

Forecasting The Future

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[0:00] Well, I'm just going to go ahead and get right at it. We're talking today in Luke chapter 21. We're in the middle of this section of prophecy!

How good are we at forecasting the future? A famous Roman engineer who engineered the aqueduct system in and out of Rome, in ancient Rome.

His name was Julius Frontinus. He was famous for saying that inventions have reached their limit. I see no further development in terms of kinds of inventions that were possible.

I think he missed a mark on that one. John Erickson, who was Queen Victoria's surgeon, personal surgeon, he said that the human heart as well as the abdomen is forever closed to surgery.

Some of you may have even had heart surgery or open heart surgery. You know that that prediction did not work out so well. How about Henry Brown, a journalist from 1893, who said that in 100 years, the law would be so simple that lawyers and their fees would pretty much drop out of sight.

[1:39] Wish that one was true. And then how about this one? Daniel Webster, who was known for some pretty good things, but in 1848 argued in the Senate that California, when they were considering purchasing the territory of California for Mexico, he said that California is pretty much a worthless piece of land, that it's worth no more than a dollar.

Some of you might think that's still true. Well, unfortunately, these kinds of predictions happen in church circles.

Preachers make these kinds of predictions as well. And for the most part, they don't actually, in every way, they don't come out so well.

Predicting the second coming of Jesus has been a folly ever since people have tried to do that. And I want to show you a few highlights.

The first is from John Hegey. And some of you may be familiar with this particular gentleman. The Bible speaks of signs in the heaven.

[3:01] What does it mean? What is the prophetic significance? Is this the end of the age? And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. I believe that the heavens are God's billboard, that He has been sending signals to planet Earth and we just haven't been picking them up.

I'm going to walk you through 500 years and show you how God is literally screaming at the world, I'm coming soon.

The coming four blood moons points to a world-shaking event that will happen between April 2014 and October 2015.

Jesus said in Mark 13, 24, 26, But in those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give its light. Then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

[4:18] That verse describes a time in the future when the sun and the moon will eclipse at the same time. And God sends planet Earth a signal that something big is about to happen.

Did it happen? So Mr. Hagee wrote a book, still available, still preaching today.

Let me tell you here, if you ever see me or hear me get up and talk about how, well, I think Jesus is coming back in October of 2027.

If I were to say that, then just send me packing, send me on my way. You, okay? Because Jesus told us numerous times that we don't know.

And it's folly for us to try to figure that out. Now, what was interesting to me is back in 2014 and 2015 when this was happening, I was kind of ridiculing it then as well.

[5:27] But people like Glenn Beck, who is Mormon, by the way, not Christian, gave this guy some air time.

And so did CBN News. And maybe some of you get your information or at least some of your information from CBN News. And I would just caution you that outlets that are willing to highlight and promote this kind of, I'll call it buffoonery, someone who is willing to get up and make a prediction like that and put it in writing or put themselves on a screen and say these things. This is not new. This is something that's been going on for centuries. And it's very recent as well. I don't know how many of you know how recent some of this is. But just this past Friday, we had a blood moon.

I don't know if you guys knew this. And so you can go online. Now, of course, you know, you go online, that's your first problem, Rich, right? It's like, tell me, where are you finding this information? [6:42] Well, it's available there online. But is there something about to happen August 28, 2026? That was two days ago.

Did we miss the rapture? Did we miss it? Did we? I hope not.

So Friday night, I took a little picture with this blood moon. There it is. I have a sneaking suspicion that when the blood moons, when it really does appear, it will be a little bit more noticeable than this.

And I'm, and you say, Rich, are you mocking, are you making fun of, of the idea of the second coming of Christ?

And I would say, not at all. Jesus is coming. And we don't know when. And so as the Bible tells us, we need to be prepared at all times because we don't know when.

[7:57] And I think the Lord knows our nature enough that if we could tell when he was going to come back again, we would just live like garbage until like maybe the first, the last week or two.

And then we'd like try to straighten up our ways. Maybe. I don't know. I mean, but it is good news that we don't know because at all times, we are to be prepared for the coming of Christ.

Now, those who make these kinds of predictions and these kinds of things, I think are mockable. I think we ought to mock them because they are bringing down the name of Christ.

Here's a collection of TikTok videos. And then some of you are going to say, well, Rich, there you go again, TikTok. I mean, the internet and then TikTok. Well, look at these. Look at these.

