

The End is Here!

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- [0 : 0 0] Good evening. It is a delight to be here. It's such an honor and such a privilege to be able to serve the Lord at Vision and to be able to minister to such an outstanding group of folks.
- And I'd like to say thank you to Pastor. I know he's not here, but I thank him for allowing me the honor to just be able to be a part of things here.
- And so many others who have done so much. The guys who worked so hard in the sound booth, the folks that organized the food yesterday, so many different things that are done to make anything work.
- And just so thankful for everybody that's taken part and for you, dear folks. The name of the message this evening is The End Is Near. Well, sort of it is.
- Now, when I say The End Is Near, we're going to skip The End Is Near, and we're going to go with The End Is Here because I don't want to be associated with the weird guy in the cartoon with the sign.
- [1 : 1 0] And so I'm going to be a little weirder than him. Instead of saying that it's near, we'll go ahead and go with The End Is Here. We live in amazing times. Now, I want to stop and talk about that for just a moment because it's hard for us to know that we live in amazing times because, like, there are times.
- And so it just seems perfectly normal to us. But if you have the ability to have some perspective and look at the big picture, it's breathtaking.
- Where we are right now, the life that we're living in 2018 is a, oh, my gracious, buckle up, hold on.
- The most amazing things in the world are happening all around us right now. And a lot of times, we don't even see it happening. We're not even aware of it. But the times, now you say, well, everybody always says we live in...
- No. In fact, I'm going to show it to you tonight. We live in breathtaking times. Sometimes it's an exciting thing to see what's going on. Now, I want you to open your Bibles up to 2 Peter 3.
- [2 : 1 4] 2 Peter 3. And we're going to start reading in verses 1 through 4 here. And we're going to go ahead. And the first thing that we're going to see is there's an exhortation to remember prophecy.
- I think the notes were just handed out. And so you've got notes there that you can follow along with as we go. And we're there at the part where it says, Exhortation of Prophecy, 2 Peter 3, 1 through 4.
- Now, let's just read through this. It says, This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before of the holy prophets and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.
- Now, Peter says, I'm writing this second epistle. I'm writing this letter to you. Why? He said, In order to stir up your minds. I want to stir you up.

I want to remind you of some things. And then he goes into verse 2 and he says, I want you to be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets. He said, I'm writing this letter to stir you up and to remind you of the things that were written by the prophets.

[3 : 22] I think they were having a prophecy conference, actually. And that's what he's saying. And he's saying, you need to remember what the prophets have said. And we need to remember what the prophets have said. Verse 3, he says, Knowing this first, Excellent.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Now, folks, have you ever run into any scoffers? Sometimes, I run into scoffers from time to time. Now, most of the people I talk to, when I'm visiting with folks and I begin to talk to them about the Lord, most people are very kind.

Some people go, Yeah, praise the Lord, I'm a believer. And others are willing to listen nicely. But sometimes I run into scoffers who are like, Yeah, that whole thing is a joke. The Bible is just a book of fairy tales.

There is no God. You guys are crazy. And there are scoffers in the world today. And the truth of the matter is, I think there are more now than there ever have been. And it's only going to increase. Okay?

[4 : 25] There are scoffers out there who like to give us a hard time. And sometimes Christians don't know how to respond when the scoffers begin to scoff, when they begin to laugh at us.

Sometimes Christians are like, Well, how do I answer him? Well, I'll tell you, one of the things you can do with a scoffer when you meet a scoffer is you can say, Oh, you're scoffing? He's like, Yeah, you know, you guys are always talking about Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

And Jesus is coming back someday. And the scoffer will go off and you say, Yeah, yeah, yeah. Jesus is going to come back. Yeah. You're crazy. You're just like believing in an Easter bunny. What is wrong with you people?

You know what? Your grandpa told my grandpa that Jesus was going to come back. Did he come back? Huh? No. Your daddy told my daddy that Jesus was going to come back. No. And now you're telling me, you guys need to get a life.

That's how scoffers scoff. That can be intimidating. Now, let me give you a suggestion. As soon as your scoffer starts scoffing, smile big, grab him by the hand and say, Let me shake your hand.

