

INTRODUCTION

I heard about a young, energetic preacher who was preaching in a small country church. He was preaching on the second coming and was quoting the words of Jesus from Revelation 22. He moved to the edge of the platform and shouted, "Jesus said, 'Behold I come quickly!'" Then his mind just went blank and forgot what to say, so he moved back and repeated his last statement as he rushed to the edge of the stage, "Behold I come quickly!" He still couldn't remember what to say next, so he tried it a third time with more energy and volume. He rushed forward and shouted, "Behold I come quickly!" But this time he lost his balance and fell right into the lap of an old deacon who was seated on the front pew. The young preacher said, "Sir, I'm so sorry!" The old deacon said, "Don't worry, you warned me three times you were coming!"

Jesus warned us more than three times that He is going to return. We're in the thirteenth chapter of Mark where Jesus talks about the future. That's why I am sharing three messages called Jesus' Extended Forecast But Jesus isn't forecasting weather, He's forecasting the future.

In the first message in this series we looked at events Jesus predicted that have already come true or are coming true. The temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., His followers have been and are being persecuted, and the Gospel is being preached all around the world. In this passage for this message Jesus predicted things that still have not happened. They are in the future.

Remember, He is speaking these words to His disciples just hours before he will be arrested and sentenced to be crucified.

Mark 13:14-27. "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that this will not take place in winter, because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive the elect—if that were possible."

"So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. 'But in those days, following that distress, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens."

I've always loved studying history. But prophecy is history in reverse. We know history from the beginning until now, but in Isaiah 46:10 God says, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand and I will do all that I

please.” (Isaiah 46:10) Jesus is God and in this passage He is pulling back the curtain to give us a glimpse of the future. Let’s explore three future truths Jesus mentions here.

1. AFTER JESUS TAKES HIS BRIDE HOME, THERE WILL BE A TIME OF GLOBAL CHAOS

Jesus said, “Those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.” (Mark 13:19)

Let me give you a simple timeline of the end-time events, as I understand them. The very next thing that will happen on God’s prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church. It’s when Jesus will return in the clouds and quickly snatch away His bride, the church. That’s us. And He will take us to His Father’s house. Jesus doesn’t talk about the rapture in Mark 13, but Paul writes about it several times. I’m going to mention it, because it is the event that ushers in the period of global chaos.

If you want to know more about the rapture I preached through 1 Thessalonians in 2013, so if you want to go to our website you can find that series in the message archive. I did a message entitled “Are You Ready for the Rapture?” You can download it as an audio podcast, watch the video, or read the full manuscript.

The word “rapture” doesn’t appear in the New Testament. In 1 Thessalonians 4 Paul writes that when Jesus comes back in the clouds, He won’t touch down on the planet, there will be a shout and a sound of a trumpet and the bodies of the dead in Christ will be raised, then we who are alive and remain will be “caught up” together to meet the Lord in the air. That phrase “caught up” is *harpadzo* in Greek, but the Latin word is *raptio*, so that’s where we get the word rapture. Paul writes, “In a moment in a twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.” At that time, millions of believers who comprise the church, the bride of Christ, will suddenly disappear.

That event will be the most catastrophic natural disaster to ever occur on planet earth. However, it’s not a natural disaster; it will be a supernatural departure. But you can imagine the chaos that will occur to communications, transportation, and infrastructure when that happens.

This time is often referred to as the Tribulation because in the King James Version, Jesus used that word. Jesus said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:21 KJV)

There have been terrible times in the history of the world. There have been plagues, pestilences, famines, drought, and bloody wars. But Jesus said this particular time would be more terrible than any previous time in history and more horrific than any time after it.

When you compared this scripture with Daniel and Revelation, many scholars believe the Tribulation will last seven years. The first half of it won’t be too bad, but the last three and a half years will be the most awful time in the history of mankind. John describes this chaotic tribulation in Revelation chapters 6-18. There are seven seals to a scroll that are opened, and

each seal leads to a kind of judgment on the earth's inhabitants. Then seven trumpets are sounded, and each trumpet announces a harsher affliction. Finally, seven vials, or bowls of wrath are poured out. Again, if you want to more about the details of the Tribulation you can get my book on Revelation. I call it *Revelation for Dummies*, because I have tried to make it so simple that you don't have to be a theologian to understand it.