I want to highlight a few of these. The guy in the upper left, you know, talking about eclipses, like eclipses. We haven't seen eclipses before. Now, all of a sudden, they're really special.

[9:09] The woman top left, the blonde woman there, is saying that the rapture is imminent and pastors aren't letting us know. So I'm at fault because I'm not buying into their pitch that the rapture is so close.

The woman in the middle there in the blue shirt, talking about how this, she's receiving these visions from the Lord. And in my mind, I'm thinking, no, they're not from him because they're not coming to pass.

You are not a prophet. And if we went by Old Testament standards, we'd have to take you out of town and stone you to death. But good thing for her that we're not in the Old Testament.

Could the rapture be between 23 and 24, 2023 and 2024? Yes, the rapture is coming this time.

I'm guessing that they've made predictions before that didn't come to pass. Apparently, people are still listening to them. The guy with Noah's Ark there, 2024 rapture is imminent?

[10:19] No. And then these last two, bottom right, they're quite special. The guy there, he was being told by a number of people that the rapture was happening on such and such a date.

And the date came and went and because he didn't see them, he thought the rapture happened and he missed it. So he's like, okay guys, buckle up.

Apparently, I hear it's going to get quite worse now because, you know, the rapture happened.

Then the woman on the far right, there at the bottom, she's like telling all her friends and family and all the ones who subscribe to her channel.

that the rapture is going to happen that afternoon and she's saying goodbye. And we're not going to see you after this afternoon because the rapture is going to happen and I just want you to know.

And then she's telling them to trust Jesus. And I'm thinking, lady, when it doesn't happen, you've lost all credibility. The message that you're preaching has lost all credibility.

[11:27] And you're bringing the name of Jesus down into the muck and mire of your stupidity because you simply will not listen to the warnings that Jesus gave, the admonition.

Stop trying to predict when it's going to happen. Knock it off and just trust him that he is coming. Absolutely. It is, these are the reasons why people make fun of Christians who talk about the second coming of Jesus.

And why they would say, oh, we can just live however we want because it's not going to happen and it hasn't happened in 2,000 years and so we can just do whatever we want. And that is, that too is such folly.

But may we never be the kind of people that would make these false claims and false predictions and say that we know that it's happening or we know that it's near or we know that it's imminent and we just simply do not know.

Every generation of believers could certainly expect that Jesus would come in their lifetime. And every generation of believers could look at the signs of the times and say, it could happen, it's coming soon.

[12:47] And we can do the same but we just don't know when it's going to happen. So we find ourselves in Luke 21.

Actually, before I get there, I want to encourage you to, if you want to focus on predictions coming true, focus on the ones that were made in the Old Testament about the first coming of Christ and look at the accuracy of them and then let that inform you in terms of will I believe that Jesus is coming again.

Let me just highlight a few. Micah 5.2. Micah, some 700 years before the birth of Christ, declared that Jesus would be born, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, O Bethlehem, Ephathra, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah.

From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel whose coming forth is from old, from ancient of days. You don't describe a baby as someone from old, from ancient of days unless that baby was divine and eternal in nature of Christ.

Zechariah 11. This is now 500 years before the birth of Christ. They weighed out as my wages 30 pieces of silver. You remember the story we're going to get to here in a few weeks.

[14:15] Judas accepting this payment for his information about where the religious leaders could go and arrest Jesus. He betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

And then if you remember, he felt so guilty about doing it, he brought those 30 pieces of silver back to the temple and threw them on the ground in the temple. Look at this, 500 years beforehand.

And the Lord said to me, throw it to the potter, the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.

There's three bits of information there that are remarkable. One is the 30 pieces of silver, again, 500 years before the birth of Christ. He's giving this information.

Secondly, that he threw the 30 pieces of silver on the ground. And then twice it mentions the potter. They took that 30 pieces of silver and bought a potter's field with it.

[15:19] Remarkable, the fine detail, the accuracy of these prophecies. Isaiah, 700 years before the birth of Christ.

I gave my back to those who strike and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard. I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. That they were going to beat him in this way, that they would pull out the beard from his face.

And of course, the Gospels make mention. And then Psalm 22. David, the psalmist here, King David, a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

And I want you to notice the three elements that are here. The dogs encompass me, a company of evil doers, and circles me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

He's making mention of the way that they crucified Jesus by nailing his feet and hands to the cross. They pierced my hands and feet. The interesting thing is that no one had yet invented crucifixion.

