's inspired word. And 483 years after the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem the Messiah, the Prince did come. Now in Luke's Gospel chapter 21, Luke's Gospel chapter 21, Luke's Gospel chapter 21, as Jesus was talking to his disciples, they were there in the temple.

And the disciples were pointing out the huge stones that Herod had used in the building of the temple. They were pointing out the costly furnishings, the gold that was used in the temple structure and all. And Jesus as they were pointing these things out to him prophesied that the day was going to come when there would not be one of these stones left standing on another.

And they said, well Lord when will this happen? And what will be the signs of your coming and the end of the age? And so Jesus began to give them prophecies. Prophecies that dealt with the signs of the destruction of the temple. And prophecies that would precede his return to the earth.

And they are sort of mixed together. So part of the prophecies dealt with the prophecy of the destruction of the temple. Others dealt with his second coming.

He said, be careful that you are not deceived. For many will come declaring that they are the Messiah, but don't believe them. You're going to hear of wars and commotions, but do not be terrified.

These things must first come to pass. And then you will see the end. But the end is still in the future.

Then he said unto them, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. This speaks of a world war. And Jesus went on to say there will be great earthquakes in diverse places.

There will be famines and pestilences. And of course surely we do see pestilences. The HIV virus, West Nile virus, mad cow disease, and so many.

The fearful happenings he said. There will be great signs in the heaven. But before all of these things they will arrest you.

Now he's talking about things that will precede the destruction of the temple. They will arrest you and persecute you. They will deliver you up to the synagogues and into prison.

You will be brought before kings and rulers for My namesake. And it will give you an opportunity to give your testimony. So don't try to work out in advance what you're going to answer them.

For I will give you wisdom which all of your adversaries shall not be able to argue against or resist. And you shall be betrayed both by your parents and your brothers, family members and friends and sons. And some of you will be put to death.

You will be hated of all men for My namesake. And now when you see Jerusalem encircled with the armies then know that the destruction of Jerusalem is near. Those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

But woe to them that are with child. For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this nation. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations.

And Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." So He prophesied the events that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Of their being dispersed throughout the world. And Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles or under the feet of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled.

Interestingly enough, of course, Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles for centuries. And it wasn't until 1967, in the war of 1967, that Jerusalem was freed from the dominance of the Gentiles that were ruling over it. And Israel once again conquered the city of Jerusalem and made it a unified city under Israeli control.

Which would indicate that basically the times of the Gentiles is just about over, about fulfilled. Jesus said that there will be signs in the sun and in the moon. Stars and upon the earth national problems that defy solutions.

The sea and the waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them for fear as they look at those things which are happening on the earth. For the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, just look up, lift up your head, for your redemption is very close. So in these prophecies that Jesus has given in Luke 21, prophecies that dealt with the destruction of the temple, not one stone left standing on another, were literally fulfilled in 70 AD.

When Titus, who was one of Nero's generals, came with the Roman legions to destroy Jerusalem, he ordered them not to destroy the buildings, however the soldiers became drunk with their success. And because the Jews had fled and their final fortress was the temple itself, they shot arrows into the temple

with torches on them and the temple burned. The gold that was there in the temple, in the tomb, was the dome melted, came down into the cracks between the great stones of which the temple was built.

And in order to completely loot the temple, they dismantled the temple stone upon stone until there was not one stone left standing on another. And the prophecy of Jesus was literally fulfilled. Daniel tells us that the Messiah would be cut off without receiving the kingdom and the Jews dispersed throughout the world.

And that's when the dispersion of the Jews took place, when it was conquered in 70 AD by the Roman troops. The first 69 year, 7 year cycles of Daniel's prophecy were literally fulfilled. But it leaves the 70th 7 year cycle yet to be fulfilled.

God has 7 years of His covenant with the nation of Israel that are yet to be fulfilled. And in chapter 9 verse 27, it says, He tells us of when this 7 year cycle will begin. Actually, in verse 27, He says, He, that is the prince of the people, verse 26, that is going to come and destroy this city and the sanctuary.

He, the leader of Rome, will come and He'll make a covenant to restore the temple and the peace covenant between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This man comes on the scene as a man of peace. He comes on as the Messiah, the Savior.

And because Russia, and the Moslem nations, who invaded Israel in Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39, which we discussed a few weeks ago, because they are so thoroughly defeated by God's intervention, God tells us that at that time, that He destroys these invading armies. And He tells us that He will take away the blindness of the nation of Israel and He will put His Spirit upon them once again. That will mark the beginning of this last 7 year cycle.

It is interesting that Iran this past week, we read in the papers, where they now have sufficient gas to develop a nuclear bomb. And of course we know that they have been threatening the nation of Israel, its existence. And when the Palestinians continue their terrorism, which they are certain to do, Israel will retaliate and probably again just invade the Palestinian territories to establish martial law, which will provoke the Moslem nations, with the support of Russia, to come against Israel, which will bring in God's intervention, which God will use as opening of the eyes of the Jews, putting His Spirit upon them.

And the last 7 year cycle begins. Now at the beginning of this 7 year cycle, the leader of the European Union, which is a revival of the Roman Empire, only as Daniel described earlier, it is mixed with clay so that there is a weakness. It isn't an autocratic kind of control, but it's a democratic kind of control.

