CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

Hopeful About Tomorrow (Part 1)

An End Times Crash Course: Four Pillars, Four Views and a Better Way to Read the Times

On the details of the end times we see in a mirror dimly, but the pillars are sure and Jesus is coming back, so we refuse to be distraught or distracted. We go to the Word, we pray, and we fix our eyes on the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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SERIES
We're Hopeful for Tomorrow, Week 1 of 2

MAIN TEXT
Revelation 21:1-5

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. The world seems to be getting worse and worse. Things are more tense, more dangerous. In many ways, they're getting simply stranger. And we have access to more information than any other time in human history, and yet that information lacks reliability. Today, I want to help start developing a framework for you to develop your own personal theology concerning the end of all things. Today, we're starting a brand new series called Hopeful About Tomorrow, and I would invite you to join me in Revelation 21. Now, I'm going to skip around a lot today, but I like giving you somewhere to turn in your Bibles.

It just shows me where all the saved people are in the room. The more paper I hear turning, the more I know that revival is on its way. Amen. If you have a Bible that glows, I forgive you. It's fine. You'll just get into heaven in the second group. Long as I'm in. Amen. Y'all didn't know that's in Revelation, right? I'm just kidding. It's not. Revelation chapter 21, I want to start in verse 1.

> **REVELATION 21:1-5** ESV
>
> 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was
> no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride
> adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is
> with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He
> will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying,
> nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I
> am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Just read this to get us started this morning. It says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

"And I saw a holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things,' hallelujah, 'have passed away.' And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'

"Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" That's a good way to end that little portion there. This moment of Scripture here that we're in, this is trustworthy and true. There is a time ahead of us where those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ are going to be redeemed, are going to be restored, are for many going to be resurrected, and are going to have glorified bodies to live together with the Lord forever in a glorified earth, a new heaven, new earth. What I'm telling you today is you've got something to be hopeful about. We're hopeful for tomorrow.

Now, really, today is going to be a different type of message. That's why I have my hands free, is so I can teach. This is when I preach. This is when I teach, amen. And today, it's going to be a little less of a "go do this, go believe this, go implement this." Today, I'm going to, hopefully for some of you, kind of open your minds to the idea that there's a lot more on this topic than we are typically exposed to. The good news about that is that other information gives us reason to be hopeful. It gives us reason to be hopeful.

But I'm going to help you come to a place today, hopefully, where you can start building some of your own personal theology around the end times, okay? Now, when it comes to developing a theology, there's three questions that I ask. This is kind of the three-question process I follow. Is one, what does the Bible say? That's a good place to start. Might not be the worst place to finish. But what does the Bible say? I've said it a few times from the pulpit. The Bible says it. I believe that that settles it. Amen. But sometimes the Bible says stuff that, if we're all real honest, don't make the most sense in the world, especially around these issues, right?

And so when we ask the question, what does the Bible say? The next question that we ask if we're struggling with that is we ask the question, what does this look like throughout church history? Throughout the 2,000 years of the church, how has the church dealt with this issue? If you get something in the Scripture and you go, "I don't know what to..." Well, what's the church been doing for 2,000 years? I got good news. There's people smarter than you and smarter than me that got us to this point. Amen. Saraland Church didn't pop up out of the ground, but it came here through the work and ministry and faithfulness of those who are now in the great cloud of witnesses.

Amen. So we didn't just pop up out of... So what does church history say? The third question that I ask when developing a personal theology is, what fruit does it produce? What fruit does it produce? If I'm looking at somebody who believes a certain thing and I have 10 people, 20 people, 30 people, I got a good sample of people that have that particular theology and they have that particular belief system. What is the fruit that that belief system is producing? How are they... What's their life look like? Jesus actually said you would know about teachers, which I would assume you could also know about teaching, by their fruit.

> **MATTHEW 7:16-20** ESV
>
> 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every
> healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can
> a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
> 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Look at their fruit. Look what they produce. 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Oh, I'm sorry. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 says that... No, 1 Corinthians chapter 3. One of the Corinthians, chapter 3, John Reddy. It's one of them.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-15** ESV
>
> 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—13 each one's work
> will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of
> work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.
> 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Says that when you look at teachers, you're going to notice that some teachers have teaching that is built out of precious stone and jewels. And then you have others that have wood, hay, and stubble. Some teaching just burns up.

The fruit on it just, it ain't no good. It just doesn't last. So those are the three questions that I ask. Now, why am I preaching this today?

I'm going to preach this because of something that I recognized in the Scripture several years ago. And then I saw it play out very close to home for me. In John chapter 4 — you don't have to turn there — there's a story of a woman at the well.

> **JOHN 4:16-24** ESV
>
> 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband."
> Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you
> now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a
> prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought
> to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in
> Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for
> salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the
> Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who
> worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

And Jesus comes, talked to this woman, and she's a Samaritan. And so he asked her, or they get to talking, and Jesus starts to unpack some things going on in her life. And it comes out this lady's working on her sixth husband right now. She's living with her live-in boyfriend, but she's working on her sixth husband. She's signing up for it.

And when this information comes out — let me just tell you, when you're on husband number six, I'm not trying to judge nobody today. Husband number six, there's something going on, man. You know, about husband four, you got to start going, "Maybe it's me," right? You got to hit some point. And so she's working on husband number six. And as soon as it comes out, she goes, "I perceive you're a prophet." She realized that Jesus is a spiritual man. And immediately she stops the conversation about what's actually happening in her world. She turns around, looks at a mountain that the Samaritans and the Jews are arguing over.

And she says, "Now, hey, the Jews say we can't worship on this mountain." And I got a feeling Jesus is standing there like I have, Pastor John — you have, in pastoral counseling meetings, where all of a sudden she's off into this deep nonsense that ain't going to do her no good. We're talking about something that would really help you, and now you want to talk to me about blood moons. We're talking about stuff that'll really help you. Now we're talking about the colors of horses. We see this in the church over and over again. People who have a dysfunctional point of their life, who mask that dysfunction in a deep theology that does nothing for them.

When my mother passed away a few years ago, my grandmother kept all of her things at the house. And when my grandmother passed away after her, I got boxes and boxes of things from my grandmother and my mother. And so I'm going through them one day just to sort through them, see what's in there. And just in case you are wondering about the wealth that I inherited, I got me a butter churner, a bunch of pictures. But one of the things in there, it was my mother's Bible. I had said the sinner's prayer with my mother years ago. It was probably 2003, 2004, somewhere, maybe earlier than that.

And so I had led my mother to the Lord. We never saw any fruit in her life. This lady — and I'm not trying to be ugly, I'm trying to just tell you my story. By the way, she's my mama. I can say whatever I want. You can't. Amen. That's my mama.