[16:27] No one had yet come up with the idea of putting someone to death by nailing them to a piece of wood or a cross. And here is David a thousand years before that giving a foreshadowing.

I can count all my bones. Jesus didn't have any of his bones broken. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.

and we're familiar with how the soldiers cast lots for what remained of his garments. And so these predictions, these prophecies that absolutely came to pass, this is what we need to remind ourselves of so that when we look at what we're going to be looking at today in the second coming of Jesus that we'll understand that these predictions are not just predictions.

This is future history. This is, from God's perspective, this is history that just hasn't happened yet. But we can take heart in knowing that these things will absolutely come to pass. Now, last time we met two weeks ago to go over previous verses in Luke 21, we talked about a few things that I want to remind you of.

[17:46] And this is one of them. This is not on your notes this week. This was on your notes two weeks ago. As we travel through these portions of prophecy in the Gospels, what makes them unique is that you will notice a sense of the now but not yet.

In other words, how prophecy can speak to issues that are happening now or in the near future, but also they speak to something that is much bigger that is yet to come, that will come at a much later time.

And from the perspective of our own existence here 2,000 years after Christ, we can say, okay, it's been at least 2,000 years and who knows how much longer it will be. So the now but not yet. And I'll make reference to that. I'll point that out to you. There are applications that we can glean from these prophecies for the here and now, things that we can apply in the here and now, but also understand that these prophecies will not find their final fulfillment until the tribulation occurs and the Lord returns in that order.

And so we have to be aware of this particular idea, the now but not yet as we make our way through these texts. And so with that in mind, let's take a look beginning in Luke chapter 21 verse 9 at a few verses that we looked at last time.

[19:13] And this is Luke writing, this is Jesus declaring, it's called the Sermon on the Mount of Olives or the Olivet Discourse. It's Jesus basically with a few of his disciples just sharing with them this incredible sermon that is prophecy, prophetic in nature.

So when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once. And then he said to them, nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

And again, here is the principle of the now but not yet. We can all say, well, yes, we have this happening now that nation rises against nation and there's rumors of wars and rumors of uprisings and these kinds of things.

Yes, that is true. We will see all of these things as kind of a tremor of what is yet to come during the tribulation. But during the tribulation, these nations that will rise against nations and these wars are going to be massive.

It will encompass the whole globe. It's not going to be just in a more identified or smaller area of space where people or nations will be at war with each other.

[20:34] The whole planet will be at war during the tribulation. there will be great earthquakes in various places, famines and pestilences, and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Again, we can experience some of these things in the here and now, but the earthquakes, the pestilence, the famine, it's nothing like what will happen during the tribulation.

Tiny in comparison to what will be during the tribulation. The events that we looked at two weeks ago in Revelation chapter 6, we're talking about islands disappearing, mountains falling down, massive, massive earthquakes, massive numbers of people dying during that time.

And then, in verse 12, we have this time stamp, and this is how we ended two weeks ago. But after this, or I'm sorry, but before all this, before all this, before these events of the tribulation, before that happens.

So now we're going to be reading through lists of things that will happen. Again, yes, they will happen in our lifetimes as well, but again, even more so magnified exponentially during the tribulation.

[22:00] And so let's take a look at these. But before all this, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my namesake.

And some of the apostles actually experienced this. Paul, in particular, was brought before governors and also Caesar as well. And so you had a near fulfillment, what happened in the lifetime of the apostles.

apostles, these things have been going on for 2,000 years, and then during the tribulation, it's going to be ramped up that much greater. This will be your opportunity to bear witness, Jesus said.

Settle it, therefore, in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends and some of you they will put to death and you will be hated by all for my namesake.

[23:05] So these are things that we have seen throughout history, throughout church history, but again during the tribulation will be ramped up immeasurably.

But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives. And we'll talk about what all of these statements mean as we make our way through what is on your notes. And so here we go. Expectations that we should have for 2,000 years of church history, absolutely, but exponentially magnified during the tribulation.

So let's talk about these different things that we can expect. The first one is persecution. And while the world might smile occasionally at Christians, and let me say that for the 200 or so years of American history, 250 years of American history, and even before that, we've lived in a country and a nation that has somewhat smiled on Christianity, that has accepted Christianity, that was, indeed, our nation was founded on Christian principles.