[5 : 29] I am so glad to hear you scoffing. And he'll look at you kind of confused like and say, Why would you, a Christian, be glad to hear me scoffing? Because in your very scoffing, you are fulfilling the prophecies of the Word of God.

God. Because my God told me that in the last days there would be scoffers just like you. God said you were going to be here. Not only that, it gets better.

God said it was going to happen in the last days. Hallelujah! It means we're in the last days and the Lord's coming is soon. And not only that, you're just sitting here mocking me about the coming of Christ.

Do you know what Jesus said you were going to say? He said that you were going to say, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning. And that's what you just said. Hallelujah!

Christ is coming back. Okay? Don't let those scoffers get under your skin. They don't know what they're talking about. Okay? And so what we're going to do tonight is we're going to get into the Scriptures.

[6 : 29] We're going to do a whirlwind review of the Scriptures tonight of a bunch of prophecies. Now, we're going to move fast and we're going to hit a bunch of different places in the Scriptures and there's a point to it.

So, hang on and go with me. I want to first of all talk about some prophecies during the New Testament times. Matthew chapter 24. Let's go over there to Matthew 24. Now, in Matthew 24, Jesus is going to give us a prophecy.

If you were in Sunday school this morning, we talked actually about this prophecy. prophecy. But, I want to explain, I have these, my wife says it's a mental problem.

I have these, I conceptualize things. I have, I make pictures that represent things. And one of the things that I do is I think about prophecy like it's a great big clock. Okay?

There's this huge clock face. There's even a clock up on the wall. See there? And it's got this big hand and every time a prophecy gets fulfilled, it goes tick, tick, tick, every prophecy is another tick of the clock.

[7 : 34] And so, when we look at the New Testament times, oh my, it was amazing. Jesus gets born of a virgin in Bethlehem at the appointed time and one after another during New Testament times that old clock was just going and that hand was just flying, tickety tickety tick.

It was just going because so many prophecies during the time of the Gospels were being fulfilled. Okay? And then we come to this one. Matthew 24, okay, verse 1, and Jesus went out and departed from the temple and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

Okay? The temple had just been rebuilt. It was like a little modest 46 year renovation. It was incredible. It was, wow, amazing.

Okay? And the disciples were just awestruck by it. And so the disciples come and they say, Jesus, Jesus, did you see this? Did you see, isn't this incredible? And Jesus looks at them and puts a pin in their balloon and says, see ye not all these things?

Verily, truly, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. Whoa. Jesus here makes a prophecy.

[8 : 55] And by the way, the rest of this chapter and the next chapter talk, he enlarges on that. But we're just going to stop right here in verse 2. Jesus makes a prophecy. He says, the day is coming before long when this temple is going to be destroyed such that not one stone will remain upon another.

Okay? Now, that was roughly 33 AD. You go forward just prophetically a very short period of time. You come to about 68 AD.

The Judeans once again have risen up in rebellion against Rome. The Romans' legions come marching in. There's war. There's fighting. It goes on to 69. It goes to 70 AD. In 70 AD, the Romans surround the city of Jerusalem.

They've got it completely surrounded and it's horrible. It's slaughter. Eventually, the Romans break into the city and the Jewish people are slaughtered.

Blood is running in the streets. The ones, a few get away and escape and run and flee the country. Most are either slaughtered or sold into slavery around the country.

[9 : 59] And this is the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the end of the nation of Israel as we know it. It was a horrible time and the prophecy that Jesus made here in Matthew 24 was fulfilled in detail in 70 AD when Titus said, okay, now go down there.

These Jews, I'll tell you what, it's one thing and another with them but the big thing is their God tear down their temple and then burn it. They burned it. They tore it down so that not one stone remained upon another just like Jesus said and that prophecy was fulfilled and the prophetic clock went tick.

And then a very strange thing happened. A very strange thing happened and that is that the prophetic clock stopped.

From 70 AD going forward you had nothing. There are little, very few, maybe no prophecies.

You go on through the years after that for the next 100 years almost no prophecies being fulfilled. Okay? For the next 200 years, for the next 500 years, for the next 1,000, for 1,800 years, nothing.

[11 : 18] Prophecy was not being fulfilled. Okay? There's still tons of prophecies in the Bible that need to be fulfilled but then we, from that time of 70 AD onward, it was like prophecy went to sleep.