Look at your neighbor and say, "Wake up," or he'll just preach for the longest time today. I'm up here sharing deep stuff to y'all. Y'all can't even giggle a little bit. Amen. And so my mother, I had led her to the Lord. I had bought her a Bible. And so in the box was the Bible I had bought for my mother. And so I start looking through.

I just think, let me see what's in here. Okay. By the way, I didn't open it up real hopeful, but I thought, let me see what's in here, because I knew she had been going to an Assemblies of God church and here and there, you know? And so I started looking through. There's nothing in this Bible. Nothing. There ain't no church programs. There ain't no bookmarks. There ain't no notes, no highlights, until I get to the book of Revelation, and she's gotten every weird thing you've ever heard in the book of Revelation highlighted, underlined, circled. And at some point you have to ask yourself this question.

Here's a good place to start when it comes to eschatology, which is the theology of ultimate things. It's the theology of the end times. Eschatology. You have to ask this question when it comes to eschatology. If your life is totally falling apart, if your children won't talk to you, you're on your sixth husband, or you can't break addiction, you can't get any stability, you haven't had a job in 30 years because no one will hire you, you're not trustworthy, the only way you get money is pawning stuff off — or whatever dysfunction you're dealing with.

At some point you got to go, how helpful is the 144,000?

> **REVELATION 7:4** ESV
>
> 4 And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

It's not doing for me what other things could do. That's the whole reason I'm preaching this today. I'm not trying to change what you believe. I am trying to expand your ability to understand that there's more in the world than what we typically believe in classical Pentecostal denominations and the Assemblies of God holds firmly. I'm not saying anything's wrong. What I'm saying is I've got hope. I've got hope. I've got hope. So we're going to expand our brain a little bit today. Everybody unclog your ears so your brain has somewhere to go.

Amen. My observation is that people who get really invested in this particular world in eschatology — and it could also be said the same for prophecy, people who get invested in prophecy have a similar thing — but people who really get invested in eschatology tend to either get distraught or distracted. They get distraught as in it worries them to death. They're unsure of what's going on. They don't know what's happening. I have been in rooms with end time teachers that some of y'all probably got 18 books from. I've been in the rooms with them where you'd sit in the front row and you'd think the anointing came in the room because you were scared to death.

No, it just turns out when people talk about all hell breaking loose everywhere in America, it's pretty scary. It's not the fear of God that got in you. It's the fear of the unknown. So you have this fear that comes over you. You become distraught. "I don't know what's going to happen. Am I going to be in that number? Am I going to be saved? Am I going to make it? Are we going to go through this? What's it going to look like? When's it going to happen? What are the signs?" And so you become distraught or you become distracted. That's what happened with the woman at the well.

That's what happened with my mother. They're looking to this thing thinking they're going to get something off of it because there's some revelation in there. There's some secret knowledge in there. There's some answer to what's going to happen. You don't need to worry about what's going to happen, honey. I'm here to tell you, you need to worry about

what did happen 2,000 years ago at a cross at Calvary, where Jesus Christ gave his life for you and for me. And now you can live in freedom. Barely touching the notes right now, but I feel like preaching for the next 22 minutes.

Amen. So today I want to give you a solid framework and explain some things that you've probably never heard that will hopefully help you keep from becoming either distraught or distracted. Okay. Now, I'm not going to do a ton of Scripture. We're going to look at some Scripture, but you're going to get a lot of flyover today. I'm going to talk to y'all like y'all are students of the Bible already. Okay. I'm going to talk to you like you know the Word to some degree already, and we're going to shift out of doctrine mode into theology mode. Doctrine is an encapsulated set of beliefs that have been established by whatever predetermined body put them together.

They're encapsulated and given to you so you know what to believe without having to think about it. Theology is a totally different world. Theology is for thinkers. It's for thinkers. And so today look at your neighbor and say, "You got a big brain." You got a big brain. You're going to think today. You're going to think today. So the next week, by the way, I am going to walk through Matthew chapter 24 pretty piece by piece.

MATTHEW 24:1-51 ESV

1 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.
2 But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone
upon another that will not be thrown down." 3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately,
saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"
4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the
Christ,' and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed,
for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,
and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.
9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my
name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false
prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow
cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed
throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. 15 "So when you see the
abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take
what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who
are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on
a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until
now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the
sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!'
do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead
astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the
wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes
from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is,
there the vultures will gather. 29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the
moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they
will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his
angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the
other. 32 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know
that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I
say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away. 36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of
heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the
day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be
the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women
will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what
day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the
thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you
also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 "Who then is the faithful and wise

> servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? [46] Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. [47] Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. [48] But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' [49] and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, [50] the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know [51] and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So next week will be a good week to bring your Bible to church. So we're going to do strong Bible next week. This week I'm giving you kind of a flyover.

So let's start here. There are some pillars when it comes to end time orthodoxy. End time orthodoxy. These are things that every orthodox believer — which we are orthodox. We subscribe to Christian orthodoxy. Every orthodox believer would believe these things about the end times. These are the pillars of eschatological orthodoxy. Number one is the second coming of Christ. Every Bible-believing Christian believes that Jesus is coming again. It will be both bodily and it will be imminent. In other words, Jesus ain't floating down here in some... No, you're going to see Jesus, Jesus, Jesus come down.

He's coming back. He will return. Jesus himself. Not an emissary, not an angel, not a spirit. The physical body of Jesus that went in the grave, that was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven.

> ACTS 1:11 ESV
>
> [11] and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Guess what? His comeback tour is on. Amen. He's coming back. It's also imminent, meaning that it is going to happen. There is nothing that can stop it. And we don't know when it's going to happen. Jesus is going to come back when he's good and well ready to. Amen. So Jesus is coming. That's the second coming of Christ. The second is the resurrection of the dead.

We believe that the righteous dead and the unrighteous dead will be resurrected. So anybody who served the Lord, they're going to have toothbrushes ready for them, because dirt is going to be in their teeth. Amen. And you go, "Well, what about people that got cremated?" I don't know. Don't look. It might be gross. I don't know what's going to happen, but they're coming back. I don't care how you went. People in the Titanic, they got the longest trip. Amen. They get to go to the water park at the resurrection. Amen. Hallelujah. So the righteous and the unrighteous will raise from the dead.

Both will be in the next pillar, the final judgment. The final judgment will be when all evil is annihilated. All evil will go away, and you will be judged according to whether or not your name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

> **REVELATION 20:12-15** ESV
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> 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

If you want to know why we are so big on souls here, it's because I am trying to see if we can get the Lamb's book of life second edition started in heaven. We're going to fill the first one up and start on the second one. Amen. Some of these are just good preacher lines. They aren't theology. Hallelujah. And then we also believe, this is the fourth pillar, in the new heavens and the new earth.