That is unique in world history. We need to understand that. And we have enjoyed the blessings of God for this amount of time, but we also have to understand that you and I, we are living in a day and age where that may not be the case very much longer as we are being, as the security and the sovereignty of our own nation is being threatened by those who would come in and seek to do away with Christianity, and we see the rise of Islamic rule, even in our own nation, that we have to be aware of.

[24:53] We have to understand that if Muslims continue to take office and to become congressmen and governors and even to the point of being presidents, make no mistake that they will eventually bring this land to the point where Christianity will be outlawed and you will not be able to worship freely the Lord Jesus Christ much as the way it is in other Muslim nations today.

There are no Muslim nations where Christianity is allowed to freely gather to worship. They murder those kind of people. They murder Christians.

And so we have to be aware of that. And there might be some people who will say, Rich, you're just being outlandish because I know someone who's Muslim or I know Muslim people and not all Muslims are that way, but you have to understand that the vast majority of Muslims, even what would be considered peace-loving Muslims, they may not be the ones who will try to behead you or stab you, but they will approve of it.

And survey has shown that even though they might not be the ones to pull the trigger, they certainly approve of if you are a Christian, if you identify as a Christian and you refuse to convert to Islam, then you deserve to die.

And so we need to be aware of this as a nation, and certainly we need to guard against this happening in our nation. As believers, we're not called to just lie down and let it happen.

[26:37] That as a nation, as believers in this nation, we have a responsibility to protect the sovereignty and the security of our country, of our state, of our families, of our churches against what anybody with any kind of common sense can look at and see what's happening in our own state of Michigan and what's happening.

We have a candidate here in the state of Michigan for Senate who is openly defiant, trying to hide it right now, during election season, but openly defiant about anything having to do with Christianity. So we need to be aware of this reality. I was perhaps 10, 20 years ago ignorant of this idea of Islam being something that would be significant during the tribulation, during the end times.

But as you see events happening on the world stage and in our own country, it's hard not to see. It's hard to look at what's happening and not see the correlation between what's happening and end times events in that way.

So be aware of that as well. Christians, so while we may right now at least enjoy the dying embers of our world smiling at Christians, followers of Christ for the most part throughout world history are the object of rage and ridicule over the vast majority of Christian history.

[28:18] that's true for most of the world today and it's true for most of world history for the last 2,000 years. And so we need to be aware that persecution is a part of our shared experience.

Prosecution, I'm sorry, before all this, there's your time stamp, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. Prosecution will also be a part of that.

Nations will outlaw Christianity and governing authorities will condemn Christians. It amazes me that there are Christian leaders, and I use the word leaders maybe with some air quotes there because I don't think they're leading very well, who would either ignore or deny some of the realities that I just shared with you.

So be aware of that as well. But this is, as Jesus promised, this is what's coming. And what has existed in much of the world, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my namesake.

Now I want you to, the first part of that, just imagine what it would have been like to grow up in a Jewish home, and every week, every part of your existence, you were going to the synagogue all the time.

[29:47] That was the community gathering center. That's where you would go to gather for worship, it's where you would go to gather for fellowship, for meals, you would just, the synagogue was the centerpiece of their world.

And then as they came to faith in Christ, the synagogue would be the place where they would go for judgment, for prosecution, even to the point of being stoned to death, and put to death, are put in prison because of their faith in Christ.

And so prosecution will certainly be a part of that, and certainly during the tribulation, that will be ramped up as well. When you read Revelation, when you read other prophetic literature, it talks about that.

And then there's opportunity not to vindicate yourself. When you go and stand before kings and judges and so forth, you're going to have an opportunity to speak.

But instead of trying to vindicate yourself, the assignment is instead to testify of the goodness of Christ, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to share your faith, to stand in defense of your faith.

[30:57] That's what we're going to be called to do. And again, opportunities here to bear witness. That is a part of it.

number four here is inspiration. This is, as it's described in these verses, God-given ability and wisdom to speak the truth and the gospel clearly.

And it is supernatural. It is unique. It is different. because I want you to look at what Jesus says not to do.

Settle it, therefore, in your minds not to meditate beforehand. Listen, you don't even have to think it through how you're going to answer the charges brought against you.

Because when you're in that moment, the Lord will supernaturally give you the words to speak, the mouth and the wisdom, the words to speak, to speak it in a way that is very much so wise and powerful, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

[32:11] So that will be a part of it as well. When Christians are brought into those kinds of circumstances, and again, of course, this is magnified greatly during the tribulation.