The clock stuck. And it couldn't move anymore. Okay? And this was a problem because Christians began to look at that and they began to say, what is it that's going on here?

Why is it that the prophecies aren't being fulfilled? And worst of all, those scoffers came in and the scoffers said, you Christians are all crazy. Okay? You say you have all these prophecies, your God said he was going to do all these things.

Is he doing them? No. Years are going by. Decades are going by. Centuries. Folks, millennia are going by. Nothing. No fulfillment of prophecy.

You Christians need to wake up and realize that's all fairy tales. It doesn't even make sense. What are you thinking about? I'll tell you something worse than that. Not only are your prophecies not being fulfilled, your prophecies can't be fulfilled.

[12 : 25] Because most of those prophecies have to do with the nation of Israel and the nation of Israel died in 70 A.D. It's gone. It's dead. Buried. Rotted.

Turned to dust and blown away. There is no nation of Israel. There hasn't been a nation of Israel since 70 A.D. Folks, not only are your prophecies not being fulfilled, they're about a nation that hasn't existed for 1,800 years.

They can't be fulfilled. You guys are crazy. Well, that was kind of unpleasant. As the scoffers scoffed.

And Christians, they didn't know how to answer that. I mean, because it seemed like it was right. And so we had some very clever theologians who said, well, you know what?

They're right. And so we need to, we're very clever theologians. So we need to find a way of interpreting the Bible so that it doesn't do this. So what we'll do is we'll look at the Bible and we'll come up with a new way of interpreting, a spiritual allegorical way of interpreting the Bible, which means that the Bible says that God is going to bless the nation of Israel in this way.

[13 : 33] But see, it doesn't actually mean that. It means something else entirely and then we can get out of this quandary. And so we'll just explain away the Bible and say, well, it says this but it means something else and then we're good.

And that's what happened. Okay? And so that is where things have stood. They stood there for centuries. Okay? But, now we come to the modern times.

And here's the thing I said, we live in amazing times. And we're going to look at prophecy in modern times. Go to Ezekiel chapter 34. Ezekiel 34 and we're going to read verses 11 through 13.

For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among the sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

And I will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries and will bring them to their own land and will feed them up on the mountains of Israel by the rivers and in all the inhabited places of the country.

[14 : 46] See, now this passage that I just read in Ezekiel is repeated over and over and over and over in the Old Testament. As you read the Old Testament prophets, many times God says there's a day coming when I'm going to seek out my people that have been scattered among the nations and I'm going to bring them home to the Holy Land, to the land of Israel and I'm going to plant them there and they're going to remain there forever.

Remember, in 1882, we had a trickle started.

Something started that was amazing. Can I get the next slide? In 1882, there was something called the first Aliyah. Aliyah is a Hebrew word that means to go up. Do you notice in the Bible when you go to Jerusalem, you're always going up to Jerusalem?

And the word Aliyah is used in modern Hebrew to mean going home to the Holy Land, moving back, going back to our land. And the first Aliyah started in 1882 with a tiny trickle, a little trickle of people, of Jewish people from Russia and from Eastern Europe said, you know what?

We're going home. We're going to a home that hasn't been our home for 1800 years. We're going to go to home even though, you know, we're going to be there, we're going to be poor, we're going to be strangers, we're going home.

[16 : 03] And so a tiny trickle began to go in 1882 and it began to grow and grow and then we had the horror of World War II. Now World War II was a bad time for the whole world.

It was a horrible time for the Jewish people. As Hitler and the Nazis exterminated, they did systematic industrial level extermination of an entire people group.

They committed genocide against the Jewish people and they murdered 6 million Jewish people. They were trying to get them all. By God's grace, they didn't get them all.

But they got many of them. A huge percentage of them perished there under Hitler. It was horrible. I can't go into it right now but it's beyond words. After World War II, the Jewish people that were left, they said, okay, this is it.

We're out of here. We're leaving. And they began just to flood. The trickle that had begun became a flood. And the Jewish people began to flood back into Israel. The nations of the earth had been resisting them going back but after the Holocaust nobody could deny them that it was their land that had been given to them by God and they began to go back.