This is where we will spend eternity. God is going to make all things new. Amen. Your body's going to be new. The ground's going to be new. The sky's going to be new. Heaven's going to be new. All things are going to be made new. We believe in the new heaven and the new earth. Those are the four pillars of orthodox eschatology. Now, there are several views that all hold those four things, but they're in a little bit of a disagreement on the timing of the events. They're in a disagreement on the timing of how all of these events are going to come about. And I'm not going to read it to you, but Revelation chapter 20 talks about the 1,000 years that Jesus will reign.

> **REVELATION 20:1-7** ESV
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> 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. 4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison

That the enemy is locked away. Satan is locked away. He's bound. Jesus will reign for 1,000 years. And then the Bible indicates that Satan will be unleashed. Now, that 1,000 years is called the millennial reign of Christ. A lot of questions come up around the millennium. So I'm going to walk you through four different predominant views of the millennium. I'm going to tell you, the last one I'm going to share with you is the one that the Assemblies of God holds, but I want you to be aware of everything out there. And for the most part, this is the point at which people start to determine what the timelines look like.

And the four different views are premillennial — remember, it's all about the millennial reign of Christ — premillennial, amillennial, postmillennial, and dispensational premillennial. The Assemblies of God holds to a dispensational premillennial view of the end times. Okay? I want everybody to anchor that in your heart this morning, in your brain.

That's what the Assemblies of God subscribes to. So I'm going to explain these four views and then we'll see where we go from there. I'm kind of watching the time and seeing how much I want to preach to y'all this morning.

Now, a friend of mine told me that y'all would want to know where I land on the views out of the four. He said that your people are going to want to know. And so before I get to these four views, I want to give you my view of the end times. This is my view of how everything is going to go down. Are you ready for it? Okay. First Corinthians chapter 13. I share Paul's view.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 13:9-12** ESV
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> 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I
> was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish
> ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I
> have been fully known.

First Corinthians chapter 13, verse 9, he says, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child.

"I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish things." This is my view on the end times right here in verse 12. "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, and then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." When it comes to the end times, these are my personal views. I'm not speaking to you as an Assemblies of God minister for the next 30 seconds. I'm speaking to you as Jason Mayfield, who spent some time in the Scripture. Okay. My personal view on the end times is that we are looking through a mirror dimly.

Whenever we start to talk about eschatology, whenever we start to talk about the end of all, I don't care how large of a chart you can print. I don't care how big, how long, how detailed it is. At the end of the day, when we're talking about this stuff, we are all wearing sunglasses at night. We just don't know. And everything is pretty verifiable in our belief system through either testimony, fruit, or history right now. This is the only thing. It's one of our theologies. There is no way to be certain about any of it. We have some pillars that we know are going to happen. Outside of that, sunglasses at night.

But I also know that when we see him face to face, we will fully know as we've been fully known. In other words, that's a way to say that Jesus is going to fill us in on everything that we need to know. Anchor this in your brain. The second coming of Christ will be the great clarifier. When you see Jesus — I don't know how it's going to go down, but I think there's going to be an angel with a clipboard behind him who's going to set up an orientation as soon as his feet hit the ground. We'll all know. At that point, we will fully know. But we're looking through sunglasses at night.

And I'm actually less interested today in you having a position on any of these issues than I am in you being comfortable holding the tension of the mystery. So real quickly, I'm just going to share with you some of these views, the four millennial views. The first is the premillennial view. This is the oldest. Let's be honest. I'm not going to try to spell any of these. Let's just go ahead and drop all the charade here. So I started getting further in than I normally do. And I went, "Wait, wait, you're too far." I did a whole message with "discernment" once. Wednesday night, Jeff comes up to me and he goes, "You know, you left an R out."

So the premillennial view. The pre. This is the oldest one. This one dates back to the first century, premillennial view. And I'm kind of just catching up to where we are. So all of this will be post the cross. We are currently in the church age. Okay. The premillennial view believes that there will be a tribulation that we kind of ease into. It's not the tribulation that you've heard talked about on TV, man. It's not super certain, not super predetermined. It's just things are going to intensify, at which point there will be a resurrection of the dead. Okay.

The righteous dead and believers will be caught up with the Lord. This is what First Thessalonians 4 talks about.

> **1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17** ESV
>
> [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Believers will be caught up with the Lord, and Jesus Christ will come back in his second coming with those believers and those resurrected dead to reign on earth. Now, here's what I want to talk to you about. This, in this view, is all one thing. It's all kind of happening quick. Believers are resurrected. Believers are caught up in the air. And then they immediately with Christ come back down and reign on earth with Christ for a thousand years, which leads us into the millennial reign of Christ, which in the premillennial view is a literal period of time where the church and Jesus reign over the earth.

Okay. At the end of this, there will be a resurrection of the unrighteous dead. Okay. There will be a final judgment. Then there will be new heavens, new earth, and then we'll enter the eternal state. Okay. That's the premillennial view. Right? That's what the premillennials believe. Then there's the amillennial view. The amillennial believes — this is from, started popping up around 400, 500 AD, or whatever they call it now. So we're in the church age. Okay. Now the church age and the tribulation and the millennial reign are all happening at the same time.

So in the amillennial view, these are more symbolic of the times that we live in, and Jesus sits on the throne, which I actually can appreciate. One person said of premillennials and dispensational premillennials is that the one thing that they neglect to realize is that the Jesus they believe will reign for a thousand years reigns right now. He sits on the throne, folks. That's a good word. So then at some point in the future, when it all happens, there will be a second coming. Jesus will come back. There will be a resurrection of the dead, probably in this view, everyone at once, at which point there will be a final judgment, then new heavens, new earth, and then we enter the eternal state.

Okay. That is the amillennial view. Then there's another view that came up around the time of the Reformation. So we're talking 1600s, 1700s. Called the postmillennial view. Postmillennial. The postmillennial, similar to amillennial, we're in the church age, okay. We're in the tribulation now, so that this tribulation is an ongoing thing, it's part of the church age. And at some point, as the gospel is spread, things will get better and better and we kind of just end up in the millennial reign. Okay. So we aren't there now, but as the gospel spreads, eventually we just — the millennial reign happens.

After that, at some point, Jesus comes back, resurrection of the dead, final judgment, new heavens, new earth, eternal state. Okay. That's the postmillennial view. Then there is what most of you have probably heard exclusively, which is the dispensational premillennial view. Now, this is the most detailed one, and I'm actually going to leave out quite a bit of detail, and you're going to see how much this starts to add up. Dispensationalists believe that we are in the church age, okay. At some point, there will be a rapture, similar to premillennialists, but this won't all happen at once.