Now, about this time, you might be getting a little nervous because you're thinking that you don't want to be around when all these terrible things are happening on planet earth. Don't worry. If you know the Lord, you are part of His bride, and we won't be here. I'm convinced for a couple of reasons that we won't suffer through the tribulation.

One reason is that when you read the book of Revelation, the church is mentioned 26 times in the first three chapters. But then during all the chapters describing the terrible tribulation, you never read the word "church" once. The church is only mentioned again in the last chapter where we are the church eternal with the Lord.

And in writing to the churches, Jesus promised us: "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth." (Revelation 3:10)

From the moment of the rapture until the rest of eternity, do you know where we'll be? We'll be with the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul wrote that when we meet the Lord in the air, he added, "And so we will be with the Lord FOREVER. Therefore encourage each other with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18)

2. DURING THIS TIME A GLOBAL LEADER WILL STAND IN THE TEMPLE AND DEMAND TO BE WORSHIPPED

Jesus said, "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand." (Matthew 24:15)

After the church is removed, you can imagine the global chaos that will ensue. There will be a world leader who will rise up and bring all the nations together in a one-world government with a global economy. The Bible calls this man several things. Daniel calls him "the king who is to come." The Apostle John calls him the Anti-Christ. In Revelation he is known as the Beast. And Paul calls him the man of lawlessness. This leader will bring the remnants of the nations together into a global alliance.

People have been talking about a one-world government for many years. In 1999 former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite spoke at the United Nations and shared his dream of a one-world government. He said, "To do that of course, we Americans will have to yield up some of our sovereignty. It would take a lot of courage, a lot of faith in the new order." Cronkite died at 92, but until his death he was pushing for a global government.

Every time I fly on American Airlines, I cringe a little when they say, "Thank you for flying American Airlines, a member of the one world alliance." I know the one-world alliance is just a

partnership of 15 different airlines, but it reminds me that sometime in the future, there will a REAL one-world alliance.

Jesus spoke about the abomination that causes desolation. This is a sacrilegious action that will be carried out by this global leader. Daniel mentions the abomination that causes desolation three times. Here's what Daniel predicted, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (Daniel 9:27)

So we know the Anti-Christ will at first appear to be a peacemaker. He will broker a seven-year covenant, or peace treaty. We don't know the parties involved in this treaty. But imagine if there was someone who could bring together the Israelis and the Muslim nations. The Abomination that causes desolation will take place in the Jewish Temple. There is no Jewish temple currently, but as I mentioned to the group at WEBS last Wednesday evening, that if they got the green light, the Israelis could construct a temple overnight. They could build the same thing that Moses built in the wilderness, a tabernacle, which was a tent. The Jewish Tabernacle wasn't large. The canvas fence around it was 150 by 75 feet. But the actual tent containing the holy place and the Holy of Holies was 45 feet long and only 15 feet wide. Those dimensions didn't change when they build larger walls and buildings around it. Think about it, 15 feet by 45 feet—that's about half the size of singlewide mobile home! Most of us live in houses larger than the actual interior of the Temple. All the instruments and implements for a third temple have already been constructed by a group of Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem at the Temple Institute.

But the Jewish temple or tabernacle cannot be rebuilt in its original location, because the Muslim Dome of the Rock occupies that space now. Not exactly. Many respected Jewish authorities believe the actual location of the Temple was about 200 feet north of the current Dome of the Rock.

What if some moderate Muslim leader was able to bring about a peace treaty with the Jews and Muslims that would divide the 36-acre Temple Mount into a Muslim section and a Jewish section and the Jews were able to rebuild their temple beside the Dome of the Rock? That would provide the place for the Antichrist to stand and do what Daniel and Jesus called the Abomination that causes desolation.

Paul wrote: "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

What an abomination—for a man to stand up in God's temple and declare that he is god and should be worshipped. When he does that, the Jewish priests and Jewish people will stage a walkout. They will desert the temple, and leave it desolate. You shouldn't be surprised because Satan controls this anti-Christ. Satan has always wanted to be worshipped. He tried to ascend to God's throne and was kicked out of his position as a beautiful angel. When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness Satan wanted Jesus to bow down and worship Him.