[17 : 14] And the trickle that had begun continued and it's continuing until this day. The Aliyah is going on and now, hit it again for me guys, and now to this day we have Jewish people returning back.

Now, not only did they begin to return just as it says here in Ezekiel but we'll go over to Amos chapter 9 and in Amos 9 verses 14 and 15 another similar passage he says, and I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them.

They shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof. They shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them and I will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them saith the Lord. He says, not only are they going to return but I'm going to plant them there and they won't be pulled up anymore and something happened then.

Now, I pastored there in Jerusalem, not Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv. I had the joy of serving as pastor of a church there in Tel Aviv and about one mile from where our church was located there's a street called Rothschild Street and the next slide will have a picture of something that happened at Rothschild Street on May the 14th, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the little guy that you can see there, stood up and said, as of this day, the nation of Israel is reestablished.

And folks, do you remember the clock? The clock that had been frozen, that had been broken, that hadn't moved for 1800 years, David Ben-Gurion gets up and says, the nation of Israel exists again and the prophecies of Amos are fulfilled and you know what happened?

[18 : 52] That clock goes, tick! And prophecy woke up. And since that day, we are seeing a continual movement of prophecy moving forward.

Prophecies are being fulfilled right before our eyes day by day. Let me, I think I have another slide. Yeah, go hit the next slide. Yeah, we're having fun there.

State of Israel is born. And we'll go on. Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 8. In Jeremiah 31, verse 8, it says this, Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the coasts of the earth and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together, a great company shall return thither.

Okay? Now what is this about? Okay, he says, I will bring them from the north country. Get a world map. Find Israel. Go north. What's north of Israel?

Russia. Russia. Okay? Now when Jeremiah wrote these words, there were no Jewish people in Russia. But God knew that one day Russia would have the world's third largest population of Jewish people.

[19 : 58] When the nation of Israel was founded, by the way, in 1948, they're celebrating, it is, excuse me, 15 weeks from tomorrow will be the 70th anniversary of the founding of Israel.

They're having their 70th Independence Day. It's kind of a big deal for them. But God says here, he's going to bring them from the north country. God, there were no Jews. God knew there would be many Jews in Russia and he said, one day I will bring them back.

Now in 48, when the nation of Israel was founded, the Jewish people in Russia, they had always been persecuted. They hadn't been treated very well. They wanted to leave and go to Israel, but the Soviet government would not allow it.

And so they were forced to stay and forced to stay and forced to stay until 1991 when the Soviet Union fell. The Iron Curtain went down, the borders were open, and the Jewish people left in a great rush.

Okay? We see the Jewish people flooding out. Folks, this is in our lifetime. In the last 20 years, we've seen an enormous aliyah, an enormous flooding from Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

[21 : 02] The Jewish people have flooded out of there, moving down into Israel. In fact, a million and a half Russian Jews moved from Russia to Israel. Now, Israel was a country of about 5 million people, and a million and a half Russian Jews showed up on their doorstep.

Company's coming. Okay? It was a big deal for this little country, and this goes on today. Now, I'm not talking about something theoretical. I'm talking about something very specific. These people are my friends.

Okay? These Jewish people, the Russian Jews that came back in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31.8, Rhonda and I know them, not all of them, but they were in our church.

They're our friends. Tuesday, I led a Bible study by Skype with them. These are people that we know personally that are the fulfillment in the flesh of a prophecy that's 2,600 years old.

Happened right before our eyes in our time. Okay? Let's go on. Ezekiel chapter 38, verses 1 through 6. Okay? We'll go over to Ezekiel.

[22 : 05] Are we bumping around too much? Ezekiel 38. And it says here, And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Let's go on.

Next slide, gentlemen. Other way. Yeah. And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshach and Tubal, and prophesy against him.

And say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshach and Tubal. Let's take a time out just for a second. What in the world is this about?

We got all of these weird things. Gogs and Magogs and Meshachs and Tubals. And what in the world does this even mean? Well, let's kind of translate it a little bit. Okay? Magog is a country.

Okay? And Gog is the name of a leader of a country. It's a title. Okay? So Gog would, you know, back, if you live in Magog, then the Gog was the boss man. Okay?

[23 : 06] And so, he's talking about Magog. Now, what is Magog? Most scholars believe that Magog refers to Russia. Okay? And so Magog, we believe, is Russia.