This is the catching up, the snatching away, from 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. There will be a rapture and a resurrection of the righteous dead. They will rapture and go to be with the Lord for seven years. During that seven years, there will be great tribulation, but believe it or not, that's actually split in two between the tribulation and the great tribulation. During this time, Israel is going to be restored. There is going to be a temple.

> **2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4** ESV
>
> 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of
> lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or
> object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

The Antichrist is going to rise up, and he is going to be the reason that the temple is restored, and then the temple is going to be destroyed.

There are some questions around, will the temple be built before this time happens, or at the very beginning of this time happens. So there will be seven years. Then, after that seven-year tribulation, Jesus is coming with the church, with the righteous dead. Satan will be bound, and then we enter the millennial reign of Christ for a literal 1,000 years. Then we enter the millennial, and the church and Jesus are reigning over the earth. Satan is bound. No one can be deceived. Then, after the 1,000 years, Satan will be released, and Satan is going to deceive a whole bunch of people.

So at this point, there's going to be a great falling away. Again, I'm leaving a lot out, but we're moving quickly. Then after this, there's going to be a final judgment. Actually, several judgments, but there's going to be a final judgment in which we will also have the resurrection of the unrighteous dead. The unrighteous dead will be judged in the final judgment. Satan's going to be judged in the final judgment. Your mama's going to be judged in the final judgment. Just trying to get something out of y'all, folks. I can tell y'all are like, "Man, he got a dry erase board and went to town."

Final judgment. After that's done, we will have the new heavens, new earth. Some dispensationalists actually believe that's going to happen here. Then we will enter the eternal state. Much more detailed. So what I want you to see — all I want you to see. I'm not telling you to believe any of this. The Assemblies of God tells me I need to tell you to believe this. Hallelujah. What I want you to see, though, is that there are a lot more than one view on this topic. So when the TV preacher scares you to the point that you're wetting the bed at night, maybe take a beat.

He might be wrong. I don't care how big his jet is or his chart is. Amen. Okay? So these are the different views. Now, make sure that stays there. As I mentioned — oh, by the way, I didn't say this, the dispensationalist view. So premillennial has been around since the early church, first hundred years or so. Amillennial, 400 to 500. Postmillennial came out about 1600, 1700. The dispensational belief system popped up about the mid-1800s. It spread wildly because it was printed without any contest in a study Bible that was massively popular, called the Scofield Study Bible.

So it also got picked up in the Ryrie Study Bible. So this stuff spread really fast and nobody knew there was anything else out there. Nobody knew there were other beliefs. Now, I'll tell you, out of all of these, the postmillennial one, even though it is the one I hope is the right the most — I hope it is. I'm not saying I believe it is. It is the one that is probably the least likely. It's the least likely of the four. Now, again, the Assemblies of God, we are a dispensationalist denomination. We run from that word, but at the end of the day, all of the beliefs are dispensational beliefs.

There's no way around that. So we say whatever we want. You know, I can get up here and say that I'm a black man. And if you shut your eyes when I start the service, you might believe it. Amen. But I'm not. I can say it all I want to. I am what I

am. We can say we are something other than we are, but we are what we are. And dispensationalism — and this is the issue, because I want to talk to you about this. Dispensationalism is a version of eschatology that is so detailed that it naturally seems right, but it is constantly plagued by failed rapture predictions and strange political involvement.

It gets weird. It's also treated — and this is not me saying it's wrong. This is me saying we've got to own our own stuff. We treat dispensationalism as the most literal interpretation of biblical eschatology. That's how it gets portrayed to people. But that's only true if you ignore all of the inputs and massive assumptions you have to make prior to that literal interpretation. At the end of the day, dispensationalism is so involved that it is a house of cards, and unfortunately, the theology is cascading, meaning if one card goes down, everything is going down.

It all has to be right or none of it can be right. In fact, a lot of y'all argue — because y'all think the tribulation is the only thing that there is to talk about in eschatology — you'll talk about pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib. Or which one are you? If you're dispensational, if you believe this stuff, you are pre-trib whether you want to be or not, because if Jesus doesn't come back prior, or there is not a rapture prior to the tribulation, nothing else can happen. The whole thing depends on the whole thing working. It's important that every piece happen, but we wear sunglasses at night.

We can't make no guarantees around here. All I can guarantee is Jesus is coming back. And I do want you to know, the issue with dispensationalism — when we come back to the lady that I talked to you about in the beginning, who's working on her sixth husband and wants to talk about mountains — the issue with dispensationalism, I have seen it for twenty years or plus, is that we typically have a high view of world events and a low view of the finished work of Jesus Christ. I think this is best exemplified in Daniel chapter 9, verse 24. I'm going to read this to you real quick, and I'm going to try not to keep you much longer, but I want to share this stuff today.

> **DANIEL 9:24-27** ESV
>
> 24 "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. And for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 says, "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people" — this is a prophecy, by the way — "and your holy city, to finish the transgression and put to an end sin and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of the anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks." Now I should back up and tell you that when it started with the seventy weeks, it is widely interpreted amongst multiple views of the end times that these weeks are actually years, that this is a symbolic number, but they are actually years.

And so he says, “To restore and build Jerusalem, the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there will be seven weeks” — seven years. “And for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.” So we have seven and we have sixty-two weeks. That’s sixty-nine years. Remember, we’re talking about seventy sevens, seventy years — or I’m sorry, seventy sevens. Not seventy-seven years. Seventy sevens. So 490 years all total. Verse 26, “And then after the sixty-two weeks an anointed one shall be cut off and have nothing.” Who does that sound like to you, by the way? Jesus Christ, right? Sounds like the Lord.

“An anointed one shall be cut off and have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abomination shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.” Again, I want to remind you, seventy weeks equals seventy sevens. Seventy weeks is seventy sevens. It’s seventy sevens. Not seventy-seven years. Seventy sevens. So seventy seven-year periods, okay?

If you were to look at this timeline and what it’s talking about in terms of the decrees that it’s mentioning, there are three decrees that you could start this from and end very close to when Jesus comes back. So when you read this, seventy sevens, this is a prophecy about the coming Messiah. The premillennialists, the amillennialists, and the postmillennialists read this passage as ending — because all of them end right at either Palm Sunday, AD 33. Any of this ringing a bell? Or right in that area, where everyone else reads this as, this is the coming of Christ. The 490 weeks that Daniel prophesied is Christological in its nature. It’s pointing towards the finished work of Jesus Christ.

But dispensationalists, what we have a tendency to do — because everything’s got to be deep, and if a lot of stuff’s got to happen, you’ve got to make a lot of stuff happen. This is why it’s a little bit of a house of cards, because nobody would get this reading naturally from it. This is not the natural reading. But at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, we go into an indefinite pause. Some theologians call it the great parentheses — couldn’t come up with a better name than that. Most people just call it a gap. We enter an indefinite gap. We have been in a 2,000-year gap, a little less than that gap.