The Jews will refuse to worship the megalomaniac. As a result, the wrath of the Antichrist and his government will burn hot against the Jews. Over the next forty-two months, Antichrist will organize a huge army to surround and attack the Israelites. The Jews will be outnumbered a thousand to one. Antichrist will gather his armies at a staging ground 60 miles north of Jerusalem at a place called Armageddon in Revelation 16:16.

3. JESUS WILL RETURN TO WIN THE FINAL BATTLE AND ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM

“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”
(Mark 13:26)

When I was a kid, going to the movies cost 25 cents and there was only one movie showing. I loved the movies about cowboys and Indians. I especially liked the ones where a small group of American soldiers would be surrounded by a huge mob of Indians riding around their overturned wagons. The soldiers were running out of ammo and it was just a matter of time until they would be overrun. But at just the right time, you heard the sound of a cavalry bugler sounding “charge!” And the scene changed you see a couple of hundred cavalry soldiers riding up to the rescue, and the Indians rode off to escape. That used to make the hair on my neck stand up with excitement.

That’s what I think of when I read about Jesus returning at just the right time to protect His people from Anti-Christ and his forces. It’s going to be a short battle. Let’s just read how Paul, John, and Zechariah describe this final battle.

Paul wrote: “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

In the climactic scene in the Book of Revelation John wrote: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True...His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself...Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations... On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Revelation 19:11-16)

Even the Old Testament prophet Zechariah saw this final battle: “Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley...The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.” (Zechariah 14:3, 9)

That’s what I call a mighty touchdown! The only weapon used in the battle will be the word that proceeds from the mouth of the glorified Christ. Martin Luther understood this when he wrote his great hymn, “A mighty Fortress is our God.” He dedicated a part of a verse to the downfall of the devil. He wrote, “The prince of darkness grim; we tremble not at him; his rage we can

endure; for lo his doom is sure; One little word will fell him." Just one little word from Jesus and Satan and his servant will fall like a tree that has been chopped down.

CONCLUSION

But let's come back from the future to the present. Nobody knows when Jesus is going to return. In the next message I'm going to talk more about what to do until Jesus returns. Are you ready to meet the Lord either in death or by His coming?

In the spring of 1980, the blue skies above Washington became obscured by steam rising from Mt. Saint Helens. Geologists warned an eruption was imminent and residents living near the area were ordered to evacuate. State troopers and forest rangers entered the area with loudspeakers blaring, "Danger! Evacuate the area immediately." Flashing road signs were erected that said, "Warning, Warning, Warning. Evacuate immediately." There was an 83-year-old man named Harry Truman (no relation to the president) who operated a lodge at Spirit Lake only five miles from Mt. St. Helens. He laughed at the warnings. Officials argued with him to leave, but when he stubbornly refused, he was granted permission to stay. He said, "Nobody knows more about this mountain than old Harry—and it wouldn't dare blow up on me."

On the morning of May 18, 1980 Harry woke, and probably followed his habit of feeding his 16 cats, then fixing breakfast for himself. At 8:37 a.m. Mt. St. Helens exploded with the force of a 23-megaton atom bomb. The air was instantly heated to 600 degrees. Old Harry never heard a thing because a shock wave of energy traveling faster than the speed of sound radiated out from the blast. It was followed by a fifty-foot tall wave of mud and dirt that flattened everything within 150 square miles. The eruption was followed by a cloud of ash that covered everything to a depth of one hundred and fifty feet. They never found a trace of Harry, his cats, or his cabin. I wonder what went through old Harry's mind in that millisecond before he realized he had gambled and lost. He had heard the warnings, but he did not heed them.

The Bible says at any moment, the Lord Jesus could return in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye. God has placed warning signs all along the road. Warning, repent immediately. For those of us who have heeded His warning, we will escape His judgment against sin. But some people like Old Harry, just laugh at the Bible and refuse to heed God's Warning.

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OUTLINE

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



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