Gog then is the ruler of Russia. Whether we're, are we talking about the current ruler, Mr. Putin? Putin. I have no sweet feelings at all about Mr. Putin.

I live there under his rule. He is a very smart man and a very strong man and I believe not a very nice man. But, we're not going to get into that right now.

The scriptures say, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog. Okay? And so God says, I've got a prophecy here against Gog and Magog against, as we understand it, Russia and the leader of Russia.

Okay? Let's see what he says to them. Verse 3 says, I am against the Ogog, chief prince of Meshach and Tubal. Next slide. And I will turn thee back and put hooks into thy jaws and I will bring thee forth and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armor, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.

[24 : 16] Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, all of them with shield and helmet, Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarma of the north quarters and all his bands, and many people with thee.

Yeah, I know, this is confusing. Let's see if we can make it a little straighter. Next slide. First of all, I want to say that Russia against Israel is kind of like the mismatch of all eternity.

Okay? Russia, you can kind of see, is this huge red place on the map. And then you, now you see the blue arrow? We're not talking about the arrow. Do you see the little tiny blue splinter that the arrow is pointing at?

The little tiny blue splinter is Israel. And so, what he's saying here in Ezekiel 38 is there's a day when Magog, Russia, is going to come down and attack Israel.

Oh, that's not even right. Okay, I mean, this isn't even, I mean, look at this. Russia is enormous. I've lived in Russia. I've lived in Israel. And, okay, Russia, if you want to cross Russia on the train, you have to ride the train for a whole week to get from one end to the other.

[25 : 21] You can drive across Israel in two hours. Okay, let me tell you another way. The population, if you take one city in Russia, Moscow, the population of Moscow is twice the size of the population of the entire country of Israel.

Okay, so if it was a war between Moscow and Israel, it would be two to one, but it's not Moscow and Israel, it's the whole country of Russia against it. This is a crazy thing. Okay, and so, we're not looking at a fair fight.

But, let's look on. Not only is Russia going to come down against Israel, but Russia says, I'm going to bring friends with me. Okay, let's go to the next slide. These countries that are listed, it says, he's going to bring with him Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah.

What in the world is that all about? Okay, first one is Persia. Who is Persia? Well, there is no country today named Persia because its name today is called Iran. Iran is a country that's run by the Ayatollahs.

They call Israel the lesser Satan. Who's the greater Satan? America. Yeah, yeah, that would be us.

[26 : 33] On the other hand, we're on the other side of the world and Israel's right there next door. Okay, the Ayatollahs, you know what, if any country in the world went out and said, we hate you and we're going to destroy you to the last man, we'd say, it's a crime against humanity, you can't do that.

Iran says that all the time and everybody's like, yeah, well, you know, that's just how they are. Okay, that's acceptable for them. They do that all the time. Now, Russia, and Iran is furiously working to develop nuclear weapons and our government has been pretending to try to stop them.

I say, don't get me started. Our government has been very ineffectually taking non-efforts to stop them from doing it and they are getting very, very close. They have a nuclear program.

How did they get a nuclear program? Whole plane loads of Russian scientists were coming down helping them put it together. North Koreans too, by the way. And so, so Russia and Iran have a very tight relationship.

They're very close. Russia has helped Iran to build its whole nuclear program. Iran has developed the missiles to develop the nuclear weapons to send them over to Israel and they're very close to achieving, having nuclear weapons that they can weaponize, send over, against.

[27 : 43] Okay? Now, by the way, and there's a civil war going on in Syria which borders Israel and the north. Okay? And Iran has sent troops to work for the Syrian dictator against those who are fighting against him.

And Russia has sent troops. It's, it's really fun. So Russia and Iran are best friends militarily, nuclearly, and, and economically. They're very tight. Okay? Let's go on to the next one.

It says Ethiopia and Libya. Okay? Right now, Libya is having a civil war. There's two different camps. One of them is, they're a client state of Israel, of Russia. Russia is funding them, giving them the weapons, supporting them, so that they can take over the whole country of Libya and rule there.

So Russia is in tight with Libya. Gomer and Tagarma. Okay? Most scholars believe that this refers to people who live in what is now called Turkey.