Betrayal. Another part of this. You will know what it's like to lose close relationships, to be ridiculed, and to be outright hated.

If you look at what Jesus says here, you will be delivered up even by parents, family members, relatives, friends.

Some of you will be put to death. Many during the tribulation will be put to death, death. But even now, the number of martyrs today is dwarfing the number of martyrs that have been occurring throughout church history.

So many people today are dying for their faith in Christ. We don't see it or hear about it so much here in the United States, but in other parts of the world it certainly is. And the unique thing about it is that it's very often not even reported in news stories because the media has an interest in not magnifying or letting us know about things that are happening to Christians.

[33:37] They only want to report on so-called Christians who are doing evil things. If that happens, that's a story. But if evil things happen to Christians, they're not interested in sharing that information.

So we have to be aware of that as well. And then the last two verses, not a hair of your head will perish.

By your endurance you will gain your lives. A couple of verses here that do need some explanation here. And you have this on your notes. Jesus is here not suggesting that people earn their way to heaven.

I do want you to see that. when Jesus says, let me go back to these verses here, by your endurance you will gain your lives.

This is not talking about salvation in the spiritual sense. This is talking about surviving the tribulation. That's the salvation that's in view there.

[34 : 48] A lot of times when we read the Gospels or we read particularly New Testament literature, when we hear that, when we see the word salvation, we see the word saved, we automatically assume it's talking about salvation from our sins.

It's talking about spiritual salvation. But there are times where, particularly when you look at the context, it's talking about more than that or something besides that. It's actually talking about physical salvation, being rescued.

The word for salvation can also be translated as rescued. It's not a religious word. It just means, you know, if you're drowning and a lifeguard saves you or It's the same idea.

And that's what's in view here. We know the overwhelming evidence of the scriptures, both Old and New Testament, teach us that it's not anything that we can earn.

That we don't earn salvation by being good enough, by doing enough good things, or surviving terrible tribulation. That's not speaking to spiritual salvation.

[36 : 00] In this case, it's speaking to physical salvation, the idea of surviving through the tribulation. Hopefully that makes sense to you.

So it's not about earning their way into heaven. He's simply describing how suffering has a way of sifting genuine believers from fair-weather Christians.

And I say fair-weather Christians in quotes. Because those who wear the label of Christianity, while it's convenient, may not be genuine Christians.

And we can't look at someone's life and judge them and determine, well, I think by the way that they live, they must be Christians. We don't know that.

It has a person trusted Christ as their Savior. If they have, they will be genuine, they will be real, and they will endure to the end.

[36 : 57] Either they're martyred for their faith, or if they're able to be saved, or to endure through the end of the tribulation, if it's indeed they make it to the tribulation.

And remember, it is the church that has taken away the rapture before the tribulation. So these are all, during the tribulation, these are all new Christians.

Because if you're a Christian, before the tribulation happens, you're going to be raptured and taken out. So during the tribulation, those who become saved, and there will be multitudes of people who will come to faith in Christ during the tribulation, and they will all be, in that sense, new believers.

And many of them will die for their faith in Christ. And yes, there will be many who endure to the end and survive to go into the next chapter, the second coming, the kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom.

So you put all that together. As we move on, Jesus is going to be discussing now the destruction of Jerusalem.

[38 : 08] And the way that I have this labeled on your notes is the destruction of Jerusalem part one, because there's a part two to this. There's a sequel. We've seen the first movie.

The second movie has yet to come out. The sequel has yet to come out, but there's two parts to this. Actually, if you go back into Old Testament, there's three parts.

There's a precursor. What do they call that? It's not a sequel, a prequel. Yeah, there's a prequel. In 586 B.C., when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon goes in and destroys Jerusalem, destroys the temple, utterly demolishes it, and that's the first destruction of Jerusalem.

Now Jesus is going to be talking about the second destruction of Jerusalem, and then there is yet another coming threat to Jerusalem and destruction of Jerusalem Jerusalem.

During the tribulation, and Jesus is going to step in and rescue them during that time. But I want us to make sure that we keep in focus here this idea of now, but not yet.

[39 : 24] Luke, you have this on your notes, Luke's account is unique. He's different than Matthew, he's different than Mark. Those are the three gospels that contain this prophetic element.

John's gospel does not discuss this. As Jesus is going through, Luke now is going to highlight what is this first destruction of Israel, that from the time that Jesus is speaking to it, it's yet in the future, but it's in the near future.