And at some point, the gap will end. We are stuck at sixty-nine weeks. This is where the seven-year tribulation comes from. When the church is raptured, things shift back to focusing on Israel, and all of a sudden, the seven years, the last seven years, the last week, the seventieth week, the last seven years, they start. Is everybody with me so far? If not, I’m not either. I haven’t thought about eschatology this much until this week. I like the stuff that works today. Amen. In fact, I’ve enjoyed preparing for this message. I’ve had a lot rattling around in my brain all the time.

It’s been good to be clarifying. So the dispensationalist believes that. Here’s the issue, is that while the rest of the views, their whole look of the end times focus on Jesus’ first coming and his second coming, we have a tendency to look past it, to focus on all of these other things. And all of a sudden — this is the moment where it comes on me in the service and I start saying stuff I shouldn’t — all of a sudden, we’ve got Christian pastors of Christian churches with the Star of David as their profile picture. And it makes a ton of sense to focus all your attention on that if Jesus isn’t the center of the whole thing.

That’s number one. And number two, if you tear out the entire book of Hebrews from your Bible. I’m not saying it’s not going to happen. I’m not saying this view is wrong. I belong to an organization that embraces this view. But I’m going to tell you, if you’re going to get into something that’s complex, and you’re going to get into something that anybody with any sense can poke a ton of holes into, or if one thing doesn’t go according to plan — which by the way, no prophecy in

the Old Testament is ever treated this way. Go through your Bible and see how many times the phrase seventy is used. Seventy years, seventy this, seventy that.

It's a number that's an idea. It doesn't mean seventy, or else we'd just be working on this perfect clock to seventy years. That's not what it is. And so we're focused on all this stuff. If we're going to hold that, it is our responsibility to make sure that no politician, no policy, no country, no organization, no party, nothing takes the place of Jesus Christ in our eschatology. If you're going to hold it, hold it. If you're going to hold something else, hold it. I don't really care. I care about what you wake up in the morning and you start thinking about. Do you run to the secret place or do you run to Fox News?

Are you trying to see how things have turned around since yesterday and gotten worse? We can't live our life that way. We are hopeful about tomorrow. I'm not worried about Antichrist. He's none of my business. If I got anything to do with the Antichrist, y'all's problems are bigger than you realize. My God. So the dispensationalist looks towards a lot of these events and seems to look past Jesus' finished work and his second coming. We focus on everything but. Our disposition becomes obsessed with signs and with wonders and with news and with timing, and we look forward when we never look back.

We never get anchored back into what our faith is all about. So if I was to summarize these four views for you this morning, just so you know that there are more views. Why do I want you to know that there are more views? Because we wear sunglasses at night, and you've got a bunch of preachers that get on TV and act like they know good and well that something's going to happen. And I'm going to tell you something. If they had stocks for failed rapture prophecies, buddy, I could be rich right now. I'd invest in that today. I'd call my broker. Okay. So this is the summary of the four views.

I want you to know that you can't be worried every time you hear something, because there's a bigger world out there than just what you've heard, than just what you've been taught, than just what's been. Some of this stuff we teach it like it's written in a brochure in the back of our Bible. We just had to jump through hoops to get a seven-year tribulation that everybody in this is worried about. And we had to bend over backwards to find it. We had to go through some prophecy in Daniel that nobody else interprets the same way. So just don't worry.

Don't worry. Jesus is high and lifted up. He sits on the throne. These are the four views. The premillennialist believes this. He believes things are going to get worse and worse, and then Jesus comes back. The postmillennialist believes that things are going to get better and better, and then Jesus comes back. The amillennialist believes it doesn't matter how things get, because Jesus is coming back. But the dispensationalist believes that John Hagee just released a new book and he's coming back tomorrow at 1:57 PM. Hallelujah. That's what we tend to believe.

That's the stuff we look at. That's the stuff we get excited about. Shame on us. Shame on us for not making Jesus the main thing. I have a tendency to believe that of all of these views, there is one that was written in the 1800s — in 1859, in fact, in Kent, England — that might be the best view of them all. And a man in Kent, England sat down with a quill and he wrote these words. "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." That's Charles Dickens, from A Tale of Two Cities. That wraps up everything you need to know. To some degree, all of this is probably true.

Things are going to get better and better. They're going to get worse and worse. Some things are already settled. Some stuff that needs to be done is done, and there's some things left to still be done. But the good news is Jesus is coming back. We look through a mirror darkly and we try to interpret things that are generally out of our depth. I just mentioned to you Daniel. You have to almost do backflips to get some of the stuff that we subscribe to without any

question. I want to read to you something real quick before I close, from Daniel, the same chapter, that might be a better instruction for us.

So if you have your Bibles, I'd invite you to join me in Daniel chapter 9. Daniel chapter 9, starting in verse 1.

> **DANIEL 9:1-3** ESV
>
> 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the
> Chaldeans—2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to
> the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely,
> seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and
> sackcloth and ashes.

It says, "In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" — just so you know what that means, that means that Persia has now overthrown Babylon, who had overthrown Judah, and they had overthrown Assyria, who had overthrown Israel. So Persia has come in and they have defeated Babylon after a seventy-year period that was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

> **JEREMIAH 25:11-12** ESV
>
> 11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.
> 12 Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the
> Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste.

Verse number 2 says, "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely seventy years."

Verse 3 says, "Then I turned my face to the Lord, seeking him by prayer." When Daniel looked at the times, when Daniel observed what was going on around him, when Daniel got worried about how things were progressing and happening in the culture — whatever he heard on the news, the Babylonian press, whatever he heard, whatever he saw, whatever came to him — he went back and he looked at the word of the Lord. He got into this prophecy from Jeremiah. He got back into the written word. He got into his Bible. He got into his Bible and he started to pray. He got in his Bible and he started to pray.

Verse 20, if you hop down there, it says, "While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel" — the angel Gabriel — "whom I had seen in a vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice."

> **DANIEL 9:20-22** ESV
>
> 20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea
> before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had
> seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me
> understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.

Verse 22, "He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, 'O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.'" My God, if you people only had a pastor who would stand up on a regular basis and look at you and say, "You need to get a word from God."

So he prays, he reads the Bible, and supernatural insight comes to him. He gets a word from God. Go over to verse 26. Part of the vision that he gets. "And after sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing." He gets — this is held by all of the views, by the way — he prays, he reads, he receives insight, and he gets a revelation of a coming Messiah. He's worried about the times, and God takes him through a process where he puts his attention on the one who is to come. Turn with me now to Revelation chapter 1. Revelation chapter 1. This is the book.