Okay? Gomer and Tagarma, we believe, is Turkey. Now, Turkey is a very interesting case because Turkey is a member of NATO and an ally of the United States.

[28 : 51] And quietly, because they're Muslims and you're not supposed to do this publicly, they've quietly been a very good friend to Israel until the last few years when everything has changed.

And they've now got a government that's pretty militant about Islam. They've got a government that hates Israel and is constantly doing things against Israel. The relationship between Israel has gone completely in the dumper.

Technically, they're still a NATO and they're still our ally, but now they're getting like this with Russia. Okay? And they're working with Russia, economic ties, military ties, diplomatic ties, and now Turkey is drawing closer and closer and closer to Israel, or excuse me, to Russia, and they've almost completely cut off relations with us.

Next slide, please. This picture was taken on November 23rd last year. So we're talking, what, two months ago? Okay? In the middle is Mr. Putin, the Russian president.

Okay? The guy with the white thing on his head is the leader, Rouhani, the leader of Iran, and the gentleman with the purple tie is Mr. Erdogan, the leader of Turkey.

[29 : 56] They're meeting in the city of Sochi to plan out their military expeditions, how they're working militarily together to deal with the situation in Syria. Okay? And so, here's the thing that I want you to see.

In Ezekiel chapter 38, God said there's going to be a time when these guys all get together and come against Israel. And I'm looking at a picture, it was taken two months ago, that's showing that these are all guys together militarily working in the nation right next to Israel.

Folks, the scene is set. Okay? What we're seeing in the scriptures, these prophecies that are thousands of years old are being fulfilled before our eyes right now.

Next slide. Over in the next chapter, Ezekiel chapter 39, there is a phrase that says, it says, thou shalt fall upon the nations of Israel, it's talking again to Gog and Magog, and all thy bands and the people that is with thee.

It says that they're going to fall on the mountains of Israel. Now, where would the mountains of Israel be? Let's look at a map. Okay? Now, the map, you can see the blue area is Israel.

[31 : 05] Okay? You can see the country of Syria, the large area to the north of Israel. Do you see the black area between Israel and Syria? Okay? That's called the Golan Heights. That area right now belongs to Israel, although there was a war and there's a dispute about who it ought to belong to, but it belongs to Israel.

There are UN peacekeepers guarding on the line between Syria and Israel there in the Golan Heights. the Golan Heights could be referred to as the mountains of Israel. It says here that the Russians are going to fall upon the mountains of Israel.

A couple of years ago in 2013, some of the troops that were guarding the frontier, their government said, you know, we're not going to do this anymore. We're going to withdraw them. And Mr. Putin said, oh, oh, oh, we'll help.

We'd be glad to send our troops to patrol that border. Israel said, uh, thanks, but no thanks. Uh, but then two years later in 2015, civil war going on in Syria.

Go ahead and click next one. And Russia sent its troops into Syria and those troops are there today. And in fact, they just announced that they intend to stay there even after the war is over. And any Americans that are in the area, please leave.

[32 : 18] Okay. And so, so what we've got now, are the Russians on the mountains of Israel, as it says in Ezekiel 39? No, but they're on the mountains of Syria that are right next door.

You know, like there, uh, right next door. And so, what we're seeing over and over and over, we're seeing that the prophecy about the Jewish people returning to the land has been fulfilled.

Okay, we're seeing that the nation of Israel being reestablished has been fulfilled. The return of the Russian Jews has been fulfilled. This unholy alliance of Gog and Magog has already been put together.

They are not on the mountains of Israel, but they're next door to the mountains of Israel right now. One after another, we're seeing the prophecies fulfilled. That clock that got stuck in 70 AD and did nothing for 1800 years is now going tick, tick, tick, tick, tick.

And if you read the newspapers day by day, you can see that the prophecies are getting fulfilled. And so you might say to me, Sam, so what's the point of all of this stuff?

[33 : 22] What are you trying to say? Are you trying to say that the end times are coming soon? No, no. I'm trying to say they're here. Folks, we are watching the fulfillment of end times prophecy all around us every day.

It's happening now. I have this feeling that if we could look up into heaven, that we would not see God sitting up on his throne.