It is basically 40 years from the time of his crucifixion, from the time that he's speaking these words, until this massive destruction of Jerusalem that happens in AD 70.

But there's also the element, and Matthew's account is a bit different because Matthew wants to focus more on the threat to Jerusalem and the coming destruction of Jerusalem in the tribulation. So Luke is going to focus on the first destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Matthew, and the way that I have it written on your notes is this way. Luke and Matthew write about two distinct yet similar events.

[40 : 41] They're similar in the sense that Jerusalem is threatened and destroyed, but they're different in that they're two different time frames.

So Matthew's account refers to events that will take place during the future tribulation. Now Matthew's account, like Luke's, has this element of now but not yet.

That's still a part of how we need to think this through, but Matthew is going to pretty much focus on the second coming, events that happened during the tribulation.

And you see that when you read his literature. In Matthew 24, in verses 13 and 14, this again is some events that we might be familiar with, but the one who endures to the end will be saved. Again, when we see that word saved, we think spiritual, but in this context, it's talking about surviving the tribulation, not spiritual salvation.

[41 : 45] And then he says this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world. Now, as we've been making our way through the gospel of Luke, we've had our drums out here.

I think they got put away. But we've had our drums out here, our conga drums. And this drumbeat that Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Do you remember what the message was? The kingdom of God is at hand. And during the tribulation, guess what gospel they will be preaching once again?

The kingdom of God is at hand. Okay? Because during the tribulation, you will know that you have about seven years. Right? You have seven years from the time the church disappeared until Jesus sets foot on the planet.

You'll know that you'll have that time. So the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom, the millennial kingdom is about to be literally at hand.

[42 : 47] Once again, Jesus was declaring that all throughout the gospel of Luke until he came to Jerusalem and he marched into the city, this great parade, and Hosanna, Hosanna.

And then they reject him as the Messiah. and then the church is born. And today, we're not preaching the gospel of the kingdom. We're preaching the gospel of grace.

Our message is that you are a sinner and that there is a price to be paid for your sin. And that Jesus went to the cross and paid the penalty for your sin.

And by trusting in him, you too can be saved. Now we're talking about spiritual salvation. Yes, you can know the Lord Jesus Christ. You can know that he is your Savior and Lord.

You can know that when you die, you'll go to heaven and be with him forever. That is the gospel of grace that we preach today. But during the tribulation, this gospel of the kingdom will once again be proclaimed.

[43 : 50] The kingdom of God is at hand. Now we're saved in the same way. The gospel of the kingdom still also includes trusting Christ as your Savior because you can't earn it. You can't be good enough.

You are a sinner in need of his grace. So this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world. Did that happen before A.D.

70 when Jerusalem was destroyed the first time? No, it did not. Be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations all nations had not yet received the gospel.

And then the end will come. The end meaning the day of the Lord, the second coming of Jesus. He goes on in verses 15 and 16.

So when you see the abomination of desolation, this is a specific event that the book of Daniel talks about that happens at the midway point of the tribulation, at the three and a half year period of the tribulation, when the Antichrist steps into the temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be God and you must now worship me.

[45 : 06] And when that happens, baby, you better run. You better get out of Dodge because he's coming for your head, literally. And if you're a Christian or a Jewish person, you will be slaughtered

at that time.

So, this abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand, and let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

This is not good strategy. If your town is about to be attacked, if you're in the countryside, you run to the safety of the city where there's walls and gates and protection.

And Jesus is saying, no, sir, no, no, no, if this time, when you see this happen, you get out of Dodge. Your safety is found in the hills and the mountains and the desolate places, not in the city. It goes on in verses 21, 22, then there will be great tribulation. The second half of the tribulation is often called the great tribulation.

[46 : 15] First half, just the tribulation. Such has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. Again, he's talking about events during the tribulation, because when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 by Rome, it didn't impact the whole world.

Right? This was such a terrible thing that the world has never seen or wouldn't see it. Okay? We've seen this kind of destruction before and after, but not during the tribulation.

And if those days had not been cut short, no human would be saved. That's how violent this would be, cut short by the return of Christ. And so Luke's account now is going to focus a little different. It's going to focus earlier. Luke's account refers to the past destruction. Now, when I use the word past here, for us, it's past tense. It happened already in AD 70.

But from when Jesus is speaking of this, this is yet 40 years in the future. So it's near future for them. But for us, it's past tense.