This is the — you want to talk about the end of all things? Revelation seems to be the book that's subtitled that. Revelation chapter 1 and verse 1.

> **REVELATION 1:1** ESV
>
> 1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

The first five words are all you need to know. "The revelation of Jesus Christ." We keep looking for events and patterns and times and things. And when will this happen? And when does this event happen? And when does this go down? And we get worried, and we buy this guy's book until it turns out that it was wrong. So we'll buy the next guy's book, and then that's wrong. So we go back — this is what really gets me — to the first guy.

And we buy his next book on the stuff that's probably going to be wrong again. And we keep going down this rabbit hole, and either we are distraught and we are worried and we're without peace, or we're completely distracted from what God wants to do in our life. And what he did with Daniel and what he did with John is when he said, "I want to show you some stuff, you might be worried about what's going on," it ended with a revelation of Jesus Christ. I'm telling you, folks, I don't care how many dragons to expect at my house for Thanksgiving during the tribulation.

I don't know if that's a real thing, but I like it. And I don't care. I need a revelation of Jesus Christ. Because a revelation of Jesus Christ transforms me today. The same one who Revelation, the same one who Daniel says, and the same one who Paul says — Jesus, who makes all things new. I don't want you distracted. I don't want you distraught. I want you going after Jesus Christ. I want you to keep your attention where it ought to be. And when it is, guess what? You'll be hopeful about tomorrow. You won't be messed up and worried. I'm done with that mess.

I'm done with it. I put my foot down on it. We can be what we are. We can believe what we believe. But I'm tired of having people come through my churches that are getting alerts every time something happens in Israel, because my God, it's happening every 17 minutes. So every time something happens in Israel, every time something happens in the Middle East, every time some prophet releases a word, every time somebody says something — and we think people are deep because they sound like they know what they're talking about. And we don't know. We're wearing sunglasses at night.

We look through a mirror. We just don't know. But Jesus is coming. And it could happen at any moment. It could happen at any time. If y'all ever wonder why I do that, my pastor did that. And I just picked it up. He'd get to the end of saying something and just... I don't know where that comes from. Jesus is coming back. We can trust. We can have confidence. We can have hope. I want you hopeful about tomorrow. This is not just a message. This isn't just a series.

This is going to be a value of our church. I'm not bringing preachers in here to scare you. I'm not going to bring people in here to get you alarmed and worked up.

And next week what I'm going to do is I'm going to walk through all of Matthew chapter 24, at least as much as I can. But I don't care about the clock apparently, so I can get it all in there. Amen. But I'm going to walk through Matthew chapter 24, and I'm going to show you why I am not worried. And you don't have to be either. Because the Bible tells me this in Philippians, that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

> **PHILIPPIANS 4:13** ESV
>
> 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

That's a good place to give the Lord a good praise.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message opens a two-week series. It is a teaching session, not a typical sermon: hands free, a dry-erase board, and a flyover of eschatology rather than a deep dive into one text. Next week walks through Matthew 24 piece by piece, so tell people to bring their Bibles.

The goal is not to win anyone to a position. It is to show that faithful Christians have held more than one view, to anchor everyone in the four pillars every orthodox believer holds, and to leave people comfortable holding the tension of the mystery.

Two cautions. First, the Assemblies of God holds the dispensational premillennial view, and this message is candid about its weaknesses. Say plainly what the fellowship holds, and present the critique as "owning our own stuff," not as a rejection of it. Second, the four views are easiest to grasp drawn out. Sketch each one as a simple timeline on a board or screen, working left to right from the cross.

Introduction

The world seems to be getting worse. Things are more tense, more dangerous, and in many ways simply stranger. We have access to more information than at any other time in human history, and yet that information lacks reliability.

Today I want to help you start developing a framework for your own personal theology concerning the end of all things.

> REVELATION 21:1-5 ESV
>
> 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

These words are trustworthy and true. There is a time ahead of us when those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ will be redeemed, restored, for many resurrected, and given glorified bodies to live with the Lord forever in a new heaven and a new earth. You have something to be hopeful about. We are hopeful for tomorrow.

This is a different kind of message. It is less "go do this" and more opening our minds to the idea that there is a lot more on this topic than we are usually exposed to. The good news is that the extra information gives us more reason to be hopeful, not less.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING A THEOLOGY

When I am developing a theology, I ask three questions.

1. **What does the Bible say?** That is the place to start, and it might not be the worst place to finish. The Bible says it, and that settles it. But some passages, especially on these issues, are not easy to understand. 2. **What does this look like throughout church history?** How has the church handled this question for 2,000 years? There are people smarter than you and me who got us to this point. This church did not pop up out of the ground. It came through the faithfulness of those who are now in the great cloud of witnesses. 3. **What fruit does it produce?** Look at a sample of people who hold a belief and ask what it is producing in their lives. Jesus said of false prophets, "You will recognize them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16), and what is true of teachers is true of teaching. Paul says some teaching is built with gold, silver and precious stones, and some with wood, hay and straw, and the fire will show which is which (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

1. Why This Message: Distraught or Distracted

The woman at the well (John 4). Jesus begins to unpack what is going on in a Samaritan woman's life, and it comes out that she has had five husbands and the man she is with now is not her husband. As soon as it gets personal, she says, "I perceive that you are a prophet," and she changes the subject to a theological argument about a mountain: "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship" (John 4:20).

Every pastor has seen this in counseling. We are talking about something that would really help, and now someone wants to talk about blood moons or the colors of the horses. We see it in the church over and over: people with a dysfunctional point in their lives who mask that dysfunction in a deep theology that does nothing for them.

Illustration: my mother's Bible. When my mother passed away, my grandmother kept her things, and when my grandmother passed, I received boxes from both of them. Among the butter churn and the photographs was the Bible I had bought my mother after I led her in the sinner's prayer, years earlier. We never saw much fruit in her life. I opened that Bible and found nothing: no church programs, no bookmarks, no notes, no highlights. Nothing, until the book of Revelation. Every strange thing you have ever heard about Revelation was highlighted, underlined and circled.

At some point you have to ask: if your life is falling apart, if your children won't talk to you, if you can't break an addiction or keep a job, how helpful is the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4)? It is not doing for you what other things could do.

That is why I am preaching this. I am not trying to change what you believe. I am trying to expand your understanding that there is more out there than what we usually hear in classical Pentecostal circles.

My observation: people who get deeply invested in eschatology (and the same is often true of prophecy) tend to become either **distraught** or **distracted**.