Nations that will align themselves together, such as we have in the European Union, and they will be the final world-dominating power. People wonder about where is the United States in all of this, and interestingly enough, it doesn't appear. It could very well be that the United States will be removed as a world-dominating power by the Church being taken out.

Can you imagine? Can you imagine? Can you imagine what's going to happen once the Church is removed from this nation? You know, as tragic as was the event that took place in New Orleans, how people reverted, actually, to savagery, to crime. You're shocked when you read of how these people became almost completely savages, many of them because of the tragedy. Think of what will happen when the Church is taken out.

Think of the days of decadence that will take place once the Lord removes the Church, and the United States, I believe, will be brought down and not really be a part. The European community will arise. The

leader will come.

He will make a covenant with the nation of Israel, and in this covenant, no doubt, allowing them to rebuild their temple. They're on the Temple Mount, but not on the southern portion, which is, of course, presently under Muslim control. The whole Temple Mount is under Muslim control, but the northern portion will, no doubt, be given to Israel, about 20 acres there, to rebuild their temple, put a wall next to the Dome of the Rock Mosque, and allow them to have the northern section for the rebuilding of their temple.

Interestingly enough, if you have the internet connections, you can go to the www.templeinstitute.org, I think it is, and you can see the pictures of the articles that they've already made to be used in the new temple. The various vessels and all that will be used when they build their temple again, and of course, so many of them are looking forward to the rebuilding of their temple. But here in verse 27 of Daniel 9, this leader from Europe will come, make the covenant with them, will bring a peaceful solution.

He comes on as a man of peace, we read in Daniel, and that people will begin to hail him as the Savior. Even the Jews will look upon him as the Messiah, because he has aided them in the rebuilding of their temple. However, the honeymoon won't last very long.

After three and a half years, we are told here in verse 27, in the midst of the seven year period, after three and a half years, he will come to the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and he will declare that he is God. He will stand there in the temple of God, declaring that he is God, and demanding to be worshipped as God. He will put an image of himself in the Holy of Holies, and require that they worship the image of him that is placed there in the Holy of Holies.

Jesus talked about this in Matthew 24. He said that in the signs of the coming of his return to the earth, he said, when you see the abomination of desolation that was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, this abomination standing in the temple, setting his image in the Holy of Holies, it's the abomination that will bring the desolation. The desolation is the great tribulation period.

God's wrath. God's judgment. It's the final straw of man's rebellion, and God will respond with great judgment upon the earth.

As Jesus said, when you see this abomination of desolation that Daniel spoke about, as you see it standing in the holy place, then those that are in Judea should flee to the mountains. Let those which are on the housetop not come to take anything out of the house, neither let him which is in the field return to take his clothes. For there shall be great tribulation such as the world has never seen before or will ever see again.

And unless those days are shortened, no flesh will be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Paul wrote about this to the Thessalonians in his second letter. He said, Now we exhort you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together unto him, that you not be shaken in your mind or troubled, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter as supposedly from us, as that the day of Christ has already come.

Let no man deceive you by any means, for there shall be a rebellion first, and that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sits in the temple of God and declares that he is God. This blasphemous act, known as the abomination that triggers the desolation or the great tribulation, which is God's wrath

and judgment, which will be poured out upon the earth in cataclysmic catastrophes, described in the book of Revelation chapters 6 through 18, described in interesting detail. I believe that what we have seen just recently, within the last year, is just a small foretaste, a preview of what is coming.

These are more or less localized areas of the world that have been affected. But when these kinds of judgments affect the entire earth, the whole earth, you can't imagine the confusion and the desolation that will take place worldwide, and you surely don't want to be here when that happens. The Bible indicates that over half of the world's population will be destroyed in these cataclysmic events that will take place when the judgment of God is poured out upon the earth.

We are looking at minor previews of coming attractions. But when will the end actually come? Jesus said when you see these things begin to come to pass, surely they are beginning to come to pass. He said look up, lift up your head, your redemption is getting close.

We know this seven year cycle will begin when God destroys those armies that will come against Israel in these last days. That will be the beginning of the end. The beginning of the seven year cycle, the last seven year cycle, divided in half as the Antichrist comes, sets up his image in the temple, this abomination that causes desolation.

But when will it end? It will end with the return of course of Jesus Christ to establish his kingdom here upon the earth. Daniel in chapter 12 asked that very question. When is the end of these things? And the Lord answered his question.

But chapter 12 is next week. Chapters 11 and 12, we will finish the book of Daniel next week. And so we'll get the second part of the sermon next week as we deal with the end of these things which the Lord showed to Daniel in chapter 12.

I hope that whets your appetite to read. You know you don't have to wait until next Sunday. You can go home and read it today and find out what will be the end of these things.

When will be the end of these things? Let's pray. Father we are so enlightened by your word. And as we look at the events that are happening, our hearts do not need to fear or to fail for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth.

For we know Lord that you are God. You are in control. And that these things that are happening Lord are allowed by you to wake people up.

And so Lord I pray that we might be awakened to our need of surrendering our lives fully to you. Our need to make every contact with the world just as light as possible. To not get entrenched in material things, but Lord to walk after the Spirit.

And so we ask Father that for your church there will be a great spiritual awakening as we watch the earth begin the final kind of convulsions before the end. And so we ask Father that guide us Lord in your ways. Make us instruments to share your truth and to bring others Lord into the understanding and the knowledge of your truth.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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