[47 : 23] You can read your history books and read about this happening. Okay? He refers to the past destruction of Jerusalem that took place in AD 70 when the Roman army destroyed the city and then dispersed much of its remaining population.

Now, I need to give you a little bit of history of what went on during this conquering. Actually, let's read the verses as Luke describes Jesus' words here.

Beginning in verse 20, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that its desolation has come near. Okay? Be ready.

He's telling people in 40 years this is going to happen. Okay? Be ready. When armies are surrounding Jerusalem, it's time.

It's happening. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains and let those who are inside the city depart. And let not those who are out in the country enter it. If you're already in the country, stay away.

[48 : 31] Get further away. For these are days of vengeance to fulfill all that is written. Alas, for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days, there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.

So again, whether it's during the tribulation or whether it's during this event in AD 70, if you're a mother of an infant or if you're pregnant, it's just not good news for you because you've got to run. And that's hard to do in that condition. Verse 24, they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.

And now I want you to notice another time stamp. Remember back in verse 12, Jesus said before all this, this is what's going on, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

That's a reference also to the book of Daniel, this great statue that Daniel has this vision of that's got, you know, steel feet and clay and all these different things, different images of different parts of the statue that represent the nations that have conquered over Israel throughout world history since Daniel, beginning with Babylon, then with the Persians, and then with Greece, and then with Rome.

[50 : 05] Those are the four parts of the statue. And then after Rome, there's going to be a time where Jerusalem has this, it's still not, it's still not in peace.

It won't be in peace. We talk about a Mideast peace treaty. There's not going to be peace in the Middle East until Jesus comes back. But then during this tribulation time, this Roman Empire will once again, led by the Antichrist, will rise up and be in charge of and come and attack Israel during that time.

So this is what's going to happen. This is what's referenced there. Now, when all of this took place, there was a general, a Roman general in AD 66 when Jerusalem decided to uprising against Rome. And Vespasian was his name, the name of the general, who came and surrounded Jerusalem to start with and began a siege against Jerusalem to bring them back under subjugation because they

had rebelled against Rome.

And during that time, the emperor at the time, Nero, was tried and convicted. And rather than be put to death, he committed suicide. And so now Rome was without an emperor.

[51 : 37] And what do we do? So Vespasian was called back to Rome. And when he got called back to Rome, they crowned him the new Caesar. Vespasian became the Caesar in Rome after Nero.

And so then Vespasian sent his son, Titus, back to Jerusalem to finish what he had started. And so a couple of years later, Titus came back with his army and they surrounded Jerusalem.

They built an encampment, basically a wall around the city because when Roman, when the Roman army approached Jerusalem, rather than surrender, they closed up their gates and they prepared for battle.

Now, what's interesting in history is that the Christians who had heard of Jesus's testimony here, who had heard Jesus share this, who this message has been spread around, there were a bunch of Christians who were in Jerusalem at this time, who got out of Dodge.

Most of them ended up in Caesarea, which is a coastal town, what would be in modern day Beirut. That's where, that's where they ended up.

[52 : 53] But Titus came, and can you imagine if you were shut up in Jerusalem, and to hear the Roman army coming, with their parade of soldiers and catapults and scaffolding equipment and all kinds of stuff that they were using in preparation for this, this long drawn out battle because that was the strategy that they used.

They built this encampment around the city. No one could get in, no food or provisions could get into the city. No one could get out of the city. If anyone tried to escape, they were immediately crucified on the scaffolding that they were using to scale and build the wall.

They crucified so many Jews, they ran out of wood. And so they were just killing them by any other means. This is how many that had died.

The somewhat famous Jewish historian Josephus records this history for us. And, and the number of Jews who died in and around Jerusalem during this time numbered well over 100,000 that were killed.

Many more that were taken into captivity and brought back to Rome, back to other parts of the Roman, Roman Empire, sold into slavery.

[54 : 28] they completely destroyed the city eventually in, in 70 AD. It took them a couple years to do this, but they, they got to the point where they completely destroyed the city.

Block by block, they tore the walls down. Block by block, they tore the temple down. They burned it first. All that gold that was part of the temple structure burned right along with it.

And so the soldiers were tasked with taking the blocks apart and getting the gold that had fallen into the crevices after it had burned and melted. And they brought back to Rome all of the temple elements that were part of, of the, of the holy of holies and the holy place.

All of that they brought back and paraded it through Rome as they came back. Titus came back as a conquering general and his brother Domitian commissioned this archway in Rome as a celebration.