I suspect that he's not sitting. I have a feeling he's standing up. And he's looking over the balustrades of heaven, and he's looking down at the earth. And he's watching very intently.

Right over here is Gabriel. And he's got a trumpet. And he's licking his lips.

And Gabriel's sitting here ready to sound the horn. And right over here is Jesus. And he's like this.

[34 : 28] Okay? And the father is like, Gabriel, you ready? Jesus, are you set? All right, now, let's. And that's where we're at tonight.

That's exactly where we stand right now. Everything is set. And the rapture could happen at any moment. All that lacks is God say, now the trumpet will sound and the Lord will come.

We are that close right now. Everybody's been joking that during the prophecy conference, I was going to tell you when the Lord's coming back. No man knows the day nor the hour. Okay?

And anybody who says that they know, they're joking with you. But folks, for the last 1800 years, like nothing, but in our day, we're seeing prophecies fulfilled and the pace of the prophecies being fulfilled is growing faster and faster by the day.

It's an exciting time. Now, let's go back to where we began, 2 Peter chapter 3. 2 Peter chapter 3 is where we started this message and I want us to finish it there as well.

[35 : 38] 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 9. The Bible says, The Lord is not slack concerning His promises. Some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us were not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Okay, what does it mean? He's not slack concerning His promise. Okay, what he's meaning is that God promised He's coming back. And you say, yeah, but He hasn't come back yet. He isn't procrastinating.

It's not because He lost. Lost track of time. Okay, there's a reason why He's waited. What is the reason? He said, He's not slack concerning His promises. Some men count slackness. He's not procrastinating.

He's not putting it off, but He is long suffering to usward. He is long suffering to humankind. He's saying, folks, when I come back, it's over.

When I come back, Christians, your chance to witness is over. Lost people, when I come back, welcome to the tribulation. Okay? And so, He is waiting because He is long suffering to give us every opportunity to get the gospel to the lost and for lost people to get saved.

[36 : 49] That's what this is saying. The Lord's not slack concerning His promise, but His long suffering does word, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He wants every person to hear the gospel. He wants every person to have a chance to come to Christ.

But the day of the Lord will come. He said, folks, He's been delaying it. He's been waiting. He's been giving us every opportunity, but the day is coming. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

What do you mean as a thief in the night? Unexpectedly and very suddenly. Over and over the pot and the scriptures talk about when everybody's just chilling and relaxing and doing their thing and not even looking up, that's when He's coming.

And that's how the world is living right now tonight. In which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise. The elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. And then Peter says this, Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?

[37 : 54] And folks, this is the whole point of everything we've said. Seeing then that all these things are going to be dissolved, this world is going to burn up. Seeing then that the Lord's going to come back. Seeing then that we will stand before Him very soon.

Then the question we have to ask ourselves is, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord? And so the question that Peter is asking is, okay, in light of the fact that the Lord's coming back, that this world is going to end, that we're going to stand before Him, what should we be doing?

I'll give you just a few things that we need to think about. Okay, number one, you need to make sure you're saved. Okay, if you're not born again, what in the world are you thinking about?

Folks, you're going to lose it. You're going to miss it. You're going to lose your soul. You don't want to delay. If you haven't been saved, you need to be saved.

Somebody might say, well, what is saved? The Bible says that every one of us has broken God's commandments. We have sinned against God, every one of us. There's not one of us. We like to think we're righteous and good.

[39 : 12] We're not. Okay, we're sinners and we've broken the commandments of God. You have, and I have. And because of that, we stand under condemnation before God. God could very easily and very justly condemn us and let us go to hell.

But God, because He is so loving and gracious toward us, He has come down and made a way that we could be saved. He sent Jesus Christ, God the Son, left heaven, came down to this earth, lived a perfect sinless life, and gave Himself on the cross.

He shed His blood on purpose to pay for our sins. He died, He was buried, He rose again on the third day. And folks, here's what it comes down to.

Going to church isn't going to save you. Being a good person isn't going to save you. There's nothing you can do to be good enough to be saved. There's only one way out and that's when we come to God and say, God, I don't deserve heaven.

I deserve to perish. But Jesus Christ, God the Son, paid for my sins on the cross. I believe in Him. I take Him as my Savior. On the basis of what He did, I ask that You would forgive my sins.