- **Distraught:** it worries them to death. "Am I going to make it? Are we going to go through this? When is it going to happen? What are the signs?" Sitting in the front row of some end time conferences, you might think the anointing came into the room, when really it was the fear of the unknown.
- **Distracted:** like the woman at the well, they keep looking for some secret knowledge or hidden answer about what is going to happen.

You do not need to worry about what is going to happen. You need to focus on what did happen, 2,000 years ago, at a cross on Calvary, where Jesus Christ gave His life for you and for me.

We are going to shift out of doctrine mode into theology mode. Doctrine is a set of beliefs established by a body and handed to you so you know what to believe. Theology is for thinkers. Look at your neighbor and say, "You've got a big brain."

2. The Four Pillars of End Time Orthodoxy

Every orthodox believer holds these four things about the end times.

1. **The second coming of Christ, bodily and imminent.** Jesus Himself is coming back. Not an emissary, not an angel, not a spirit, but the same body that went into the grave, was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven: "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). It is imminent: nothing can stop it, it could happen at any moment, and no one knows when. 2. **The resurrection of the dead, the righteous and the unrighteous.** Everyone is coming back, however they went. 3. **The final judgment.** All evil will be annihilated, and people will be judged according to whether their names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 20:12-15). That is why we are so big on souls here: let's fill the first edition and start on the second. 4. **The new heavens and the new earth.** This is where we will spend eternity, if we are born again. God is making all things new: our bodies, the ground, the sky.

The views below all hold these four pillars. Where they diverge is the timing between here and there.

> REVELATION 20:1-7 ESV
>
> 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great
> chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a
> thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive
> the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.
> 4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I
> saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those
> who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.
> They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life
> until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in
> the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ,
> and they will reign with him for a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be
> released from his prison

Pastor Jason summarized this passage rather than reading it. Satan is bound for a thousand years, Christ reigns, and then Satan is released for a little while. That thousand years is called the millennial reign of Christ. There are four predominant views of the millennium, and for the most part they determine how and when everything else happens: **premillennial, amillennial, postmillennial and dispensational premillennial.** The Assemblies of God holds the dispensational premillennial view. Anchor that in your mind.

3. My View: In a Mirror Dimly

A friend told me you would want to know where I land. My strongest view on the end times is borrowed from Paul.

> 1 CORINTHIANS 13:9-12 ESV
>
> 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
> 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I
> gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I
> shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

- When it comes to the end times, we are looking in a mirror dimly. We are wearing sunglasses at night, at best. I don't care how large a chart you can print; on the details, we just don't know.
- But when we see Him face to face, we will know fully. In other words, **the second coming of Christ will be the great clarifier.**

I am less interested in you having a position on any of these issues than I am in you being comfortable holding the tension of the mystery.

4. Four Views of the Millennium

Draw each view as a timeline that begins after the cross, in the church age.

Premillennial. The oldest view, going back to the first century and the early church.

- The church age eases into a time of tribulation as things intensify.
- The righteous dead are raised and living believers are caught up with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- Christ returns at once with them, and He and the church reign on earth for a literal thousand years.
- Then the resurrection of the unrighteous dead, the final judgment, the new heavens and new earth, and the eternal state.

Amillennial. Emerging around AD 400 to 500.

- The church age, the tribulation and the millennial reign are happening at the same time; the thousand years are symbolic of the age we live in, with Jesus on the throne now.
- At some point Christ returns, the dead are raised (likely all at once), and then the final judgment, the new heavens and new earth, and the eternal state.

As one person observed, the thing premillennialists and dispensationalists can neglect is that the Jesus they believe will reign for a thousand years reigns right now. He sits on the throne.

Postmillennial. Coming out of the era after the Reformation, the 1600s and 1700s.

- The tribulation is ongoing and part of the church age.
- As the gospel spreads, things get better and better until we are in the millennial reign.
- After that, Christ returns, the dead are raised, then the final judgment, the new heavens and new earth, and the eternal state.

Of the four, this is the one I most hope is right, and the one I think is least likely.

Dispensational premillennial. The most detailed view, and the one most of us have heard exclusively. It arose in the mid-1800s and spread widely through the Scofield Reference Bible and later the Ryrie Study Bible, which printed it without any contest.

- The church age ends with a rapture of the church and the resurrection of the righteous dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- Believers are with the Lord for seven years while a seven-year tribulation unfolds on earth, divided into the tribulation and the great tribulation.
- During this time Israel is restored, a temple stands, and the Antichrist rises (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
- Christ returns with the church, Satan is bound, and Christ reigns for a literal thousand years.
- Satan is released, a great falling away follows, and then the final judgment (with the resurrection of the unrighteous dead), the new heavens and new earth, and the eternal state.

All I want you to see is that there is more than one view. So when the TV preacher scares you half to death, take a beat. He might be wrong, no matter how big his chart is.

5. Owning the Problems with Dispensationalism

The Assemblies of God is a dispensationalist fellowship. We sometimes run from the word, but the beliefs are dispensational beliefs. This is not me saying it is wrong. This is me saying we have to own our own stuff.

- **It is so detailed that it naturally seems right,** but it has been plagued by failed rapture predictions and strange political involvement.
- **It is treated as the most literal interpretation** of biblical eschatology, but that is only true if you ignore the inputs and massive assumptions you must make before the literal interpretation begins. No plain reading of Scripture gets you there.
- **It is a house of cards.** The theology cascades: if one card goes down, everything goes down. That is why, if you are dispensational, you are pre-tribulation whether you want to be or not. Without a rapture before the tribulation, nothing else in the system can happen.
- **It tends to hold a high view of world events and a low view of the finished work of Jesus Christ.**

6. Daniel's Seventy Weeks

That last point is best seen in Daniel 9.

> DANIEL 9:24-27 ESV
>
> 24 "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end
> to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to
> anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore
> and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. And for sixty-two
> weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks,
> an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall
> destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war.
> Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the
> week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who
> makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

"Seventy weeks" is literally "seventy sevens," and across the views it is commonly understood as seventy sevens of years: 490 years. Seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks is sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years. And after the sixty-two weeks, "an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing" (Daniel 9:26). Who does that sound like?

Walk through a timeline (one common way of counting it):

- **The starting point:** Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8), around 445 BC.

- **The first seven weeks** (49 years): Jerusalem rebuilt, around 396 BC. Then the sixty-two weeks begin.
- **The sixty-ninth week** ends with the Messiah: on this reckoning, at Palm Sunday.
- **The seventieth week** is bound up with the cross, the resurrection and the ascension, and on down to the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Other starting points work as well. Counting from Artaxerxes' earlier decree to Ezra (Ezra 7), in 457 BC, the sixty-nine weeks reach about AD 27, the beginning of Jesus' ministry. However you count it, the prophecy points to the coming Messiah. It is Christological at its heart. It points to the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Here is where it gets squirrelly. Dispensational teaching inserts a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, between verses 26 and 27, sometimes called "the great parenthesis." That gap is the church age. The clock has been paused for nearly 2,000 years. At the rapture it starts again, and the seventieth week becomes the seven-year tribulation, when attention shifts back to Israel, natural Israel is restored and saved, and Jesus returns with those raptured to reign for a thousand years, followed by a great falling away.