Does this look like anything familiar that's going to be built here pretty soon I guess? Don't, doesn't our president talk about building one of these archways in Washington, D.C.?

[55 : 44] Well this is what it's kind of modeled after. We think about the one that's in Paris but it goes all the way back here to, to Rome. The, what was inscribed on there is just in celebration of this, of the two conquering generals and now King Vespasian and his son Titus celebrating the, the tremendous victory that was had in, in Jerusalem in A.D.

70. This is on the inside of this archway. You can see a couple of the elements that are there. first the menorah that was in the holy place and then the table of showbread is there.

There are other elements that are part of this. They brought back all of this treasure. They brought back so much gold, so much silver, so many slaves that Vespasian built this, the Colosseum on the gold that they took from the temple in Jerusalem and the silver and the slave labor that was used to build what we know today as the Colosseum which all modern Colosseums are basically modeled after this.

And if this is the inside of the Colosseum, massive structure could sit about 80,000 people, and the design that they used to get people in and out of the Colosseum is still being used today in modern

Colosseums to get flow and getting people in and out into their seats for the show.

Quite interesting. And so in Rome, you can see where they stand in relationship to another Colosseum in the background, the Arch of Titus, they're kind of blocked by a tree there, but you get the idea of what this would have looked like.

[57:47] Fascinating history. And the point that I want to make here is this is history. These events happened. We know they happened.

They are recorded. There's evidence all around of these things actually happening. That what Jesus spoke of 40 years in advance of it came to pass just as he said it would.

What would make us think that if Jesus spoke this and it came to pass 40 years later that we would somehow think, well, the second coming is fantasy.

It's not really going to happen. They've got it wrong. It's a dangerous place to go, a dangerous way to think. Real quickly, three principles.

I'll just go through these real quickly. Number one, Jesus knew or knows what's going to happen next. He absolutely does. And not just in general, but in particular.

[59:03] He's in charge of it. He is sovereign over it all and he knows exactly what's going to happen. Secondly, evil never goes unnoticed by God. There is a coming judgment.

All is seen, all is known, and a judgment day is absolutely coming. The idea of people thinking, well, it's not going to happen, I don't have to worry about it, is nonsense.

God is the one who is holding the glass of time and it is running out. We only have so much time left and nobody knows that amount of time. There is an end date to the times of the Gentiles.

I made reference of this before. The ending of the times of the Gentiles coincides basically with the ending of the church age, the rapture. the times of the Gentiles is basically the times that Gentiles have rule over Jerusalem.

And that's coming to an end. And it happens to correspond with the end of the church age when the church is taken out, taken and raptured away from the coming judgment that will happen during the tribulation.

[60:24] So the best thing for us is to not make light of it. We know that it's going to happen. We don't know when, but we know that it will.

And so whether that's in our lifetime or not, we don't know, but it's best to expect it. It is best to be prepared for it. And don't put it off, because you don't know.

You don't know when your life will end either. So on both counts, be prepared. Be prepared to meet the Lord, to see him face to face. Because at one point you will, either as a follower of his or at the great white throne judgment, when your eternity in hell, in the lake of fire, is then made permanent. So be prepared. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you. thank you for this message that you gave that is so accurate.

Lord, all that we see in the Old Testament that came to fruition during your first coming, it is remarkable to see all of these events as they were prophesied and predicted and how they came to pass.

[61:54] And Lord, how naive it would be for us to think that it can't happen again. Because now we have all of this literature now that tells us of your second coming.

And we know that it's going to pass. We know that it's going to come to pass, that it's going to happen. You said you're coming back. I pray that we would believe that promise that you made. And that you're going to make all things right, all things new, and you will bring your justice. And Lord, we are looking forward to those events.

Lord, I pray for those who are making a mockery of the second coming, either by denying it, as unbelievers, or by those who are either false teachers or just being led astray in this area, those who are claiming that it's coming and it's a time that they can ascertain by looking at the events around them and then determine that yes, it's going to be happening this Thursday or it's going to be happening in 2027 or whatever the claims might be, Lord.

I pray, Lord, that their message would be tamped down and not many would pay attention to that. Lord, we understand that those kind of predictions are fascinating and it draws our attention and yet we can know that it's not true because your word tells us that it's not true.

[63:44] Thank you, Lord, for the promise of your coming. I pray that we would be prepared. In Jesus' name, amen. may may