[40 : 24] Save my soul and give me eternal life. And if we'll do that, God will save us. If you have not done that, you're playing Russian roulette. Okay? You are playing games with your eternal soul.

Get saved tonight. Okay? So, that's number one. What must we do? What sort of men ought we to be? As it says here, what manner of persons ought we to be?

First of all, we better make sure we're saved. Second of all, the Bible over and over and over, Jesus says, watch and pray. What's He saying? He's saying, be ready, be looking, be living as people who are expecting my return.

We talked about this in Sunday school a little bit. We easily get seduced by this world. We easily get drawn away. Our attention gets drawn away to all of the things that are going around us.

There's the politics and there's the entertainments. There's the latest movies and there's the latest sports things. There's the house and there's the car and there's the job and there's the family and our life just fills up with all the stuff of this world.

[41 : 25] And you know what? God gets squeezed off to the side and then squeezed off into the corner and then packed away somewhere under the back stairs. And we're living our life as though this world is the only thing that's going on.

And God says, watch and pray. What does that mean? It means be looking. It means when you get up in the morning, go to the window and look up and say, is this today? Are you coming today?

We need to be living as people who are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, who are here temporarily. We're just kind of camping out here for a little while. We're going there and we're living according to those values, not according to the values of this life.

Number three, we need to be living worthily. What does that mean? Well, it says right here in verse nine, excuse me, in verse 11, he says, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

So many Christians today are living lives that they know for a fact are not honoring to God. Okay? There is secret sin in your life. Or there's just apathy and complacency.

[42 : 33] You know that God wants you to get your life cleaned up, but you'll do it some other day. You know God is calling you to serve him, but you'll do it some other day.

Okay? Maybe God's calling you to serve right here in the church. Maybe God's calling you to go to the foreign field. But you know what? There's always time.

Folks, there's not always time. The trumpet's gonna sound, and if we don't get right now, when are we gonna get right? The last thing I wanna say to you about this, what manner of persons ought we to be?

We ought to be flaming witnesses for Jesus Christ. You say, well, I'm shy. Yeah, me too. I know, you don't think I'm shy. Ask Rhonda I'm shy. Our friends, our loved ones, our neighbors are perishing without Christ.

And we don't have time. Or we're too shy. Or we're afraid of offending them. And so, we're going around with our mouth shut while the world is perishing around us.

[43 : 45] And there are people all over the world that need Christ. But you know, it would be really awkward. It'd be difficult. I mean, it'd take a real sacrifice to go. I'll just stay home because it's easier.

If what the Bible is saying is true, if the coming of the Lord is nigh, we need to make sure we're saved. We need to be watching. We need to be living a life that's on fire for God.

And folks, we've got to get the gospel to our neighbor here in Alpharetta and to the people to the ends of the world. John 9, verse 4 says this.

It says, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. Night cometh when no man can work. Folks, night cometh. It's coming. The trumpet's about to sound.

What we're going to do, we better do because the opportunity is about to be lost. Christ, let's stand. Have the musicians come to the instruments.

[44 : 50] Let's bow our heads and close our eyes as we stand and pray. I want to ask you to look in your heart. As we've looked at prophecy this week, as we've studied these prophecies tonight, as we see this accelerating pace toward the coming of the Lord, prophecies being fulfilled on every hand, what is God saying to you?

What is it that you need to do so that when you stand before him he'll say, well done, thou good and faithful servant. Do you need to get saved? You can do that tonight.

Maybe God's speaking to you about some sin. Maybe he's speaking to you about getting serious about your walk with him. Maybe about getting the gospel to the lost. Maybe about the mission. I don't know. If God is speaking to your heart tonight, I pray for you and then we're going to invite you to come and to meet with the Lord here at the front.

Father, we come before you now and we thank you for this day. We thank you for your word. Lord, we don't have to be in darkness like the lost. You've given us the prophecies.

We can see that you're coming as soon. Lord, help me to live as though you were coming back tonight.

[46 : 16] Help us as a church to live as people who know that you're about to return. Save the lost that are here tonight. Lord, help Christians that will live watching, that will live passionately for you, that we will take the gospel.

Lord, do your work in our hearts. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.