The other views say: Jesus comes back, and that is the big event. The dispensationalist tends to look toward the tribulation and the restoration of natural Israel, while everyone else looks to what Jesus did at Calvary and to His second coming. The result is a natural disposition to become obsessed with signs and world events more than with the finished work of Jesus Christ. That is how we end up with Christian pastors of Christian churches whose profile picture is the Star of David. It makes sense to focus all your attention there only if Jesus is not the center of the whole thing, and only if you tear the book of Hebrews out of your Bible.

No other prophecy is treated like this. Look at how often Scripture uses seventy: seventy years, seventy this, seventy that. It is a number that carries an idea, not a perfect stopwatch.

If we are going to hold this view, it is our responsibility to make sure that no politician, no policy, no country, no organization, no party, nothing takes the place of Jesus Christ in our eschatology. What do you run to when you wake up in the morning: the secret place or the news?

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR VIEWS

- The premillennialist says it is going to get worse and worse, and then Jesus comes back.
- The postmillennialist says it is going to get better and better, and then Jesus comes back.
- The amillennialist says it doesn't matter how it gets, because Jesus is coming back.
- The dispensationalist says a TV prophecy teacher just released a new book, and Jesus is coming back tomorrow at 1:57 p.m.

Shame on us for not making Jesus the main thing.

Illustration: the best view of all. In 1859 Charles Dickens published words that may describe the time until Jesus returns better than any chart: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (*A Tale of Two Cities*). Things will get better and better. Things will get worse and worse. Some things are already settled and some are left to be done.

The bold statement for the day: **every view is probably right to some degree and greatly wrong in many ways.** We look in a mirror dimly. It is sunglasses at night. But Jesus is coming back.

7. A Better Way to Read Daniel 9

> DANIEL 9:1-3 ESV
>
> 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the
> Chaldeans—2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according
> to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem,
> namely, seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy
> with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Persia has overthrown Babylon after the seventy years Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 25:11-12). Daniel looks at the times, and instead of chasing every report, he compares them with the written word: he "perceived in the books" what the Lord had said through Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2). He goes to the Scripture, and he goes to prayer.

> DANIEL 9:20-22 ESV
>
> 20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my
> plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel,
> whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He
> made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and
> understanding.

While Daniel was still praying, Gabriel came with insight and understanding. In Daniel's pursuit, he got a word from God. If only you had a pastor who stood up regularly and told you that you need to get a word from God!

And what was the word? "An anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing" (Daniel 9:26). Concerned about the times, Daniel does not walk away with a theory. He walks away with a revelation of the coming Messiah. God turned his attention to the One who was to come.

> REVELATION 1:1 ESV
>
> 1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take
> place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

You want to talk about the end of all things? The first five words are all you need: "The revelation of Jesus Christ." We keep looking for events, patterns and timing. We buy one teacher's book until it proves wrong, then the next one, then go back to the first one's next book. What God did with Daniel and with John is the same: when they were troubled about the times, He gave them a revelation of Jesus Christ. That revelation transforms me today.

Conclusion

Go back to where we started: “Behold, I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5). The same Jesus Daniel saw, John saw and Paul preached is the One who makes all things new.

- **I don’t want you distracted.** Don’t let something that seems like “the deep things of the Lord” pull you away from the victory available in Christ today.
- **I don’t want you distraught.** Don’t let your anxiety climb because you watch world events like a hawk and wonder every day, “Is this it?” Something happens in the Middle East every few minutes, and sounding deep is not the same as knowing.
- **I want you hopeful.** Jesus is coming, and it could happen at any moment. We can trust, we can have confidence, we can have hope. This is not just a series; it is a value of our church. We will not bring in preachers to scare you or get you worked up.

Next week we walk through Matthew 24 to see why we don’t have to be worried. As Paul says, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). Give the Lord praise.

OPTIONAL: INVITATION

This line is in the original notes but was not preached on April 12, 2026. Use it if time allows.

Maybe your tomorrow looks bleak because you haven’t made Jesus the Lord of your life. Today you can put your faith in His finished work, and your tomorrow will be hopeful too.

03

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

REVELATION 21:1-5	1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
1 CORINTHIANS 13:9-12	9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

DANIEL 9:24-27	24 "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. And for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."
DANIEL 9:1-3	1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.
DANIEL 9:20-22	20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.
REVELATION 1:1	1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-15	12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.
JOHN 4:16-24	16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

MATTHEW 24:1-51

1 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to
him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered them, "You see all these, do you
not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not
be thrown down." 3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him
privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your
coming and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one
leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they
will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are
not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise
against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and
earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.
9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be
hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away and betray
one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead
many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow
cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the
kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations,
and then the end will come. 15 "So when you see the abomination of desolation
spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader
understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one
who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one
who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are
pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight
may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such
as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.
22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for
the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look,
here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false
prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if
possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you,
'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner
rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far
as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there
the vultures will gather. 29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun
will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from
heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven
the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they
will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his
elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 32 "From the fig tree

learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you
know that summer is near. [33] So also, when you see all these things, you know that he
is near, at the very gates. [34] Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until
all these things take place. [35] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not
pass away. [36] "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels
of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. [37] For as were the days of Noah, so will be
the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For as in those days before the flood they were
eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah
entered the ark, [39] and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all
away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [40] Then two men will be in the field;
one will be taken and one left. [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be
taken and one left. [42] Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your
Lord is coming. [43] But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what
part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not
have let his house be broken into. [44] Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of
Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. [45] "Who then is the faithful and wise
servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the
proper time? [46] Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he
comes. [47] Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. [48] But if that
wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' [49] and begins to beat his fellow
servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, [50] the master of that servant will come
on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know [51] and will
cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping
and gnashing of teeth.

REVELATION 20:1-7

[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the
bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent,
who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into
the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations
any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a
little while. [4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the
authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been
beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not
worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or
their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest
of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first
resurrection. [6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over
such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and
they will reign with him for a thousand years. [7] And when the thousand years are
ended, Satan will be released from his prison

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17	16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
PHILIPPIANS 4:13	13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

MATTHEW 7:16-20	16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.
REVELATION 7:4	4 And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:
ACTS 1:11	11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."
REVELATION 20:12-15	12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-4	3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

JEREMIAH 25:11–12

[11] This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. [12] Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.

Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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